

# Gift and Celebration Policy

[ [Purpose](#) ] [ [Policy Summary](#) ] [ [Definitions](#) ] [ [Policy Statement](#) ] [ [Procedures](#) ]

## About This Policy

**Effective Date:** November 11, 2014  
**Last Updated:** October 18, 2018  
**Responsible University Office:** Human Resources  
**Responsible University Administrator:** Chief Inclusion and Human Resources Officer

**Policy Contact:**  
Amy McGaheran  
Director of Human Resources  
amcgaher@clarkson.edu

## Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to define when it is appropriate to give gifts and to have celebrations paid for by University funds.

[back to top](#)

## Policy Summary

This policy applies to all University departments, institutes, centers and schools. This policy does not apply to gifts or celebrations for donors or alumni who do not hold paid or unpaid appointments.

[back to top](#)

## Definitions

**Gift:** Transfer for which the dominate motive is detached or disinterested, generosity, or affection, respect, admiration charity or like sentiment.

**Long Service Employee(s):** Individual who has been employed for at least five years.

**Sympathy:** Expressions of sympathy should be for immediate family only.

**Immediate family includes:** Mother, father, mother-in-law, father-in-law, grandmother, grandfather, grandchildren, husband, wife, brother, sister, brother-in-law, sister-in-law, son, daughter, or in some cases another relative who is a member of the immediate household.

[back to top](#)

## Policy Statement

On occasion, a school or department may want to recognize faculty and/or staff members for outstanding achievement or for a professional milestone such as a promotion or retirement. These include work-related achievements, holiday celebrations, team morale-building events, expression of sympathy (immediate family only), promotions or retirement. Some celebrations may include alcohol in a responsible manner.

[back to top](#)

## Procedures

**Restrictions:** Federally sponsored funds should never be used to charge faculty or staff gifts, morale-building events, celebrations or work-related achievement events. Non-federally sponsored funds may be used only if the sponsor has approved a budget that specifically includes such event or gift expenses as part of program goals. Departmental restricted funds may be used only if the amount is within the fund terms. Departmental unrestricted funds may be used at the discretion of the department, as long as University policies are followed. Start-up funds may never be used for these purposes.

## Appropriate Use of University Funds

Work-related Achievements include:

- Marking the achievement of a major departmental goal
- Marking the end of the academic or fiscal year
- Honoring a faculty, student or staff member in connection with a work related employee recognition program

- Honoring a long service faculty or staff member who is leaving the university
- Honoring a retiree

**Gifts:** May be given when the primary motive is detached or disinterested, generosity, or respect, admiration, charity, or a similar sentiment. Gifts for this must be tangible personal property such as a watch, pen, or the traditional Clarkson chair typically given to retirees.

Gifts may be charged when:

- Honoring a faculty or staff member for achievement of a work-related goal or objective (non-bonus)
- Honoring a long-service employee outside of the University-wide recognition program
- Honoring a long service faculty or staff member departing the school, department, or the University
- Honoring a retiree

**Sympathy:** May include a memorial gift, donation to charity or flower arrangement upon the death or serious illness of a faculty or staff member or an immediate family member of a faculty or staff member. In such cases, the University should be acknowledged as the sender ("From your friends and colleagues at Clarkson University's XX Department.") In the case of a donation to a charity, the notation should indicate that the donation is from "Clarkson University's XX Department".

Gifts are to be limited to \$75 or less in value unless if it is for the years of service reward or a retiring employee. See table below for tax implications of gifts.

Celebrations are limited to maximum of \$35 per employee. The University does not pay for spouses, partners, children, friends, etc. All celebrations will be limited to 1 hour during business hours and preferably should be scheduled at the end of the day.

## Inappropriate Use of University Funds

It is not appropriate to spend University funds in recognition of faculty or staff for non-work-related achievements or events such as weddings, baby showers, housewarmings, birthdays, etc.

If individuals wish to recognize these events, they may do so on a personal level. Personal funds should be used to pay for these and other kinds of staff parties and gifts. The University will NOT reimburse these personal expenditures.

**Department Procedures:** It is the responsibility of each department to inform their employees of these internal policies and to enforce them. All gifts and celebrations charges will be applied to account 2526 (Entertainment). An annual review of charges to account 2526 by each department is strongly recommended and will be randomly audited by the Controller's Office on an annual basis. It is expected that Departments use reasonable and prudent judgement and refer to Internal Revenue Service (IRS) regulations when establishing dollar limits for all charges that fall under this policy. Departments and Schools should also strive to ensure that all faculty and staff are treated in an equitable manner.

**Communication:** Managers and supervisors are responsible for communicating this policy along with their internal policies to their employees on a regular basis, at least annually.

**IRS Guidelines for Taxability of Gifts** The following table outlines taxability of gifts to employees and individuals affiliated with the University. The tax rules shown below apply to gifts given to the U.S. citizens, residents, and non-resident aliens.

Scenario	Employee Taxable?	Student Taxable?	University Affiliation (e.g. Non-Salaried Appointment) Taxable?	Fellowship Recipient Taxable?
Tangible personal property (*) - Occasional and less than \$75	No	No	No	No
Tangible personal property (*) - Equal to or greater than \$75 (this category does not include a length of service or retirement gift)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Tangible personal property valued in the range of \$0-\$400 for length of service or retirement	No	N/A	N/A	N/A
Tangible personal property valued greater than \$400 (**) for length of service or retirement (***)	Yes	N/A	N/A	N/A

(\*) Cash and cash equivalents of any amount, including gift certificates of any amount, are NOT considered tangible personal property.

(\*\*) Consult with the University Controller prior to making any payment

(\*\*\*) Only amounts greater than \$400, none of the value \$0-\$400, is taxable or reportable

YES = Subject to all taxes including federal, state, FICA (social security/Medicare) and included in gross income

NO = Not subject to tax withholding and not included in gross income

[back to top](#)