



LARGE DONATIONS POLICY

December 2024

Introduction

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that the University follows a clear set of guidelines when considering whether to accept a large donation. This is to ensure that donations are compatible with the University's vision and mission, and do not risk damaging its reputation.

Definitions

A **donation** is deemed to be a voluntary transfer of money by a donor, made with philanthropic intent for the benefit of the University. After receipt, the University must own the donation in full and any work, project or intellectual property that results. The donor may not retain any explicit or implicit control over a gift after acceptance by the University and there must be no contractual conditions attached to the donation.

For the purposes of this policy, a **large** donation is deemed to be any donation of £25,000 or more. As well as one-off donations, this should include any donations from the same donor over a rolling 12 month period which total £25,000 or more.

Donations may be made in **cash or in-kind**. In-kind donations might include works of art, equipment, land or buildings. This policy covers both cash and in-kind donations.

Procedure for considering large donations

When a large donation has been offered, before the donation can be accepted, a meeting of the Donations Committee should be held.

The Donations Committee will comprise of:

Vice-Chancellor (Chair)
Chief Operating Officer
Director of Marketing and Student Recruitment
Director of Finance and Planning

At this meeting, the committee will consider the checklist questions given below. If the responses to these questions raise any concern as to whether the donation should be accepted, then the committee should determine what further action should be taken. This may include declining the donation or undertaking further investigative work.

Prior to the meeting, the Director of Finance and Planning (or someone else delegated to perform this task by the Vice-Chancellor or Chief Operating Officer) should have already considered the questions raised in the checklist (Appendix 1) and be in a position to provide as much background information as possible to enable the committee to answer the questions. This must be passed to the Chief Operating Officer who will review the documentation and agree whether there is sufficient information for the donation proposal to be considered by the Donations Committee at that stage. Background information will include the use of internet search tools.

In the event that any search responses give cause for concern, further information must be sought, including through the use of more formal legal and other services.

There may be occasions where the donor requests that either their name or the donation itself should not be publicised by the University. This request will be accommodated, but it will not be possible for the University to accept a donation from an anonymous donor. This is because in order to ensure that there are no reasons why the donation cannot be accepted, it is vital that the University knows the name and background of the donor to be able to make such an assessment.

If the Donations Committee decides to accept the donation, the Vice-Chancellor, as Chair of the Donations Committee, should inform the Chair of Council and the Chair of the Audit & Risk Committee. The Chair of the Audit & Risk Committee should take Chair's action to approve the acceptance of the donation.

Minutes of the meeting of the Donations Committee should be received for noting at the next Audit & Risk Committee meeting. This committee should be made aware of the name of the donor, even in cases where the donor has asked for their name to not be publicised.

If a donation is accepted, the Director of Marketing and Student Recruitment should ensure that it is entered onto the Donor Strategy database and that the donor is appropriately thanked.

The University at all times retains the absolute discretion to decline the offer of a donation without giving the reasons for doing so.

Council

The Donations Committee shall be required to report to Council any donations accepted of £25,000 or over. As per above, this will be covered by the minutes from the Donations Committee being received for noting at the next Audit & Risk committee – this noting of the donation would be included in the minutes of that Audit & Risk committee, which would be received at the next full Council meeting. Separately, a list of all donations received shall be prepared annually for the Audit & Risk committee, and this should be included in the Council papers following that meeting.

Policy Review

This policy should be reviewed every three years, or sooner where required.

APPENDIX 1 – CHECKLIST

- 1) Has the donation been funded through activities which are incompatible with the ethics and principles of the University
- 2) Is the intended use for the donation compatible with the vision and mission of the University?
- 3) Has the motivation for the donation been clearly explained and understood.
- 4) Can the committee confirm that acceptance of a donation will not:
 - a) Require an action or actions on behalf of the University or its staff which are deemed illegal?
 - b) Place unmanageable or inappropriate demands on the University?
 - c) Deter donations from other potential donors?
 - d) Harm the University's reputation and relationship with other benefactors, partners, potential students or other stakeholders?
 - e) Constitute any form of bribery?
- 5) What additional costs or burdens would the University incur if it accepted the donation¹? Do these additional costs or burdens outweigh the benefit of the donation and indicate that the donation should be declined?
- 6) Are there any present or upcoming University tenders that may be of interest to the donor? If there is a possible link between the donation and the tender, the University should consider what steps must be taken to ensure there is no conflict of interest?
- 7) Is the donation from a current student or relative of a current student? If so, it will need to be made clear in any gift agreement or related communication that the donation will in no way have any bearing or influence on how the University will treat the student, including the outcome of his/her degree mark.
- 8) Are there any other reasons provided by the Charity Commission (see [Accepting, refusing and returning donations to your charity - GOV.UK](#)) why the donation cannot be accepted?

¹ likely to be particularly relevant if the donation constitutes land or property