

AD15 Employee Acceptance of Gifts

Classification:	Administration
Responsible Authority:	Chief Financial Officer
Executive Sponsor:	Vice President, Finance and Administration
Approval Authority:	Algonquin College Executive Team
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PURPOSE

Employees in certain positions can influence contractual decisions. Employees of the College have a fiduciary responsibility to avoid situations that will constitute a conflict of interest, or the appearance of a conflict of interest. This policy is designed to help employees of the College recognize possible and/or perceived conflicts of interest that may arise with respect to the acceptance of gifts, hospitality or gratuities from suppliers, contractors, or other business partners so that they can, in good faith, disclose, manage, and resolve such situations.

SCOPE

This policy is intended to establish a minimum set of standards for all College employees, Board of Governors members, appointees, volunteers, and all consultants and contractors engaged by the College.

Certain departments such as Procurement and Facilities may apply a higher standard to keep their employees free of any obligations and thereby avoid potential conflict of interest or commitment.

DEFINITIONS

Word/Term	Definition
Conflict of Interest	Any situation where the personal interests of employees may be incompatible or in conflict with their responsibilities as College employees, and include actual, potential or perceived conflicts of interest.
Gift	A Gift is a tangible or intangible item or service given voluntarily by one party to another, typically to express gratitude, appreciation, or goodwill.
Potential Conflict of Interest	The potential for conflict exists as soon as the College member can foresee that he/she has a private interest that may be sufficient to influence a public duty or responsibility.

POLICY

The acceptance of significant material gifts by an employee of the College is not permitted. Minor gifts or token courtesies that do not place, or do not have the appearance of placing, the employee under any obligation when making decisions on the College's behalf are permissible. In no event should an employee accept a gift or hospitality on the understanding or perception that his/her position will be used to influence a decision.

General Guidelines

Acceptance of significant material gifts as an employee of the College is not permitted. When an employee is offered a minor gift or hospitality in which the employee is unsure if an obligation or an appearance of an obligation is created, the employee shall discuss the offer with their manager or department head. The manager or department head will then decide whether the acceptance of the gift or hospitality places, or appears to place, the employee under any obligation. In making the determination, a variety of factors shall be considered, including but not limited to:

1. Whether the gift or hospitality is provided before or after the employee makes a decision concerning the party who is offering the gift.
2. The frequency of the offers to, or acceptance of token gifts, or hospitality by the employee concerned.
3. Whether the offering or receipt of a gift or hospitality is a matter of cultural or diplomatic protocol. Unless restricted from doing so, cultural or diplomatic gifts of significant value should be turned over to the College's Event's Office for use in events benefitting students.
4. Cash, gift cards, gift certificates and travel benefits (except as described in Acceptable Gifts and Hospitality Section 6 and 7) in any amount, must not be accepted as a gift under any circumstances.

Acceptable Gifts and Hospitality The following guidelines describe the circumstances in which gifts or hospitality will normally be deemed to be acceptable.

1. An employee may accept gifts of small intrinsic value.
2. An employee may keep a gift/prize if it is offered to attendees at a conference, seminar or trade show.
3. An employee may accept plaques or similar recognition awards.
4. An employee may accept gifts of social entertainment when the host or the beneficiary of the event is Algonquin College. For example, an employee accepting an invitation to play golf in a tournament where Algonquin College is the recipient of the proceeds from the tournament.
5. An employee may accept a gift of social entertainment (e.g. tickets to attend a cultural or sports event) from a vendor or business partner when it does not

- obligate the employee. The acceptance of such gifts should normally be restricted to a maximum of one event per vendor per year.
6. An employee may, with the written approval of the employee's manager, accept an invitation from a supplier or potential supplier to attend an educational seminar where the event presents educational value to the employee. The frequency of such acceptances should be considered to avoid appearances of conflict of interest or commitment.
 7. Attendance with suppliers' representatives at luncheons, dinners or business organization meetings which have been discussed with the employee's manager or department head and provided that the employee uses caution with respect to the frequency of these associations.

Declining Gifts or Hospitality

1. If an employee is offered or receives a gift which falls outside these guidelines, it should be declined or returned in a tactful manner.
2. When the gift cannot be returned, the gift should be handed over to the employee's manager to be either held by the College, or given to another charitable organization or such other action as determined by the manager.
3. If the nature or value of the gift or hospitality is such to raise concern as to the good faith of the party offering it, the employee shall advise their manager or department head.
4. Under no circumstances should a gift or hospitality be accepted from a vendor directly before or during or directly after a tender process for related goods or services. During a procurement Request for Proposal or tendering process any offer of a gift or hospitality to an Algonquin College employee may result in the supplier being disqualified from the tendering process so that the integrity of the process is not compromised, or does not appear to be compromised.

Repercussions of Non-Compliance

Failure to comply with this policy will result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

RELATED POLICIES

HR12: Conflict of Interest