



Policy Name:	University Funded Gifts, Recognition and Donations
Originating/Responsible Department:	Financial Services
Approval Authority:	Senior Management Committee (SMC)
Date of Original Policy:	November 2019
Last Updated:	November 2019
Mandatory Revision Date:	November 2024
Contact:	Assistant Vice-President (Financial Services)

Policy:

Departments may provide employees, students, or visitors, gifts recognizing a milestone or event. Departments may also wish to provide employees with recognition for specific performance related achievement.

Gifts and recognition may be charged to University funds provided the appropriate approval has been acquired, and is administered in accordance with Canada Revenue Agency rules governing gifts and rewards. More detail on the CRA rules can be found here: [Gifts, awards, and long-service awards](#)

Purpose:

While University employees are encouraged to contribute to gifts that mark milestones or events associated with a co-worker, it is understood that, on occasion, it is appropriate to use University funds for this purpose. On occasion, the University may wish to provide an employee with recognition for specific achievement related to their performance. It may also be appropriate for the University to fund a gift to students or visitors in recognition of a contribution towards a specific activity of the University (e.g. guest speaker). The policy sets out the circumstances under which gifts may be made and the treatment of gifts for taxation purposes.

Scope:

The policy applies to all gifts, recognition, and donations funded by any source of funds. Specific funding agency rules will take precedence over this policy.

Procedure:

Gifts to Employees:

“Gifts” to employees must relate to a specific event such as a wedding, sympathy, birth of a child, or retirement, and be approved by the Department Head (e.g. Chair, Academic or Administrative Director, etc.). The value per gift must not exceed \$200.

“Recognition” is performance-related and recognize an employee’s achievements, such as completing a project ahead of schedule, or exceptional performance, and must be approved by the Department Head (e.g. Chair,

Academic or Administrative Director, etc.). The value per recognition must not exceed \$200. Amounts exceeding \$200 requires prior approval from a Vice-President or the President.

Non-cash gifts to employees are exempt from tax so long as the aggregate annual value (on a calendar year basis) does not exceed \$500. Any amount in excess of \$500 must be included in the employee's income.

Non-cash recognition is not exempt from tax, and the value must be reported to Accounts Payable for inclusion on the employee's T4.

Low value non-cash items may be given as a gift or recognition and are excluded from the \$500 per annum calculation, for a gift, or inclusion in income, for recognition. For example, University branded pens, mugs, t-shirts and plaques would be excluded from the total.

CRA dictates cash or near-cash gifts or recognition to an employee (e.g. gift cards and certificates, campus card contributions) are taxable benefits and must be included in the individual's income for the year. Due to the administrative burden of tracking and reporting these gifts as a taxable benefit, the University prohibits cash or near-cash gifts or recognition to employees.

Donations may be made in lieu of a gift as a sympathy gesture, to a maximum of \$200.

Donations cannot be made in lieu of an agreed upon payment to an individual (e.g. overtime work).

Gifts to Non-Employees:

Gifts to non –employees should be a token gesture of appreciation in recognition of a voluntary contribution to the University, such as a guest speaker or a student volunteer. Maximum value of \$200. Amounts exceeding \$200 requires prior approval from a Vice-President or the President.

Cash or near cash gifts to a non-employee are considered taxable by the CRA. The individual initiating the gift must provide Accounts Payable with the recipient's name, address and social insurance number.

The University can make a donation up to \$200, on behalf of non-employees as a token of appreciation for their contribution.

Donations cannot be made in lieu of an agreed upon payment to an individual.

Donations to Registered Charities:

Donations up to \$200 can be made to a registered charity in lieu of flowers for sympathy, or as a token of appreciation for a voluntary contribution to the University. Any other donation cannot be made unless approved by a Vice-President or the President.

Contacts: AVP Financial Services, Director Business Operations

Links to Related Policies:

[Hospitality and Working Meal Expenses](#)

[Payments to Individuals and Business Entities](#)

[Procurement Policy](#)

[Travel and Related Expenses](#)