



University of  
**Salford**  
MANCHESTER

# **Register of Interests, Gifts and Hospitality Policy (Declaration and Management of Conflicts of Interest)**

**Version Number 2.3**

**Effective from July 2024**

**Owner: University Secretary**

**Author: Head of Governance**

<b>Document Control Information</b>			
<b>Revision History incl. Authorisation: (most recent first)</b>			
<b>Author</b>	<b>Summary of changes</b>	<b>Version</b>	<b>Authorised &amp; Date</b>
EPS	<i>Revisions to sections, mandatory cohorts, approach to subsidiary companies, and points of clarification</i>	V2.3	University Council, 05 July 2024
EPS	<i>Revisions for clarification</i>	V2.2	University Council, 08 April 2022
EPS	<i>Minor revisions to reflect organisational changes</i>	v2.1	University Council, 8 October 2021
EPS	<i>Revised after policy review and to address regulatory and organisational changes</i>	v2.0	GNEC, 11 March 2019
MS	<i>New version (Management of Conflicts of Interest Policy)</i>	v1.0	Director of LPG, 10 Dec 2015
<b>Policy Management and Responsibilities:</b>			
Owner:	This Policy is issued by the University Secretary, who has the authority to issue and communicate policy on such matters and has delegated day to day management and communication of the policy to the Head of Governance.		
Others with responsibilities (please specify):	All subjects of the Policy will be responsible for engaging with and adhering to this policy.		
<b>Author to complete formal assessment with the following advisory teams:</b>			
Equality Analysis (E&D, HR) <a href="#">Equality Assessment form</a>	1. v2.3. EIA Approved (EIA2022-16)		
Legal implications (Legal)	2. confirmed approach to subsidiary companies <i>No further review required</i>		
Information Governance	3. <i>No further review required</i>		
Student facing procedures (QMO)	4. <i>N/A</i>		
UKVI Compliance (Student Admin)	5. <i>N/A</i>		
<b>Consultation:</b>			
Staff Trades Unions via HR Students via USSU Relevant external bodies (specify)	1. <i>N/A</i> 2. <i>N/A</i> 3. Through adoption of the CUC Higher Education Code of Governance		
<b>Review:</b>			
Review due:	2 years by July 2026		
Document location:	University website		
<a href="https://www.salford.ac.uk/governance-and-management">https://www.salford.ac.uk/governance-and-management</a>			
<b>The owner and author are responsible for publicising this policy document.</b>			

## 1.0 Purpose

The University is committed to delivering the highest standards of governance when making decisions and transacting its business. Central to the proper conduct of public business is the need to observe the 'Seven Principles of Public Life' drawn up by the Nolan Committee on Standards in Public Life (the Nolan Principles) published May 1996: selflessness, integrity, objectivity, accountability, openness, honesty and leadership. Failure to do may leave individuals open to suspicion of impropriety and pose a reputational risk to the University.

The purpose of this policy is:

- to assist in defining and identifying interests, gifts and hospitality; including how these may give rise to conflict;
- to describe the procedures for declaring interests, gifts and hospitality, including how the University manages oversight and compliance;
- to describe how the University holds and processes information about declarations of interests, gifts and hospitality; and
- to define the principles for managing perceived, potential or realised conflicts of interest.

In fulfilling this purpose, the policy will mitigate against wrongful or biased decision-making.

## 2.0 Scope

This policy applies to:

- members of Council and standing or time-limited committees of Council, including co-opted members;
- all University employees, including those engaged by subsidiary companies; and
- persons affiliated to the University by way of an honorary academic title (including but not limited to emeritus professors and visiting professors or visiting researchers).

The policy statements regarding interests apply whenever an individual recognises, or could reasonably be expected to recognise, that a conflict of interest may arise from their activities.

The policy statements regarding gifts and hospitality apply whenever an individual is offered and/or accepts a gift and/or hospitality.

Where compliance is mandatory, this is outlined in the relevant section.

## 3.0 Policy Statements

### 3.1 Conflict of Interest

3.1.1 Conflict arises when an individual has an interest, either financial or non-financial, which may compromise their obligations to the University.

3.1.2 Conflict may also arise from a personal connection. That is, anyone with whom the individual has a relationship with which may influence the individual's objectivity. This includes, but is not limited to, partners or close family members (e.g., parents, siblings, children).

### 3.1.3 Conflicts of interest can be:

- **perceived** - whereby a reasonable person would consider an interest likely to compromise obligations and/or objectivity;
- **potential** - whereby a situation could develop into a perceived or realised conflict; or
- **realised** – whereby a situation has given rise to conflict in interest.

## 3.2 Definition of an Interest

3.2.1 It is difficult to describe a definitive range of interests. Individuals are best placed to know their responsibilities within the University and other organisations and where these have the potential to conflict.

3.2.2 Examples include:

- paid employment or self-employment;
- consultancies;
- directorships of commercial companies;
- shareholdings;
- elected officer ships or positions in other organisations;
- remunerated or honorary positions and related connections with other educational institutions;
- trusteeships or participation in the management of charities and voluntary bodies;
- property holdings;
- potential for career or academic enhancement (own or others);
- access to privileged information;
- public appointments (whether paid or unpaid); and
- receipt of gifts and/or hospitality.

## 3.3 Declaring an Interest(s)

3.3.3 On appointment Council members, employees and affiliated persons are directed to this Policy and where applicable are required to make a declaration within one calendar month of their commencement.

3.3.4 Members of Council and its standing committees, University Leadership Team, and members of the board of subsidiary companies will complete and sign the Declaration of Interest form provided by the University Secretary's Office (USO). The USO is responsible for transferring the information contained in the form to the Register of Interests [see Section 3.8: Handling and Processing Information] within one working day of receipt.

3.3.5 Members of staff, including affiliated staff, will complete the online Declaration of Interests form available on the internal hub site.

- 3.3.6 Thereafter the University applies a risk-based approach to declarations, requiring **mandatory** completion (or confirmation) of a Declaration of Interests form including nil declaration (no interests to declare) on an annual basis for:
- members of Council and standing or time-limited committees of Council, including co-opted members;
  - members of Senate and committees of Senate, including co-opted members;
  - members of the University Leadership Team (ULT);
  - direct reports of members of ULT;
  - Directors of the Board, Executive Officers and their direct reports of subsidiary companies;
  - Employees appointed to Procurement; and
  - Employees appointed to Legal.
- 3.3.7 The annual invitation to make a mandatory declaration of interests is issued by the University Secretary. This is normally between August and October.
- 3.3.8 Other employees who are involved in discussing or reaching decisions or required to purchase goods or services on behalf of the University, and who believe that they have or may have a conflict of interest should complete the online Declaration of Interests Form as soon as they become aware.
- 3.3.9 Other persons within scope who undertake any form of paid or unpaid private work outside the University including honorariums should also complete the online Declaration of Interests form [for guidance on private income refer to the University's Financial Regulations].
- 3.3.10 Any changes to circumstances, including new interests, should be declared at the earliest opportunity.
- 3.3.11 Where a conflict of interest arises from a committee agenda item, the University's Standing Orders stipulate the procedure for disclosure.
- 3.3.12 Where an individual is in any doubt about an interest, a declaration should be made.
- 3.3.13 Section 5 of the University's Charter permits members of the Council to receive remuneration and/or other financial benefit from the University provided this is approved in accordance with Ordinance 17 '*Ordinance for Conferring Benefits on Council Members*'. In such instances the remuneration/financial benefit is declared as an interest.

### **3.4 Managing a Conflict of Interest**

- 3.4.1 For independent members of Council and its committees, the Chair of Council, upon advice from the University Secretary, shall determine where a material conflict of interest exists and how this should be managed/resolved.

- 3.4.2 In resolving such a conflict of interest, the Chair of Council may require the individual concerned to relinquish the role/shareholding from which the conflict arises.
- 3.4.3 Where an independent member of Council is unwilling to relinquish their external interests, they may prefer to resign from Council.
- 3.4.4 For employees, the Vice-Chancellor, upon advice from the University Secretary and, where appropriate, the Chief People Officer, the Deputy Vice-Chancellor & Provost, or the Deputy Chief Executive and Chief Finance Officer, shall determine where a material conflict of interest exists and how this should be managed/resolved.
- 3.4.5 In resolving such a conflict of interest, the Vice-Chancellor may require the individual concerned to relinquish the role/shareholding from which the conflict arises.
- 3.4.6 Where a member of staff is unwilling to relinquish their external interests, the matter will be referred to the Chief People Officer for appropriate handling under the University's HR policies.
- 3.4.7 All actions relating to the management of material conflicts of interests will be documented in the Register of Interests.
- 3.4.8 In the case of directors of subsidiary companies, the Chair of the Board of Directors, upon advice from the appointed Company Secretary, shall determine where a material conflict of interest exists and how this should be managed/resolved.
- 3.4.9 Where a new conflict of interest arises for an employee who carries significant financial responsibility on behalf of the University, the matter must first be referred to the Deputy Chief Executive and Chief Finance Officer (or, in the case of the Deputy Chief Executive and Chief Finance Officer, referred to the Vice-Chancellor) for approval before such a commitment is entered.
- 3.4.10 Where the declaration of an interest arises from a committee agenda item, the University's Standing Orders stipulate the actions or sanctions that can be taken.
- 3.4.11 The declaration of interest will be recorded in the minutes of the meeting, along with the Chair's decision regarding any further action/sanction.
- 3.4.12 For all other declarations of interest, the line manager will review the disclosure to determine if it needs to be managed. In all circumstances this should consider whether members of the public, knowing the facts of the situation, could reasonably conclude that the interest involved might influence the financial or non-financial material aspects of any arrangement.
- 3.4.13 In declarations of interest that are concluded to potentially influence financial aspects of arrangements, the matter will be referred to the Deputy Chief Executive and Chief Finance Officer (or, in the case of the Deputy Chief Executive and Chief Finance Officer, referred to the Vice-Chancellor) for approval before such an arrangement is entered.

3.4.14 In declarations of interest that are concluded to potentially influence non-financial aspects of arrangements, line manager will agree management of the conflict with the individual. This may include (*please note, this is not an exhaustive list*):

- Not taking part in discussions in certain matters;
- Not taking part in decisions relating to certain matters;
- Referring to others certain matters for decision;
- Resolving not to act as a particular person's line-manager;
- Standing aside from any involvement in a project;
- Declaring an interest to a third party; and/or
- Temporarily suspending consultancy work.

3.4.15 The steps agreed to manage the conflict of interest will be recorded in writing and specify discussions, negotiations and decisions made and are signed by the manager and the individual. Where applicable, the interest may also be included in the Register of Interests.

### 3.5 Influence of Gifts and Hospitality

3.5.1 Influence arises when an individual accepts a gift and/or hospitality which may compromise their obligations to the University.

3.5.2 Influence may also arise from a personal connection. That is, anyone with whom the individual has a relationship with who accepts a gift and/or hospitality. This includes, but is not limited to, partners or close family members (e.g., parents, siblings, children).

3.5.3 Influence can be:

- **perceived** - whereby a reasonable person would consider acceptance of a gift and/or hospitality likely to compromise obligations and/or objectivity;
- **potential** - whereby acceptance could develop into a perceived or realised influence; or
- **realised** – whereby acceptance has given rise to undue influence.

### 3.6 Definition of Gifts and Hospitality

3.6.1 The University's Financial Regulations prescribes the definitions, monetary values, and procedures related to the receiving of gifts and/or hospitality.

### 3.7 Declaring Gifts and Hospitality

3.7.1 On appointment Council members, employees and affiliated persons are directed to this Policy.

3.7.2 Declaration of eligible gifts and hospitality is mandatory at the point of acceptance.

- 3.7.3 Declarations are made using the online Declaration of Gifts and Hospitality form, or in the case of independent members of Council and its standing committees, and directors of subsidiary companies can be accepted via email submission to the Finance Office's prescribed email address - [Finance-GiftsHospitality@salford.ac.uk](mailto:Finance-GiftsHospitality@salford.ac.uk)
- 3.7.4 Where an individual is in any doubt about an offer of a gift and/or hospitality, it should be refused.
- 3.7.5 Individuals should consider whether, in refusing an offer, the matter was of sufficient value or the proposition of particular terms as to require report of identification of bribery risk [for guidance on bribery refer to the University's Anti-Bribery Policy].

### **3.8 Holding and Processing of Information, including disclosure**

- 3.8.1 A register of declared interests (the **Register of Interests**) is owned by the University Secretary and maintained by the University Secretary's Office.
- 3.8.2 The section of the Register of Interests pertaining to members of Council and its standing committees and the University Leadership Team is published on the University's website (although the University reserves the right to redact entries that are not deemed suitable for publication, e.g., for reasons of personal security or familial identification – in such instances note of an entry will be published but with those elements deemed unsuitable redacted).
- 3.8.3 Unexpurgated access to the entries on the Register of Interests pertaining to the undernoted are provided by the USO to:
- the Head of Procurement – for employees appointed to Procurement;
  - the Director of Legal Services – for employees appointed to Legal;
  - the Company Secretary of subsidiary companies (where applicable);
  - The University's appointed external audit service provider (as directed by the Head of Financial Accounting); and
  - those roles identified with responsibilities in managing conflict of interest(s) under Section 3.4 above.
- 3.8.4 Internal application to inspect entries on the Register of Interests not prescribed by Section 3.8.2 and Section 3.8.3 above should be addressed in writing to the University Secretary. Access is restricted to those who require it to fulfil their University responsibilities, e.g., for purposes of line-management.
- 3.8.5 A register of declared gifts and hospitality (the **Register of Gifts and Hospitality**) is owned by the Deputy Chief Executive and Chief Finance Officer and maintained by the Finance Office.
- 3.8.6 Requests to inspect entries to the Register of Gifts and Hospitality should be addressed in writing to the Deputy Chief Executive and Chief Finance Officer.



- 3.8.7 Under Section 15 of the United Kingdom's General Data Protection Regulations, individuals have the right to a copy of the data held on them by the University. Applications are handled through the University's stipulated procedures for subject access request (SAR).
- 3.8.8 Application for public inspection of either register can be made under the Freedom of Information Act (2000) through the University's stipulated procedures for freedom of information (FOI) requests.

#### **4.0 Policy Enforcement**

- 4.1 Responsibility for compliance with the Policy is with those individuals identified in Section 2: Scope.
- 4.2 Responsibility for compliance with the invitation to make mandatory declaration lies with the appropriate line-manager or in the case of the Vice-Chancellor and members of Council and its standing committees, with the Chair of Council. A report(s) of compliance ('failure to declare' report) is provided to the University Secretary and relevant line manager by the University's Secretary's Office.
- 4.3 Ultimately, failure to make a mandatory or relevant declaration and/or failure to disclose complete and accurate information may constitute misconduct and shall be handled under the University's disciplinary policies and procedures, or in the case of the Vice-Chancellor and members of Council and its standing committees, under the University's Ordinance for the Removal of the Chancellor, Pro-Chancellors, and Members of Council (Ordinance 10).
- 4.4 In the case of subsidiary companies, the articles of association of the company prescribe the handling of removal of the nominated (non-University) appointments to the board of directors, other than that the University's disciplinary policies and procedures shall apply.
- 4.5 Allegations of non-disclosure or mismanagement of conflict of interest may also be raised under the University's Whistleblowing Policy.

#### **5.0 Related Documentation (please note, not an exhaustive list)**

This policy is produced under the guiding principles of the University's Ethics Framework. Information about the corporate governance of the University, including the Code of Conduct for Members of Council and Senior Officers, the Ordinances and Standing Orders, Financial Regulations and Delegated Authorities Policy, and the Ethics Framework is published on the University website (public):

<https://www.salford.ac.uk/about-us/corporate-information/governance>

Further information about the management and procedures relating to gifts and hospitality is published on the University hub site (internal):

<https://testlivesalfordac.sharepoint.com/sites/Finance/SitePages/Registration-of-Gifts-and-Hospitality.aspx?csf=1&e=e9NdwM>

The following documents can be found on the relevant University's webpages, and should be read alongside this policy:

Anti-Bribery Policy  
Criminal Finances Act Policy  
Counter Fraud Policy and Response Plan  
Data Protection Policy

Freedom of Speech Code of Practice  
Whistleblowing Policy  
HR policies and procedures.

For subsidiary companies, the articles of association of the company and memorandum of understanding with the University.