

# Gifts and Hospitality Policy

Applies to: Faculty (including part-time and visiting faculty), postdoctoral scholars, staff and students (including graduate/undergraduate student workers and graduate assistants) employed by University of Southern California and its subsidiaries including Keck Medicine of USC (“USC Employees”). This policy continues to apply to individuals who are on sabbatical or other leaves, or who are visiting other institutions

## 1. Policy

Issued: May 11, 2022

Last Revised: September 9, 2024

Last Reviewed: N/A

## 2. Policy Purpose

At USC, our values of integrity, accountability and open communication guide our behavior as we make relationships with our community and Third Party partners. We recognize that Gifts and Hospitality (“G&H”) are often exchanged to build goodwill and strengthen working relationships between USC and those with whom we engage. However, when G&H-giving exceeds Modest Value, it can suggest something improper and, in some cases, may be unlawful. This policy is designed to support compliance with the law as well as our values of integrity and accountability.

As USC Employees, we are accountable for evaluating the G&H that are given and received in accordance with this policy. USC employees must ensure that giving or receiving G&H does not improperly influence or appear to improperly influence an individual’s decision-making abilities.

USC Employees should not offer or give G&H to a Third Party, nor should they accept G&H from a Third Party unless it conforms to the principles set forth in this policy.

## 3. Scope and Application

This policy represents USC’s commitment to proactively address and manage G&H to or from Third Parties. The giving or receiving of certain types of G&H may trigger additional or distinct regulatory or legal obligations that are specific to a USC Employee’s activity or roles. The following USC policies are intended to address these types of obligations:

- The [Conflict of Interest and Commitment Policy](#) further describes USC’s position on financial or personal benefits that may create the appearance of a Conflict of Interest.
- USC’s [Political Activity Policy](#) contains additional requirements for giving G&H to Government Officials. Any G&H to a Government Official must be pre-approved by USC’s University Relations department.
- The [Relationships with Industry](#) and [Conflict of Interest in Research](#) policies contain additional requirements for accepting and providing G&H for healthcare professionals and researchers.

- The [Gift Acceptance and Campaign Counting Policy](#) contains additional requirements for receiving G&H from donors.
- Keck Medicine of USC's operating policies contain additional guidance for the giving and receiving of G&H at USC hospitals and clinics.
- The [Fundraising Coordination Policy](#) describes USC-related fundraising requirements, including independent efforts related to fundraising opportunities and restrictions on G&H from current or former patients and students.

This policy does not address institutional gift giving and receiving, or the giving of G&H between USC Employees.

Individual departments, schools or units may have more restrictive standards or guidance concerning the giving and receiving of G&H. USC Employees should consult their supervisor, department chair or Dean to determine if additional policies or procedures apply based on their roles or responsibilities at USC.

Disclosure is not required under this policy for payments for lodging, meals and transportation received for the purpose of participation in uncompensated service to a professional organization of which the individual is a member. Similarly, Honorarium received by USC Employees based on their role at USC and in conjunction with their external professional activities do not need to be disclosed under this policy unless the receipt of such honorarium creates a potential Conflict of Interest. The applicable requirements of the Conflict of Interest in Research Policy must also be followed.

#### 4. Definitions

Term	Definition
<b>Conflict of Interest</b>	<p>A Conflict of Interest arises when:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Professional, financial, or personal activities or relationships compromise, or have the appearance of compromising, a USC Employee's professional loyalty and responsibility to USC</li> <li>– Professional, financial, or personal activities or relationships compromise, or have the appearance of compromising, a USC employee's ability to perform USC duties and responsibilities in a full and complete manner, or</li> <li>– A USC Employee's professional, financial or personal activities compete (or have the appearance of competing) with the university</li> </ul> <p>See the <a href="#">Conflict of Interest and Commitment Policy</a> for full definitions of a Financial Activity, Conflict of Commitment, and Close Relation.</p>

<b>Gift &amp; Hospitality</b>	<p>A Gift is anything of value. Gifts include baskets of fruit, flowers, promotional items, subscriptions to publications or clubs, jewelry, use of vacation homes, tickets to sporting events or concerts and preferential rates or discounts on goods and services.</p> <p>Hospitality includes, but is not limited to, lodging and travel expenses, room, meals, waivers of conference or event fees, and customary expenses in connection with participating in engagements or attending conferences or events.</p> <p>Honorarium, which is a voluntary payment that is given to a person for services for which fees are not legally or traditionally required, is not considered a gift or hospitality under this Policy. If receipt of honorarium creates a potential conflict of interest, it must be reported as described in the Conflicts of Interest and Commitment Policy.</p>
<b>Government Official</b>	Elected or appointed officials (typically including most of their staff members) or government employees empowered to make governmental decisions. Candidates for political office may be subject to the same policy requirements and limitations.
<b>Honorarium</b>	For the purposes of this policy, an honorarium is a payment for services. This method of payment is usually made to a guest speaker or lecturer as a “thank you” and gesture of good will and appreciation.
<b>Modest Value</b>	Items considered modest value include food and refreshments or customary G&H of no more than \$200 per person per occasion.
<b>Third Party</b>	<p>A Third Party is any individual or entity that is not a USC employee, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– A supplier or vendor of goods or purchased services</li> <li>– Past or present students or patients, their families, or their foundations</li> <li>– A customer, person, or entity with whom USC has a business or other relationship, or with whom negotiations may be in progress</li> <li>– A sales representative acting on behalf of a Third Party</li> <li>– Joint venture partners</li> <li>– Professional organizations</li> <li>– Non-employed physicians with privileges at a USC hospital</li> </ul>

## 5. Policy Details

### General Guidance

The following guidance applies to any G&H given to or received from a Third Party:

- ***We stand up for what is ethical.*** G&H may not place the recipient under any obligation that may create an actual or apparent Conflict of Interest.

- ***We stand up for what is right.*** G&H must not be lavish or frequent. The value of the G&H must be reasonable and of Modest Value as outlined in the Acceptable Gifts and Hospitality section of this Policy.
- ***We share openly and honestly.*** G&H must be made openly, transparently and accurately documented per USC's procedures outlined in section 6 of this policy.
- ***We seek advice.*** If a USC Employee needs guidance about G&H, they must consult their supervisor, department chair, Dean, or the Office of Culture, Ethics and Compliance.
- ***We value different experiences, cultures, identities, and perspectives.*** When exchanging G&H outside of the United States, USC Employees must be mindful of US and local anti-bribery and corruption laws. The requirements of this policy apply regardless of where a USC Employee is conducting business.

### **Acceptable Gifts or Hospitality**

USC Employees are generally permitted to accept meals, travel, and other customary expenses in connection with participation in speaking engagements and other professional events. However, if the estimated value of such expenses exceeds Modest Value, the G&H must be approved by the USC Employee's supervisor, department chair or Dean and be disclosed to the Office of Culture, Ethics and Compliance. Examples of acceptable G&H that may generally be exchanged between USC Employees and a Third Party and do not require disclosure or approval include the following items of Modest Value:

- A working meal or meal voucher
- Logoed USC items
- A host/hostess gift
- A plaque or award

If a USC Employee wishes to accept G&H in excess of no more than \$200 per person per occasion or \$1,000 in aggregate from the same Third Party in one year, it must be approved by the USC Employee's supervisor, department chair or Dean and disclosed to the Office of Culture, Ethics and Compliance through the Gift Reporting Disclosure Form (see section 7). Similarly, G&H given to a Third Party that is no more than \$200 must be pre-approved by the USC Employee's supervisor, department chair or Dean and disclosed to the Office of Culture, Ethics and Compliance through the Gift Reporting Disclosure Form.

### **Prohibited Gifts or Hospitality**

The giving or receiving of G&H between a Third Party and USC Employee is always unacceptable if it:

- Does not fit within USC policies
- Is illegal, including when it attempts or intends to influence or reward in connection with USC business, regardless of the value of the G&H

- Is inconsistent with USC's values
- Is in the form of cash or cash equivalents
- Creates an actual Conflict of Interest or the appearance of a Conflict of Interest
- Violates the University's Policy on [Prohibited Discrimination, Harassment, and Retaliation](#)

Additionally, USC Employees must never exchange G&H with a Government Official without the explicit approval of University Relations. Offering or giving G&H to a Government Official can result in regulatory and/or legal consequences for the USC Employee and for the university.

### **Use of Personal Funds**

Provisions of this policy apply to use of personal funds for G&H related to USC business, and USC policies regarding reimbursement should be followed when exchanging G&H for business purposes. The policy does not apply to situations where a personal, non-business relationship exists, and the G&H is not given for a business purpose. In such cases USC employees are encouraged to discuss the situation with their supervisor or the Office of Culture, Ethics and Compliance if giving the G&H could give rise to the appearance of conflict of interest.

### **6. Procedures**

- USC Employees should refer to the [Travel and Expenses Procedures](#) when personal funds or USC travel cards are used for payment of G&H.
- USC Employees should refer to the [Corporate Card Procedures](#) when a USC Procurement card is used for payment of G&H.
- Any G&H exchanged between a USC Employee and a Third Party that exceeds \$200 per person per occasion or \$1,000 per person per year in aggregate from the same Third Party must be approved by the USC Employee's supervisor, department chair or Dean and disclosed to the Office of Culture, Ethics and Compliance by completing the Gift Reporting Form (see section 7) and submitting it to [compliance@usc.edu](mailto:compliance@usc.edu).

### **7. Forms**

[Gift Reporting Disclosure Form](#)

### **8. Responsibilities**

<b>POSITION or OFFICE</b>	<b>RESPONSIBILITIES</b>
<b>The Office of Culture, Ethics and Compliance</b>	Developing and reviewing exceptions to the policy. Monitoring G&H activity relative to the policy requirements as well as providing periodic

	communications and training designed to support the policy and the related procedures.
<b>USC Employees</b>	Understanding and complying with this policy. In any situations where it is not clear if the actions a USC Employee is contemplating are permitted, seeking guidance from their supervisor, department chair or Dean and the Office of Culture, Ethics and Compliance. Disclosing G&H that is no more than \$200 per person per occasion or \$1,000 in aggregate from the same Third Party in one year to the Office of Culture, Ethics and Compliance and obtaining approval from their supervisor, department chair or Dean.
<b>Supervisors, department chairs, and Deans</b>	Setting expectations for the giving of G&H to Third Parties including what is allowable based on the individual department, school, and unit, and how to comply with expenditure and procurement procedures. Reviewing and approving G&H above Modest Value and ensuring that reportable G&H given or received are properly recorded in accordance with this policy.

## 9. Related Information

- [Conflict of Interest and Commitment Policy](#)
- [Investigation of Non-Protected Class Conduct in Violation of University Policy](#)
- [Gift Acceptance and Campaign Counting Policy](#)
- [Fundraising Coordination Policy](#)

## 10. Contacts

Please direct any questions regarding this policy to:

OFFICE	PHONE	EMAIL
Office of Culture, Ethics and Compliance	213-740-8258	<a href="mailto:compliance@usc.edu">compliance@usc.edu</a>