Hospitality Policy

Section 1 - Policy Statement

(1) The University recognises that the provision of hospitality can result in significant benefits to the institution, particularly in promoting the University as a whole and the activities of the various colleges and offices.

(2) The University has developed this policy to ensure that hospitality activities are appropriate, that standards of accountability are maintained and that there is a measure of consistency in the way in which this policy is implemented across the University.

(3) The University's Code of Conduct - Staff and Code of Conduct - Students exemplifies the behaviours and attitudes expected in the learning and work environment. All members of the University community should familiarise themselves with and abide by the spirit of these documents.

Policy Principles

Primary Purpose of the Function

(4) Corporate hospitality activities should only be arranged where there is a clear benefit to be obtained for the University, such as the facilitation of sponsorship for University activities enhancing the University's community engagement activities or as part of fund-raising projects. Hospitality should not be a substitute for business meetings, which would ordinarily be conducted in the workplace.

(5) The justification for the incurring of expenditure is underpinned by four principles:

a. the expense must be for official purposes;
b. the expense must not be excessive;
c. the expense should be able to withstand public scrutiny, and hence should be comparable to government rates applicable at the time and
d. the expense must be incurred for a specific outcome that can be demonstrated to be of benefit to the University.

(6) The attendance of University employees should be limited to those with a direct involvement in the business being conducted. Costs of providing hospitality must be proportionate to the benefits obtained for the University and would be considered reasonable in terms of community expectations.

(7) Anticipated outcomes should be documented at the time of approval and appropriate documentation to substantiate expenditure for hospitality (and for Fringe Benefits Tax purposes) must be maintained.

(8) Approval should be obtained prior to the incurrence of all expenditure and for substantiation purposes. The financial delegate approving expenditure must be satisfied that the expenditure incurred, or to be incurred, is in relation to official duties, is reasonable and is publicly defensible.

(9) The approving officers for determining the extent to which University resources are applied for the purposes of hospitality rests with the Vice-Chancellor and members of the Senior Executive Team.

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(10) It is recognised that, on occasions, functions are arranged which involve only the participation of University staff and the provision of hospitality is incidental to the primary purpose of the function. For the University to pay for the hospitality, the primary purpose of these functions must be to further the aims and objectives of the University or the organisational unit and a statement outlining the circumstances should be attached to the financial documentation and be advised through the University's Expense Management System. This enables the correct determination of FBT liability for the cost centre.

(11) The University will not meet the costs of tipping, unless in exceptional circumstances or where dictated by national custom.

Participants at Hospitality Functions

(12) Participants at functions covered by this policy should normally be restricted to University staff and individuals external to the University who it is believed will contribute to the University's objectives. On occasion, attendance at such functions by a staff member's spouse or partner (Associates) may be appropriate. Prior approval for attendance by Associates should be obtained from the Vice-Chancellor, or relevant member of the Senior Executive Team.

Functions for Which Hospitality Should Not Be Provided

(13) The University will not provide hospitality for the following functions, but these functions may be funded by voluntary employee contribution:

a. an employee's retirement function, luncheons, staff Christmas meal/functions or informal functions for recognising employees' efforts;
b. employee's leaving/retirement functions;
c. staff social luncheons;
d. staff Christmas functions or functions to celebrate other cultural or religious festivals.

Functions Not Considered Hospitality But for Which Food/drinks May Be Provided

(14) The following functions are not considered as expenditure on hospitality:

a. eligible working meals (light lunches/meals on a working day – two course with no alcohol) and morning teas;
b. conference or seminar of more than 4 hours (excluding meal breaks);
c. professional development seminars;
d. meals consumed on work related travel (unless they are specific hospitality functions);
e. minor incidental expenditure for items such as tea, coffee, biscuits for servicing meeting rooms.

(15) Refreshments under these circumstances should be regarded as incidental to the activity being performed and charged to the appropriate use code, not hospitality.

Receiving Hospitality

(16) When accepting hospitality, care should be taken to avoid any possible conflict of interest. It is particularly important that such situations should not be perceived or construed as providing an incentive for any commercial transactions or procurement activity.

(17) A hospitality benefit may be accepted if it complies with all of the following principles:

a. refusal would offend;
b. it conforms to normal business practice or other cultural practices of the giver;
c. it does not influence a member of staff in such a way as to compromise impartiality or create a conflict of

interest; and

d. it is received in the course of duty in respect of, work area responsibilities or prior approval has been received in accordance with the Gifts and Benefits Policy.

Fringe Benefits Tax

(18) Fringe Benefits Tax is imposed on certain hospitality/ entertainment expenditure at the current applicable rate. The tax is applied to that portion of the hospitality/entertainment expenditure, which relates to the provision of meals, refreshments, etc to University staff or associates (i.e. partners or spouses).

Section 2 - Non-compliance

(19) Non-compliance with Governance Documents is considered a breach of the Code of Conduct - Staff and Code of Conduct - Students and is treated seriously by the University. Reports of concerns about non-compliance will be managed in accordance with the applicable disciplinary procedures.

(20) All staff members have an individual responsibility to raise any suspicion, allegation or report of bribery or improper conduct in accordance with the Fraud and Corruption Control Policy and Whistleblower Reporting (Improper Conduct) Procedures.

Section 3 - Definitions

Approving officer	means officers who the University has given the authority to approve hospitality, being the Vice-Chancellor, Provost and Deputy Vice-Chancellors.
Entertainment	From time to time, the University may participate in events or enter into arrangements which provide the opportunity to host and extend entertainment (which may or may not involve the provision of hospitality) to invited guests. Examples of such entertainment include: 1. hosting in "corporate boxes" at sporting or cultural events; or 2. hosting at functions such as special dinners, receptions, performances or other major events being conducted either on or off campus.
Hospitality	means the: 1. provision of meals or refreshments to persons who are visiting the University or other off-campus locations for business reasons; 2. organisation of other functions which further the objectives of the University; or 3. entertainment of individuals at special events conducted on University grounds or other locations. The expectation is that, in the majority of cases, this will occur at venues on University campuses, although the provision of hospitality off campus or at a staff member's home is not precluded. However, hospitality should not be a substitute for business meetings, which would ordinarily be conducted in the workplace. OR is the friendly reception and entertainment of guests. Examples include, luncheons, dinners, invitations to sporting, musical or theatrical events or other similar 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.

Status and Details

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Approval Date	5th May 2021
Expiry Date	19th March 2023
Responsible Executive	Fiona Coulson Vice-Chancellor
Implementation Officer	Brendon Douglas Vice-President Governance and University Secretary
Enquiries Contact	Brendon Douglas Vice-President Governance and University Secretary

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