

Donations Framework



THE UNIVERSITY OF
MELBOURNE

University of Melbourne Advancement, May 2019

Overview

The University of Melbourne values the ongoing involvement of, and relationships with, donors. To protect donors and the University from publicly expressed concerns or perceptions of undue donor influence over academic, administrative, curriculum, building, admissions and student programming decisions, this framework provides guidance to assist both potential donors and University staff in understanding where those boundaries lie.

The University welcomes the active participation of donors in shaping a gift that meets their ambitions. In accepting donations, the University of Melbourne must also ensure alignment with strategic objectives and core values. This does not preclude donors from actively engaging to help determine the scope of a gift but does place limits on the areas in which a donor may properly be involved.

Choices about curriculum and assessment, appointments to academic positions, selection of students, the design of research and the awarding of scholarships are academic decisions and remain under University control.

Involvement of Donors

The involvement of donors with their gift and the University is welcome and an important part of philanthropy today. Gifts to the University are expended in line with the expressed wishes of the donor. However, for a gift to be tax-deductible, the donor should transfer absolute control of the gift to the University. Donor involvement must also respect the fundamental academic values of the University - to preserve, defend and promote the traditional principles of academic freedom. This is encapsulated in the [Academic Freedom of Expression Policy](#).

Academic Positions

Academic appointments are governed by the University Appointments and Promotions Committee, which provides oversight for academic appointments to ensure that academic standards are maintained. Full details of this Committee and its processes can be found here: <https://policy.unimelb.edu.au/MPF1299>

Donors are welcome to work with the University to identify an academic position in a particular discipline that they might wish to support, but the University will not accept gifts that require that an academic hold a particular political or philosophical view, or teach, or conduct research in a particular manner.

We welcome external perspectives and while neither donors nor their representatives may be part of a selection panel for an academic position, they are welcome to contribute to the development of position descriptions and recruitment plans, recommend potential candidates, and meet with and express their views on shortlisted candidates.

Scholarships

When establishing a new scholarship through a gift, donors can express a preference for the type of student and academic discipline they wish to support. The awarding of scholarships is an academic responsibility and carried out by a selection committee established by the governing academic division of the University. In cases of scholarship programs where selection criteria go beyond academic criteria (for example, leadership or non-academic skills such as sporting ability), it may be appropriate to invite the donor or the donor's representative to participate in a selection committee. The majority of members of such a committee must be University academic or professional staff and selection decisions will be by majority.

Research

Philanthropically-funded research is subject to the established University ethical commitments regarding the research it will undertake. A donor may determine the broad field of research that they wish to support, in discussion with the University. Researchers must be free to come to whatever conclusions the evidence and their analysis lead them to. The donor may not require that the research utilise particular methodologies, rely on particular sources, or produce particular results. These are matters of independent academic judgement.

Teaching

Donors may choose to support teaching programs in a particular discipline but must allow the University to control the details of the curriculum, the content, pedagogy, assessment or philosophical or political orientation of the teaching. Under no circumstances will the University admit a student or give any preference or priority to a student at the request of the donor.

Infrastructure

Donors who support infrastructure projects are welcome to contribute their views on design and finish during the design stage. Final decision on design and finish lies with the University. The University will determine the selection of architects, contractors and other suppliers involved in capital projects subject to its Governance, Probity and Risk Framework. A donor or the donor's representative will have no power to influence or veto decision-making on these matters.

Gifts in Kind and Cultural Gifts

Gifted material, such as artwork, property or books, becomes the property of the University of Melbourne. They are subject to the same conditions as existing collections and assets, including processing, retention, location, use and disposal. Once gifted, a donor or the donor's representative will have no power to influence or veto decision-making on the management of these assets.

University Co-Contributions

In some cases, for an agreed use of a gift to be viable, the University may be required to make a financial or other contribution (for example personnel, time, space, etc). These instances will be considered on a case-by-case basis and within the University's normal approval processes. When a University contribution is possible, the University will need to ensure that a source of funding or other contribution is available and approved and that there is a strong alignment of the University's strategy with the proposed gift.

Authority

This Framework was endorsed by University Council in December 2018. It is supported by policies contained within the [Melbourne Policy Library](#):

- Academic Appointment, Performance and Promotion Policy
- Academic Freedom of Expression Policy
- Contracts Policy
- Establishment and Award of Student Awards Policy
- Gift Policy
- Procurement Policy
- Research Funding, Costing and Pricing Policy
- Research Integrity and Misconduct Policy
- Selection and Admission Policy

These policies are made under the [University of Melbourne Act 2009 \(Vic\)](#), the [Council Regulation](#) and/or the [Vice-Chancellor Regulation](#), and support compliance with other relevant legislative requirements listed in each policy.

Further Information

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