

Gifts and Hospitality Policy

DOCUMENT MANAGEMENT

The purpose of this section is to provide details of the official versions and controls relating to the management of the Gifts and Hospitality Policy.

KEY PERSONNEL

Role	Responsible Person	Responsible Action
Author	ICT & Compliance Manager	Draft
Owner	Head of Finance	Review
Owner	Finance Committee	Review
Owner	-	Review and Approval

DOCUMENT HISTORY

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V1.0	January 2017	Draft
V2.0	March 2017	Review
V3.0	March 2020	Review
V4.0	January 2024	Policy reviewed and updated in line with NICS policy

Gifts and Hospitality Policy

1. Purpose

- 1.1. The purpose of this document is to:
 - a. Detail the fundamental principles underlying the provision & acceptance of gifts, hospitality and awards offered by outside organisations
 - b. Outline role and responsibilities of Usel Directors, Management team and staff
 - c. Detail the procedures to be followed
- 1.2. This guidance does not seek to supply a prescriptive list of the hospitality and gifts that can be provided or accepted, but rather seeks to provide the ethical framework for decision making in relation to gifts and hospitality.
- 1.3. **All Directors, Managers and members of staff** should consult this guidance prior to accepting or offering: a gift or hospitality on behalf of Usel. These should be read in conjunction with Usel's Bribery Act Policy.

2. Fundamental Principles and Legal Obligations

- 2.1. As a Non-Departmental Public Body we all have a responsibility to carry out, and conduct our business in an open, fair and equitable manner. It is important to recognise that accepting or offering a gift or hospitality could unwittingly compromise the integrity of the individual Director, Manager or member of staff and Usel.
- 2.2. As a consequence, Directors, Managers and staff should refuse all offers of gifts or hospitality where possible (see template at Appendix A).
- 2.3. Guidance should be sought from the individual's line management on how to make a refusal of gifts or hospitality to avoid damaging business relationships.
- 2.4. If refusal is not deemed appropriate Directors, Managers and staff should ensure they do not receive benefits of any kind from an individual or organisation, which might reasonably be seen to compromise their personal judgement. Likewise, expenditure on hospitality or gifts should only be incurred where it is evidently in Usel's business interests.
- 2.5. To help comply with these principles the need for approval is built into the procedures that should be applied.

- 2.6. Usel Directors, Managers and staff should conduct themselves with honesty and impartiality in the exercise of their duties. As a consequence, they should never receive benefits of any kind from a third party, which might reasonably be thought to compromise their personal judgement or integrity. In this respect, perception is as important as reality.
- 2.7. Approval from Head of Finance & Corporate Services must always be in advance of the provision of gifts or hospitality (Appendix B).
- 2.8. Expenditure on gifts and official hospitality should only be incurred where it can be shown to be in direct support of Usel's business. This expenditure should give no grounds for anyone to reasonably suspect that the staff member's personal judgement or integrity has been compromised. Expenditure should follow USEL's procurement processes including the use of a purchase order prior to incurring the expenditure.
- 2.9. Details of any gift, whether it is accepted or not, must be entered in the Gift and Hospitality Register; which must be updated as soon as reasonably possible after the offer has been made (see Appendix C for guidance). Usel Gift and Hospitality Register can be updated through your manager and the Master Register will be maintained by the Head of Finance & Corporate Services.

3. Gifts

- 3.1. A gift is something voluntarily donated, with no preconditions and without the expectation of any return.
- 3.2. Gifts, which do not exceed a value of more than £50, may be regarded as "trifling" in nature and therefore may be accepted by staff on behalf of Usel with the approval of their line manager. However seasonal, promotional or trivial gifts (such as calendars, diaries, pens etc), which bear Company names and/or logos of the provider of the gift and also have a value of less than £50 may be accepted by individuals without the need for these to be reported or approved in advance.
- 3.3. More expensive gifts, which have an apparent value of more than £50 and gifts of lottery tickets, cash, gift vouchers or gift cheques cannot on any account be accepted. All gifts offered (apart from those which are trivial or inexpensive), even if they are declined/returned need to be recorded in the gifts register.
- 3.4. Gifts of alcohol, cigarettes or cigars and the like should not be accepted under any circumstances and should, where necessary, be returned to the donor.

3.5. Some gifts, or multiple gifts from the same source, can create improper influence, or the appearance of improper influence. Some can even be seen as bribes, which can tarnish Usel's reputation for openness. Multiple gifts from the same source over a 12-month period should be avoided.

3.6. The following gifts must not be accepted in any circumstances:

- Cash/Gift Vouchers/Gift Cheques
- One that is considered indecent
- One that is considered inappropriate
- One that might damage Usel's reputation
- One that is against the law
- Offers of heavily discounted services or work for the personal benefit of the member of staff

3.7. Offering and giving gifts, which do not exceed a value of more than £50, may be offered by staff on approval of their Line Manager.

3.8. Gifts, which have an apparent value of more than £50, can only be offered in line with Usel Procurement Policy and are likely to have tax implications.

3.9. Gifts, vouchers, and entertainment offered as rewards to employees such as token gifts or one-off awards may require Department approval as they may be seen as novel or contentious.

3.10. Multiple gifts to the same source over a 12-month period should be avoided.

3.11. Consideration must be given to the recipients code of conduct in case this prevents the recipient from accepting the gift and/or hospitality.

3.12. The following gifts must not be offered in any circumstances

- One that is considered indecent
- One that is considered inappropriate
- One that might damage Usel's reputation
- One that is against the law

4. Gifts Received in Recognition of Work Done

4.1. Where gifts (vouchers/tokens) are offered to Usel staff in recognition of work done e.g. presentations, broadcasts, talks etc then acceptance should be based on how much of the preparatory work for the event was done in the staff's own time, how much in official time and the extent to which Usel resources, other than, for example, use of an officially issued lap-top at home, were used in the preparation. The following guidance should be applied:

- 4.2. If the preparation was carried out entirely in the individual's own time and the event took place outside normal working hours at no expense to Usel, it would be acceptable for the member of staff to retain the whole fee, token or other gift;
- 4.3. If, however, the preparation was done wholly in Usel's time with use of Usel resources, no gifts or fee should be accepted unless the event is carried out outside of normal working hours when a gift or token to the value of up to **£50** is acceptable; and
- 4.4. If the preparation was carried out and the presentation etc, delivered in the individual's own time but Usel facilities were used for typing, preparation of PowerPoint / overheads etc, then a gift or token to the value of not more than **£75** is acceptable.
- 4.5. In the case of either (4.3) or (4.4), Usel can, if it so chooses, charge the organisation or body a fee based on the salary costs of the individual and/or the use of resources. If a series of gifts from the same source exceed the monetary limits set out above the same rules apply.

5. Hospitality

- 5.1. Hospitality typically involves drinks, lunches, dinners or invitation to events where the third party is present.
- 5.2. Directors, Managers and staff are expected to exercise care in deciding what is routine and must not only, take into account the apparent value of the hospitality/entertainment, but also how it would be perceived.
- 5.3. Any hospitality, whether it is accepted or not, must be entered in the Gift and Hospitality register; which must be updated as soon as reasonably possible after the offer has been made.
- 5.4. It is recognised that in some cases the value of hospitality received is not readily apparent. Where this is the case the following estimated values should be used to ensure consistency across Usel:

Description	Value (£)
Dinners (including formal black-tie dinners)	60
Lunch	40
Casual lunch	25

Buffet/Refreshments	20
Reception/Drinks	20

6. Accepting Hospitality

6.1. Where the value of entertainment, or hospitality that is expected and participation in such lunches/dinners is a routine part of maintaining and building important business relationships for Usel; Directors, Managers and staff are required to consider whether such lunches or dinners have a legitimate business purpose and are appropriate to the relevant circumstances. Prior clearance/approval should be obtained from Head of Finance.

6.2. Hospitality which would not be accepted would include invitations to frequent or more expensive social functions where there is no direct link to official business such as sporting events, the theatre, opera, ballet, weekend breaks or holidays.

6.3. It should be noted that visits to manufacturers or suppliers at their expense, even though those take place during annual leave or other free time, may constitute gifts or benefits.

6.4. It can be argued that if you are to achieve the best value for money in dealings with suppliers or consultants then you need to build up contacts and that it is quite legitimate for you to have a close working relationship with organisations or individuals, which may involve a degree of hospitality. There may also be instances where you receive invitations to events run by voluntary organisations such as annual conferences or dinners. Attendance at such events is considered an integral element in building and maintaining relationships with the voluntary sector and any hospitality received is likely to be modest and therefore acceptable. Additionally, isolated acceptance of tickets to public sporting, cultural or social events may be accepted if attendance is justified as being in the interests of USEL.

6.5. In deciding whether hospitality can be accepted, staff should consider if:

- Is likely to help business effectiveness
- Places no obligation or perceived obligation on the recipient
- Is not frequent, lavish or prolonged
- Is unconnected with any decision affecting the organisation or the individual offering it
- Can be justified

Provides benefits to USEL, which outweigh the risk of possible mis presentation of the hospitality.

6.6. When in doubt about accepting hospitality or an invitation senior management should be consulted.

7. Offering Hospitality

7.1. All expense claims and purchases must include full disclosure of the information listed at Appendix B for the record. It is the responsibility of the claimant and the subsequent approvers to ensure that the information to be provided is complete.

7.2. The prior approval of the CEO must be sought if alcohol is to be served.

8. Trade, Loyalty or Discount Cards

8.1. Trade, loyalty or discount cards by which an individual might personally benefit from the purchase of goods or services at a reduced price are classified as gifts and should be refused and returned to the sender.

8.2. Frequent flyer cards used by airlines can be used by staff to avail of special departure lounges and priority booking and check-in. They must not make private use of any flights/air miles, which derive from flights paid for from the public purse.

9. Awards or Prizes

9.1. Staff should consult with their line management if they are offered an award or prize in connection with their official duties and obtain approval if they are minded to accept the award/prize. They will normally be allowed to keep it provided:

- There is no risk of public criticism;
- It is offered strictly in accordance with personal achievement;
- It is not in the nature of a gift nor can it be construed as a gift, inducement or payment or a publication or invention to which other rules apply.

10. General

10.1. Multiple occurrences of entertainment of Directors, Managers and staff by the same outside organisation over a short period of time should be avoided. The above limits apply to individual occurrences as well as the cumulative value over a 12-month period.

- 10.2. The provision of tea or coffee and biscuits/scones at meetings with non-Usel attendees may be charged.
- 10.3. The chairperson of any such meeting should consider whether the circumstances warrant the provision of refreshments. For example, such provision may not be appropriate if a meeting is expected to be particularly brief or if the number of Usel staff far outweighs the number of visitors.
- 10.4. Meetings consisting only Usel Directors, Management and/or staff will not qualify for light refreshments with the exception of:-
- Staff training courses where it is not convenient to allow a break for participants to heat up or eat their own lunch.
 - Board and other meetings which last more than 2 hours – in these circumstances, approval is needed.
 - Recruitment, promotion boards or selection panels.
- 10.5. The following rules as to cost of food and drink should be adhered to when guests are entertained at hotels or restaurants:-
- The total cost per head including beverages and any service charge or tip should not be excessive. It would also be difficult to justify the same level of cost for, say, lunch as for dinner;
 - The element for beverages should not exceed one third of the total bill;
 - If no service charge is included in the bill, a tip of 10% would be reasonable, but this should be contained within the maximum cost specified by the approving officer;
 - Receipts to cover the expenditure **MUST** be obtained.

11. Expenses of Spouses

- 11.1. No spouses or partners of Usel staff are eligible to receive hospitality other than in exceptional circumstances. The specific written approval of the CEO must be obtained.

12. Approval Procedures

- 12.1. Approval must always be sought in advance of the provision/acceptance of gifts or hospitality other than light refreshment; working lunches or trivial gifts (see Appendix D).

13. Gifts and Hospitality Register

- 13.1. In order to counter any possible accusation or suspicion of improper conduct a Gifts and Hospitality Register must be maintained (see Appendix C for guidance).

- 13.2. With the exceptions of the provision of tea, coffee, milk and sugar to be consumed within working hours, light refreshments for meetings, seasonal, promotional and trivial gifts <£50 the Gifts and Hospitality Register must be completed with all gifts and hospitality offered to and provided by Ussel Directors, Managers and staff.
- 13.3. A copy of all approval forms to support gifts and hospitality accepted and provided must be retained by the Ussel member of staff for 5 years to assist the audit process.
- 13.4. Ussel must maintain a Gifts and Hospitality Register that must be reviewed on an annual basis to identify any areas of concern. A record of each review and findings must be maintained (for 5 years) for audit purposes.
- 13.5. The copy of all forms and the Gifts and Hospitality Register will be kept centrally by the Finance Team.

14. Responsibilities

- 14.1. Ussel Managers have a responsibility to ensure the Gifts and Hospitality Policy and procedures have been discussed with teams and that checks have been performed to ensure all staff are: obtaining the necessary approval for the acceptance and provision of gifts and hospitality; are completing the approval forms; and the register.

15. Breaches of this Policy

- 15.1. Any breach of this policy e.g. failure to obtain approval or failing to include gifts or hospitality on the Gifts and Hospitality Register will be taken seriously and disciplinary action may be taken where deemed appropriate.
- 15.2. The fundamental principle is that no Director, Manager and member of staff should do anything which might give rise to the impression to their colleagues, members of the public, or people with whom they deal that they have or may have been, influenced by a gift, hospitality or other consideration to show bias for or against any person or organisation while carrying out Ussel duties.

Return of Offer of Gift/Hospitality

(The content of this template should be tailored to suit each circumstance)

Contact Name
Name of company
Address of company

Name of Business
Manager/Head of Division
Office Address

Date

Dear

Usel operates a Gift and Hospitality Policy to ensure high standards of propriety in the conduct of its business.

On account of public confidence, perception is as important as reality and because of this I am obliged to return your offer of *[INSERT: Name of gift/hospitality]*.

This is not in any way meant to offend or to imply that your *[gift/hospitality]* was offered in anything but the utmost good faith, but is designed to protect both individual members of staff and Usel. I hope you will accept our response in that spirit and that we can look forward to continued effective working relationships.

Yours sincerely

Gifts and Hospitality Policy

The following forms should be completed to record providing hospitality or buying a gift.

TO BE COMPLETED BY PERSON PROVIDING HOSPITALITY

Name of Person providing Hospitality:

Usel.

Office Location Details

Name:

Address:

Tel
Number:Cost
Centre:

Provision of Hospitality (Other than light refreshments)

Date of Event/Meeting:

Venue:

Purpose of Event:

Hospitality Type

Food

Estimated Cost:

Beverages

Estimated Cost:

Room Hire

Estimated Cost:

Total Estimated Cost:

List of attendees

Names:

Employer Body:

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Ussel REQUEST FOR PRIOR APPROVAL TO PROVIDE A GIFT OR HOSPITALITY
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Provision of Gift	
Name of Proposed Recipient:	
Details of Gift:	
Reason for Gift:	
Estimated Value of Gift:	
Signed by Person Providing Gift/Hospitality	
Name:	
Signed:	
Date:	

PART 2: TO BE COMPLETED BY APPROVING OFFICER		
Hospitality/Gift	Approved/Rejected:	
	Name:	
	Signed:	
	Date:	
Is Value >£100?		
Approval Sought?		
Date Obtained:		

PART 3: COMPLETION OF HOSPITALITY REGISTER		
Hospitality/Gift	Approved/Rejected:	
	Name:	
	Signed:	
	Date:	

Gifts and Hospitality Policy

The following information is to be recorded on the Gifts and Hospitality Register:

For each gift or other incentive:

- The donor of the gift, complimentary voucher, other incentive (including the name of the individual and their company);
- The date it was offered;
- Description of the gift, etc;
- The name and business unit of the (proposed) recipient;
- Estimated value of gift;
- Whether the gift was accepted or declined;
- The disposal action taken.

For every instance of hospitality:

- The source of the hospitality (including the name of the individual and their company);
- The date of the event;
- The venue and type of hospitality;
- The names of Usel Directors, Management and staff who were offered (and received) the hospitality;
- Estimated value of hospitality;
- Whether the offer was accepted or declined;
- The business justification for acceptance (what was the benefit to Usel of accepting this hospitality) or decline;
- Date that the serial in the Gifts and Hospitality Register was audited and the identity of the auditor;
- Summary of actions taken following audit;
- Reference of any documents that detail follow-up action

REGISTER OF GIFTS AND HOSPITALITY

Department Name: _____

Year: _____

Gifts/Hospitality offered to Usel

Date of Offer	Date of Event	Offered to	Ultimate recipient (if different)	Offered From	Description of Offer	Reason for Offer	Details of relationship with Offeror	Est./Actual value of offer £	Action Taken	Entered by	Entered Date	File Ref:	Comment

Appendix D

Gifts and Hospitality Policy

Use! REQUEST FOR APPROVAL TO ACCEPT A GIFT/HOSPITALITY

PART 1: TO BE COMPLETED BY RECIPIENT

Offered to:	
Name of Ultimate Recipient (if different):	
Who made the offer:	
Description of offer:	
Why the offer was made:	
Estimated/Actual Value:	
Was offer declined/accepted?	
Is there an actual/potential contract with the donor? If yes provide details	
Signed by Recipient:	
Date:	

PART 2: TO BE COMPLETED BY APPROVING OFFICER

Decision (Approved/Rejected):	
Rationale for Decision:	
Instruction: Return/Dispose of/Donate	
Signed by Approving Officer:	
Date:	

PART 3: COMPLETION OF GIFTS & HOSPITALITY REGISTER

Reference:	
Name:	
Signed:	
Date:	