Gifts and Donations Policy

Introduction
This policy states the requirements for gifts to faculty, staff, students, volunteers and others outside of the University.

Policy Statement
A gift can be monetary or tangible and is given to someone without the expectation of payment or return. Examples of gifts include: Flowers for illness/hospitalization/bereavement, host/hostess gifts, alumni gifts, employee retirement, and gifts to donors.

Gifts in recognition of employee work-related achievement or years of service are given through official recognition programs authorized by the Human Resources Department.

The University is classified by the IRS as a tax-exempt charitable organization. As such, donations made by the University to other charitable organizations (with the exception of memorial gifts) are discouraged.

Definitions
Permissible Gifts

- Illness/hospitalization of an employee or student, requiring hospitalization. The spending guidelines for this gift is $100.
- The death of an employee or an employee's immediate family member. Memorial gifts made on behalf of an employee may include flowers or a donation to a charitable organization. In such cases Brown University should be acknowledged as the sender, e.g., "from all your friends and colleagues at (University department)." In the case of a donation to a charity, the notation should indicate the donation is from the University department. The spending guideline for either a gift or memorial donation is $100.
- Thank you gifts for volunteers. Include the name of the volunteer and the service the volunteer provided in the payment details.
- Gift cards/certificates may be purchased as a thank you for a volunteer as long as the volunteer is not a Brown University employee, student, researcher, temporary employee, or a contractor currently under contract.
- Recognition of a long-term employee leaving a department or retiring from the University. The spending guidelines for this gift is $10.00 for every year of service. Such gifts should not exceed $400, the maximum non-taxable limit established by the IRS, for gifts of recognition to long-term employees.

Gifts not Permitted

- Gift cards/certificates, of any value, to Brown University employees, students, researcher, temporary employees or to contractors currently under contract.
- Holiday gifts for faculty, staff, students and volunteers purchased with any University funds.
- Gifts to an individual for personal reasons other than illness/hospitalization/bereavement such as: Administrative Assistant Day, birthday, wedding, baby shower, housewarming, promotion, etc. These gifts are never permitted and are considered a personal expense.

Donations
When payments are made to charitable organizations the request must include documentation explaining the nature of the donation, the relationship to Brown University, and a copy of the organizations tax exempt (501(c)3) certificate. With the exception of a memorial gift to a charity that complies with spending guidelines, donations must be approved at the senior officer level.

**Responsibilities**

Financial Coordinator: Create the supplier invoice for the payment and include receipts and any other required documentation as outlined in Procedures (below).

Cost Center Manager: Approve the supplier invoice and ensure the correct spend category is used.

Accounts Payable: Review and approve the supplier invoice.

Senior Officer: Approve donations other than memorial donations.

**Procedures**

- Gifts and memorial gifts are purchased using either the PCard, supplier invoice, or in the case of a memorial gift (such as flowers), the purchaser may be reimbursed using an expense report.
  - Memorial donations (such as a donation to the American Heart Association) must be made using either the PCard or supplier invoice. These donations must be paid directly by Brown. Employees may not make a memorial donation and subsequently seek reimbursement.
- Use the Gifts and Hospitality spend category: 3220
- Donations (other than memorial donations) are processed on a supplier invoice. Attach the tax exempt organization’s 501(c)3 certificate, documentation explaining the organization’s relationship with Brown University, the reason for the donation, and a senior officer approval.
- Use the Donations spend category: 3240

Related Policies: [Gift Card Policy](https://www.brown.edu/about/administration/policies)

Policy Owner Approved by: Vice President for Finance and Chief Financial Officer

Contact(s)

Doreen Burgers
Director of Administrative Services and Outreach
Doreen.Burgers@brown.edu
401-863-7579

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