

BRIBERY PREVENTION, GIFTS AND HOSPITALITY - POLICY & PROCEDURES

1. Introduction

1.1 This policy defines standards and guidelines in relation to adherence to the anti-bribery measures and standards that should apply to the acceptance and provision of gifts and hospitality. In particular, the policy is designed to comply with The Bribery Act 2010 ([see Guidance notes](#)).

1.2 The policy is set out under the following headings:

- anti-bribery policy;
- dealing with contractors, agents and business partners;
- giving gifts and hospitality;
- receiving gifts and hospitality;
- compliance;
- conflicts of interest policy;
- reporting bribery, corruption and suspected non-compliance with this policy.

2. Anti-bribery policy

2.1 The University values its reputation for ethical behaviour and financial probity and reliability. The University recognises that any involvement in bribery is illegal and will reflect adversely on its image and reputation.

2.2 The University prohibits the offering, giving, soliciting or the acceptance of any bribe in whatever form to or from any person or company, public or private by any council member, member of staff, contractor, consultant, agent, overseas agent, external examiner and any non-employee service provider engaged on University business for whatever reason.

2.3 The prevention, detection and reporting of bribery is the responsibility of all staff.

3. Dealing with contractors, agents and business partners

3.1 The Bribery Act 2010 highlights two specific types of bribery that could lead to prosecution of the University:

- the liability to prosecution if a person associated with it bribes another person....., where an associated person is one who performs services on or behalf of the organisation; and
- bribery of a foreign public official, where an official is one who holds a legislative, administrative or judicial position in a territory or country outside the UK.

3.2 This means that the University needs to take care to ensure that any contractors, agents or business partners acting on its behalf comply with the Act.

3.3 It is therefore essential that contractors and agents acting on the University's behalf are made aware of the University's anti-bribery policy, through the University's terms and conditions or through the tendering process for larger contracts. In the case of international agents, reasonable due diligence must be carried out to ensure that they are not acting in a way that would compromise the University.

4. Giving gifts and hospitality

4.1 Staff may not, directly or through others, offer or give any, money, gift, hospitality or other thing of value to an official, employee or representative of any supplier, customer or any other organisation, if doing so could reasonably give the appearance of influencing the organisation's relationship with the University.

4.2 Staff may:

- give gifts of a nominal value (such as Aston advertising novelties);
- with management approval, provide meals and other entertainment at venues outside the University, provided that the expenses are kept at a reasonable level. For the avoidance of doubt, the per capita cost of a meal should not exceed £50 and would normally be much less;
- provide meals and overnight accommodation at Conference Aston where these are reasonable and in the normal course of University business or events.

5. Receiving gifts and hospitality

5.1 An employee or any member of their family should not, directly or through others, solicit or accept money, gifts, hospitality or anything else that could influence or reasonably give the appearance of influencing the relationship with that organisation or individual.

5.2 Gifts or hospitality may not be accepted, irrespective of value, which might influence or be seen to influence such situations as the outcome of an exam, the acceptance of a student into the University, the award of business (contract) or the use of the University's Intellectual Property or other assets, or to benefit personally or for the benefit of any person connected to that person.

5.3 Unless you have been informed otherwise you may accept:

- a gift of nominal value, such as an advertising novelty, when it is customarily offered to others having a similar relationship with that individual or organisation;
- customary meals or entertainment provided that the expenses are kept at a reasonable level.

5.4 For the avoidance of doubt:

- gifts with a value of more than £25 and hospitality expected to cost in excess of £50 should be authorised by your line manager ;

- gifts or hospitality in excess of £100 should be authorised by the executive dean or head of central support function;
- hospitality or gifts in excess of £500 should be authorised by the Chief Financial Officer.

5.5 If an excessive gift or hospitality is found to have been accepted, then your manager will discuss the circumstances with you and agree how to deal with it e.g. a gift can be returned or steps can be taken to ensure that the acceptance of hospitality does not influence a decision or situation in favour of the giver. If excessive gift(s) or hospitality are accepted on more than one occasion or are found to have influenced decisions inappropriately, against University policy (or potentially illegally), then appropriate disciplinary procedures will followed.

6. Compliance

6.1 All staff are required to comply with The Bribery Act 2010. The Chief Financial Officer (CFO) is responsible for the University's policy in relation to The Bribery Act 2010. Contact the CFO if further guidance is required.

7. Conflicts of interest policy

7.1 A conflict of interest occurs when you advance a personal interest (or that of others with whom you are connected) at the expense of the University.

7.2 Reference should be made to the University's policy on [declarations of interest and the register of interests](#).

8. Reporting bribery, corruption and non-compliance with this policy

8.1 If you know of, or have good reason to suspect that, an unlawful or unethical situation or that you suspect that either an act of bribery or non-compliance to this policy has occurred; you should report the matter to your Head of Department or Executive Dean. Should reporting in this way be inappropriate, you should refer to the [University's whistle blowing procedure](#).