

Hospitality and Gifts Policy

1 Purpose of document

In terms of accountability it is important for an organisation to have in place a written policy that regulates the relationship between the Institute, its staff and the external environment. This policy provides a safeguard for the Institute by providing clarity about the standards the organisation sets and what is expected of its research staff whose time is funded by IFS.

Offers of hospitality or of gifts can give rise to suspicion of improper conduct or inappropriate use of charitable or public funds. This is equally so of the acceptance of offers of hospitality and of gifts, particularly if offered by individuals or companies that are undertaking, or hoping to undertake business with the organisation.

As a consequence, The Institute has developed its Hospitality & Gifts Policy to assist staff in complying with the standards set by the organisation. The policy lays down the underlying principles of accepting and refusing hospitality and gifts, as well as providing a methodology for the recording of such instances.

This policy lays down the accepted amounts for staff with regard to hospitality and gifts, and staff must ensure that any hospitality is recorded. This policy applies to all personnel associated and employed by the Institute on an equal basis.

2 Hospitality

Working lunches provided on a modest scale and on an occasional basis are part of normal business practice and staff are not required to obtain formal approval to attend them or provide them. However if staff, other than senior staff, receive a prior invitation to a more formal lunch or dinner, they must declare their intention to attend to their head of sector.

The refusal of any invitation may cause embarrassment and this must be taken into account by anyone considering or approving such an invitation. Individuals must also take account of the timing of the invitation in relation to decisions which the Institute may be taking effecting those offering the hospitality.

Invitations to other events such as arts or sporting events etc. should be subject to the same scrutiny as above.

It is recognised that it is normal to offer hospitality to seminar speakers or visiting academics. On such occasions IFS staff should not normally outnumber the external guests by a ratio of more than 3:1 and expenditure should be kept to a minimum whilst reflecting the status of the guests. The names of everyone attending should be included in any expense claim. Expenditure on any items, such as alcohol, should be in line with the guidelines laid down by any funding bodies underwriting the costs.

3 Gifts

In general, all gifts of significant value should be refused. However, as with hospitality, in cases where refusal is likely to offend, some discretion may be exercised. The offer of a gift should be reported to the Head of Finance who will decide based on the nature, volume and origin of the gift whether it should be refused or accepted or kept by the Institute rather than the individual concerned.

Staff may accept occasional seasonal gifts of a low value such as calendars, diaries and pens. It is not necessary to ascertain the exact value of such gifts but anything that appears to be worth more than £200 should not be accepted or passed on to the Head of Finance as appropriate. Staff should exercise careful judgement in such cases.

Payment for gifts provided by Institute staff should normally have the prior approval of a senior member of staff unless already included in any research budget. Staff should be aware of the Bribery Act 2010 and the Institute's own related policy.

4 Register

In order to counter any accusation or suspicion of improper conduct, The Institute will maintain a central register of hospitality and gifts. This register will be maintained by the Head of Finance

Details of all offers of hospitality (except for modest working lunches) and gifts (except seasonal gifts of low value) should be sent at the earliest opportunity to the Head of Finance. This applies whether they have been accepted or declined.

The register is open to inspection by Trustees.

5 Policy review

5.1 Summary of reviews

Date	Reviewed by	Issues found	Action taken	Notes
24/10/22	EH	N/A	N/A	Reviewed policy but no changes needed.
15/5/23	SSS	N/A	N/A	Reviewed policy but no changes needed.

5.2 Log of changes made

Date	Changes made	Changes made by	Major or minor change?	Approved by (major changes only)