

Gifts, Benefits and Hospitality Policy

Section 1 - Purpose

(1) This policy outlines the responsibilities of staff to avoid conflicts of interest and uphold high standards of integrity and trust when receiving or offering gifts, benefits or hospitality.

Section 2 - Overview

(2) Offering or receiving gifts, benefits or hospitality can be a normal part of a modern working environment. However, it can also give rise to concerns about bribery, corruption or conflicts of interest.

(3) This policy outlines RMIT's position on responding to offers of gifts, benefits and hospitality, as well as providing them.

Section 3 - Scope

(4) The policy applies to all employees and affiliates of RMIT University and its controlled entities (known as the RMIT Group). For this policy, all employees and affiliates are referred to as "staff".

(5) This policy applies to all instances of:

- a. gifts, benefits or hospitality offered to or by staff or their immediate family members, which can be reasonably attributed to the staff's official duties or association with RMIT, regardless of whether they are accepted or declined
- b. gifts of appreciation received by staff from students
- c. gifts or hospitality at events, whether hosted by RMIT or externally, including catering and in-kind venue hire
- d. externally funded travel or conference tickets not covered by the [Travel procedure - Staff](#)
- e. prizes, awards, grants or cash awarded for personal use

(6) For the purpose of this policy, and its related guideline and schedule, the below are out of scope:

- a. gifts, benefits or hospitality provided by RMIT to its staff. Gifts, benefits or hospitality of this nature may be subject to fringe benefits tax (FBT) as per the [Taxation Procedure](#)
- b. gifts, benefits or hospitality exchanged between staff members
- c. [philanthropic](#) gifts or donations governed by the [Philanthropy and Fundraising Policy](#)
- d. RMIT funded [travel](#) arrangements approved through the RMIT travel portal.
- e. gifts, meals, entertainment and sponsorship covered by the [Schedule 1 - Allowable Expense Guidance](#)
- f. honorariums and other payments for activities such as thesis examination, peer review, or one-off seminars or presentations
- g. prizes, award and grants awarded for education or research activities.

Section 4 - Policy

(7) All staff have a duty to act in the best interests of RMIT at all times and with the highest degree of professional independence and integrity. This duty extends to the responsible provision and receipt of gifts, benefits and hospitality.

(8) Staff may offer and accept reasonable and modest gifts and hospitality of the kind ordinarily given in the normal course of business, provided there is a legitimate business or cultural reason (including for example, relationship development and formalisation for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities). Such gifts, benefits or hospitality should be modest and in line with local customs and cultural protocols.

(9) Dealings with current and prospective suppliers must be appropriate and for the benefit of the RMIT Group rather than provide personal benefits to staff.

(10) A gift, benefit, or hospitality is unacceptable if:

- a. it is solicited or asked for under any circumstances
- b. it is offered to secure a material benefit for the party offering it
- c. it would constitute a probity breach, especially where the offer is from a supplier trying to win or maintain business opportunities with RMIT
- d. it may cause staff to act, or be perceived to have acted, in a preferential or biased manner
- e. doing so would compromise RMIT's reputation or impartiality
- f. it could reasonably be seen as a bribe
- g. it breaches the law or the recipient's own rules for receiving gifts, benefits or hospitality
- h. it may lead to an actual, potential or perceived conflict of interest as per the [Conflict of Interest Policy](#)
- i. it is cash, used in a similar way to cash, or is easily converted to cash (except in very limited circumstances relating to cultural gift giving traditions, such as Lunar New Year, and provided it meets the requirements under clause 8)
- j. it is from a foreign entity in circumstances which may create a foreign interference risk. For foreign interference management at RMIT, please refer to the [Foreign Interference Management Portal](#).

Gifts, Benefits and Hospitality Declaration

(11) All gifts, benefits and hospitality must be declared in accordance with the thresholds specified in Schedule 1 – Value Thresholds and Associated Requirements using the [Gifts, Benefits and Hospitality Declaration form](#).

(12) RMIT collects and holds personal information in the Gifts, Benefits and Hospitality Declaration form for internal use to ensure compliance with this policy. Declarable gifts, benefits and hospitality may include personal information of donors and recipients external to RMIT and will be managed in accordance with the [RMIT Privacy Statement](#).

(13) All Gifts, Benefits and Hospitality Declarations are treated sensitively and confidentially. Access to this information is restricted to direct line management and selected persons within the scope of defined responsibilities under this policy, in accordance with the [Privacy Policy](#).

Responsibilities

(14) All staff are required to:

- a. declare all gifts, benefits or hospitality using the Gifts, Benefits and Hospitality Declaration Form, in accordance with this policy and the conditions and disclosure requirements in Schedule 1

- b. decline offers of gifts, benefits and hospitality that are not acceptable
- c. ensure the responsible provision of gifts, benefits and hospitality (if they are giving a gift, benefit or hospitality).

(15) Staff unsure about whether the gift, benefit or hospitality meets the criteria set out in this policy should consult their line manager or the Central Compliance team.

(16) Direct managers oversee the acceptance or refusal of gifts, benefits and hospitality by direct reports, and provide advice to promote awareness and model good practice.

(17) The Chief Officer Procurement is responsible for:

- a. ensuring staff involved in procurement decisions and RMIT suppliers are aware of and comply with this policy, and
- b. monitoring supplier behaviour and compliance with probity and conflict of interest requirements.

(18) The Chief Financial Officer is responsible for approving the threshold values, conditions and disclosure requirements for gifts, benefits and hospitality prescribed in Schedule 1.

(19) The Chief People Officer is responsible for the investigation and management of conduct matters arising from alleged or actual breaches of this policy, in accordance with the [Code of Conduct](#) and [Workplace Behaviour Policy](#).

(20) The Executive Director, Governance, Legal and Strategic Operations is responsible for:

- a. maintaining a register of gifts, benefits and hospitality declared via the Gifts, Benefits and Hospitality Declaration Form
- b. investigating matters linked to serious misconduct breaches of this policy and whistleblower reports in accordance with [Whistleblower Procedure](#), and
- c. approving procedural exemptions under this policy.

Section 5 - Compliance

(21) Where a manager or staff becomes aware of a gift, benefit or hospitality that has been accepted or provided in breach of this policy, they must contact [People Connect](#) as soon as practical. Any actual breaches must be escalated to the [Central Compliance](#) team.

(22) RMIT may determine that an investigation should be undertaken to determine whether misconduct has occurred. This may result in disciplinary action, including termination of employment.

(23) If the conduct is unlawful, such as offering or accepting a bribe, staff might also be subject to criminal or regulatory prosecution.

(24) RMIT may direct a staff member to return any gift that has been accepted in breach of this policy.

Section 6 - Subordinate Policy Documents

(25) This policy includes the following schedule(s):

- a. Gifts, Benefits and Hospitality Policy Schedule 1
- b. Gifts, Benefits and Hospitality Guideline.

Section 7 - Definitions

Affiliates	Include (but are not limited to) contractors, consultants, conjoint, adjunct, emeritus, honorary and visiting appointees, office holders of an RMIT entity, members of any RMIT committee, volunteers or any other person appointed or engaged by RMIT to perform duties or functions on its behalf.
Benefits	Include preferential treatment, privileged access, favours or other advantage. For example: invitations to sporting, cultural or social events, access to discounts and loyalty programs and promises of a new job. The value of benefits may be difficult to define in dollars, but as they are valued by the individual, they may be used to influence the individual's behaviour.
Conflict of Interest	When a person's personal or external interests, duties or obligations conflict or are inconsistent or incompatible with their duties or responsibilities to RMIT. It may be financial or non-financial.
Cultural Protocols	Principles and practices that guide the behaviour of a cultural group. For Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples, for example, these protocols include historic and current customs, practices, traditional lore and codes that are part of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural observances.
Gifts	Free or discounted items or services and any item or service that would generally be seen by the public as a gift. This includes gifts to immediate family of a staff, where there is a clear link with the employee's official duties. Examples include items of high value (e.g. expensive pens), low value (e.g. small bunch of flowers), consumables (e.g. chocolates, or wine), services (e.g. repairs, places in education courses), or the transfer or loan of money (including gift cards) or property.
Gifts, Benefits and Hospitality Declaration Form	An internal electronic record of all declarable gifts, benefits and hospitality offered and received by RMIT staff. It records the date an offer was made, the donor or recipient, the nature of the offer, its estimated value and how the offer was managed. For accepted offers, it details the reason for acceptance and the Manager approving the acceptance.
Gift of Appreciation	Gifts that are generally given to express gratitude or thanks, such as flowers, chocolates, a bottle of wine and the like, in appreciation of performing a specific task or for performing duties in an exemplary manner.
Hospitality	Friendly reception and entertainment of guests. Examples include, luncheons, dinners, invitations corporate hospitality, planned or impromptu light refreshments at a business meeting, expensive restaurant meals and sponsored travel and accommodation. The value of hospitality is calculated on a per head amount.
Indigenous Community Members	Persons who identify as being a member of an Indigenous community in Australia or overseas.
Legitimate business reason	Gifts, benefits or hospitality that furthers the conduct of official RMIT business or other legitimate goals that is fair and reasonable.
Modest	An offer of a gift, benefit or hospitality that is made as a courtesy or is of inconsequential or trivial value to both the person making the offer and the recipient.
Philanthropic gift	A monetary contribution that has the following characteristics: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a transfer of money or property to RMIT for its own benefit or of its students that is made voluntarily • the gift does not provide a 'material benefit' to the donor, and • the donor's motivation for the gift is philanthropic intent and generosity. A philanthropic gift is not sponsorship or the provision of money, goods or services for a specific activity or program in return for a material benefit. A material benefit will generally be a taxable supply for the purposes of Goods and Services Tax (GST) and accordingly, unlike in the case of gifts, GST will be applicable for sponsorship.
Public Official	Includes, but is not limited to, politicians, public servants, and any employees or contractors of government entities, or international public-sector organisations.

Section 8 - Associated Information

Part A - Legislations

- a. Public Interest Disclosures Act 2012 (Vic)
- b. Anti-corruption Law 2018 (Vietnam).Policy

(26) [Anti-Corruption and Fraud Prevention Policy](#)

(27) [Business Expense Policy](#)

(28) [Conflict of Interest Policy](#)

(29) [Code of Conduct](#)

(30) [Workplace Behaviour Policy](#)

(31) [Whistleblower Procedure](#)

Part B - Website Links

(32) [Gifts, Benefits and Hospitality Declaration form](#)

(33) [Gifts, Benefits and Hospitality Management Staff site](#)

Status and Details

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Effective Date	To Be Advised
Review Date	To Be Advised
Approval Authority	
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Expiry Date	Not Applicable
Policy Owner	Fiona Notley Chief Operating Officer
Policy Author	Briony Lewis Executive Director, Governance, Legal and Strategic Operations
Enquiries Contact	Central Contracts