

UCI LIBRARIES

Guidelines for Relationships with Vendors

Vendor relationships can raise many complex issues, and UCI and the UC system have a number of policies and procedures in place to clarify what interactions are or are not appropriate. To help library employees comply with applicable University policies, the following guidelines were developed. Part 1 pertains to gifts and gratuities that may be offered by vendors. Part 2 provides recommendations related to the avoidance of conflicts of interest that library employees may encounter when working with vendors. If you have questions about the appropriateness of a relationship, transaction, or meeting with a vendor, it is best to discuss the situation with your supervisor and the Library Business Office ahead of time.

PART 1: GIFTS & GRATUITIES

UC Policy on Acceptance of Gifts and Gratuities by Employees states:

“...employees must avoid the appearance of favoritism in all of their dealings on behalf of the University. All University officers and employees are expected to act with integrity and good judgment and to recognize that the acceptance of personal gifts from those doing business or seeking to do business with the University, even when lawful, may give rise to legitimate concerns about favoritism depending on the circumstances...”

- In order to maintain professional relationships with vendors, employees generally should not accept gifts or favors from vendor representatives.
- Common types of gifts to avoid:
 - **Meals** (e.g. lunch, dinner, coffee, or any form of food/beverage). It is recommended that employees not allow vendors to buy them food or drinks. Employees are expected to pay for their own meals. Talk to your supervisor if you have questions about the appropriateness of a meeting with a vendor. You may wish to discuss with your supervisor whether your meal costs are reimbursable, preferably before the meeting occurs.
 - **Conference meals** - Use good judgment, employees may attend vendor receptions or meals for large groups of conference attendees. But for meals between vendors and selected (or individual) customers, you should not allow vendors to pay for your meal.
 - **Tickets to sporting or entertainment events**
 - **Flowers / Presents**
 - **Discounts or free products** that are offered directly to you and that do not fall into the category of informational materials required to perform your job. (Discounts/rebates provided to the library in the normal course of business are fine. In addition, promotional items being given out at conferences to all attendees and prizes resulting from a drawing for which everyone was able to participate and you were selected through a random drawing are also fine.)
- Payments or reimbursements *may* be considered a gift, depending on the source of funds and the circumstances (consult a supervisor or the Library Business Office). Examples include:
 - **Honoraria** – Acceptance of honoraria may or may not be permissible. Various rules apply depending on the circumstances.
 - **Travel expenses paid by a vendor** – if the employee is attending a vendor event in an approved capacity (giving a speech or presentation, or serving on a board),

expenses associated with transportation directly to and from the event and lodging and subsistence expenses for the days of the event may or may not be considered gifts. However, any lodging, meals, or transportation that are not directly associated with such an event are considered gifts.
- If you receive a gift, or offer of a gift from a vendor, employees shall do one of the following within 30 days of receipt of the gift:

- Politely decline the gift
- Return the unused gift to the donor
- Deliver the unused gift to a charitable organization or a governmental entity – such donations cannot be claimed as a charitable contribution.
- Turn unused gift over to the University
- Pay donor for gift – the payment must be equal to the value of the gift.
- You may also contact your supervisor or the Library Business Office if you have questions about the appropriate course of action.

PART 2: AVOIDING CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

- UCI policy prohibits participation in commercial advertising that identifies UCI as a user of any product or service, except under specific circumstances and with the approval of the Associate Vice Chancellor-Administrative and Business Services. Therefore, you should not allow vendors to use quotes from you in marketing, or give permission for the use of the University name or UCI logo on any organization's Web site without appropriate approval. When in doubt, consult with your supervisor.
- UC and UCI policies prohibit employees from engaging in activities that create a conflict of interest between the employee's assigned functions and any other interest or obligation. Therefore, do not conduct business with or participate in the recommendation to do business with vendors that would represent a conflict of interest (e.g. you have a financial interest in the company, the company employs a near relative, the company employs a current or recently separated UC employee).
- Solicitation of support for events (e.g., conferences) or for gifts to the library may raise conflict of interest concerns. These situations require special consideration, and should be discussed with your AUL prior to contacting the vendor with your request. You should not approach a vendor with such a request without approval.

Policy Resources

1.UC Irvine Administrative Policies and Procedures, Section 700-09, Policies on Gifts, Gratuities, and Conflict of Interest: <http://www.policies.uci.edu/adm/pols/700-09.html>

2.UC Policy and Guidelines Regarding Acceptance of Gifts and Gratuities by Employees Under California's Political Reform Act: <http://www.ucop.edu/ucophome/coordrev/policy/1-24-01att.pdf>

This policy describes the responsibilities of staff in specific officially designated positions who must fulfill reporting requirements under California's Political Reform Act. Very few individuals in the library are required to file these reports. However, the introduction to the policy, and the various descriptions of what is or what is not a gift, should be useful to all individuals who have contact with vendors.

3.UC Irvine Administrative Policies and Procedures, Section 700-20, Guidelines on the Use of University Name and Seal: <http://www.policies.uci.edu/adm/pols/700-20.html>

4.Personnel Policies for Staff Members, Policy 82: Conflict of Interest http://atyourservice.ucop.edu/employees/policies_employee_labor_relations/personnel_policies/spp82.html

5.Business & Finance Bulletin B-43, Materiel Management, Employee-Vendor Relationships. <http://policy.ucop.edu/doc/3220485/BFB-BUS-43>