



UNIVERSITY OF RICHMOND

Policy Manual

Policy #:	FIN-1100	Policy Title:	Gifts, Prizes, and Awards
Effective:	01/01/2025	Responsible Office:	University Controller's Office
Date Approved:	12/18/2024	Approval:	Executive Vice President and Chief Operating Officer
Replaces Policy Dated:	01/10/2023	Responsible University Official:	Senior Associate Vice President and University Controller

PURPOSE:

The purpose of this policy is to provide guidance to individuals who wish to provide gifts, prizes, or awards utilizing funds administered by the University of Richmond. As a non-profit institution, the University of Richmond must exercise good stewardship of its charitable assets and must ensure that those assets are being used to further the University's educational mission. The policy ensures the appropriate and compliant use of University resources to further the University's mission of teaching, research, scholarship and service.

SCOPE:

This policy applies to the University of Richmond and all of its Affiliates. As used in this policy, the term "Affiliates" means organizations or entities in which the University owns a controlling interest or has the right to elect the majority of the entity's governing board.

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POLICY STATEMENT:

FIN-1100.1 – Definitions

Gift

A gift is a cash or non-cash item given as a gesture of goodwill or appreciation. The gift may be, but is not necessarily, related to job performance or student performance in academic or other realms.

Prize

A prize is a cash or non-cash item given at random or as a result of a competition or contest. The prize is not directly related to job performance or student performance in academic or other realms.

Award

An award is a cash or non-cash item given to recognize excellence or to honor an achievement or accomplishment. The award may be related to job performance or student performance in academic or other realms.

De minimis

A non-cash gift, prize, or award that is so small and infrequent that accounting for it would be unreasonable or administratively impractical is considered a de minimis benefit by the Internal Revenue Service (IRS). **Per IRS regulations, Cash, gift cards, and gift certificates are never considered de minimis.**

FIN-1100.2 – Policy

Gifts

University Employees and Students

The use of University resources to provide cash gifts (including gift cards or gift certificates) to employees or students is not permitted.

The use of University resources to provide non-cash gifts to students or employees is generally not permitted, except in the following limited circumstances, infrequent occasions, and modest amounts (approximately \$75 or less):

- Expressions of sympathy or support in recognition of a serious illness or death of an employee, student, or immediate family member;
- UR-logoed merchandise as part of a program or event;
- Expressions of congratulations or appreciation in recognition of an academic or professional milestone, such as graduation or completion of a project of major significance, or completion of term of service in a University role.

To show appreciation for or recognize a staff member's outstanding service to the University, supervisors are encouraged to recommend an employee for a bonus payment or other recognition through one of the University's formal recognition programs administered through Human Resources.

The use of University resources to provide gifts in recognition of employee service milestones such as retirement or departure of long-serving employees is permissible and must be coordinated with Human Resources to ensure compliance with tax requirements.

The use of University resources to provide gifts in recognition of holidays or personal events (*e.g.*, weddings, birthdays, or births/adoptions) is not permitted.

Non-University Individuals

Cash payments given to non-University individuals (*e.g.*, honoraria) are considered taxable income and are not considered a gift or prize. To issue a payment to these individuals, a payment request must be completed and submitted through Workday. The recipient may receive a Form 1099-MISC or similar tax reporting form if total calendar year payments exceed the reporting threshold.

When University officials are hosting visitors (individuals who are not University students or employees), being hosted at an event, or visiting other institutions, University funds may be used to give such visitors a modest non-cash gift appropriate to the occasion as a sign of appreciation or gratitude.

Awards, Prizes and Incentives

University funds may be used to provide prizes, awards and incentives only under the following circumstances:

- Students may receive departmental academic achievement awards and Commencement awards with approval of the Dean or Vice President as outlined in *FIN-2101 Policy on Provision of Financial Resources to Students*. The type of award (cash, plaque, etc.), value of the award, the student's name, and the student's University ID number **must be provided to the Financial Aid Office and the University Controller**. The award will be reported as taxable income on form 1099-MISC, if total payments reach \$600 or more within the calendar year. Unless required by the terms of an endowment, academic achievement awards, Commencement awards, and other awards to students **may not be provided as cash or cash equivalents**.
- Random prizes are allowed for participation in events. The prize may not be a gift card or gift certificate.
- Awards distributed to employees at the annual Service Awards Event or as formal recognition for teaching, scholarship or service are allowable (*e.g.*, Distinguished Educator Awards).
- Gift cards or gift certificates (or cash) may be given as incentive to research study participants or for participation in institutionally sponsored surveys. When gift cards or gift certificates will be provided in these circumstances, **pre-approval from the University Controller is required**.

The creation of a new prize or award requires approval by President's Cabinet and either HR (for faculty/staff awards) or Financial Aid (for student awards) and must be established in keeping with all applicable employment, taxation, and financial aid regulations as well as *FIN 2101 – Policy on Provision of Financial Resources to Students*.

FIN-1100 – Gifts, Prizes, and Awards

FIN-1100.3 – Taxation

- The Internal Revenue Service (IRS) provides guidelines on the taxability of gifts to employees. Specifically, the IRS stipulates that gifts, prizes, or awards to employees must be treated as compensation, are subject to tax withholding, and are reportable on Form W-2.
 - Gift cards and gift certificates are considered taxable compensation, regardless of the amount, beginning with the first dollar.
 - IRS regulations allow for exemption of certain non-cash gifts given during a formal setting recognizing length of service; such awards are non-taxable within certain parameters.
- Gifts, prizes, or awards given to students, or non-University of Richmond employees, may be subject to tax reporting on Form 1099-MISC.

RELATED POLICIES:

FIN-4101 Policy on Use of University Funds and Financial Responsibilities

FIN-2101 Policy on Provision of Financial Resources to Students

FIN-4204 Policy on Business Meals and Entertainment

FIN-16001 Reporting and Investigating Suspected Fraud, Waste, and Abuse Policy

GOV-1005 Policy and Procedure on Monetary Support and Cash Donations

POLICY BACKGROUND:

Policy was reviewed by Academic Deans and President's Cabinet prior to approval on 12/18/2024

Policy was reviewed by Academic Deans and President's Cabinet prior to approval on 01/10/2023.

Policy was reviewed by Academic Deans and President's Cabinet prior to approval on 06/13/2019.

Policy replaces *Policy of Tax Reporting for Gifts, Prizes, and Awards* dated 4/8/2016.

POLICY CONTACTS:

Director of Strategic Sourcing & Payments, Office of Strategic Sourcing & Payments

Director of Tax Compliance & Payroll, Payroll Office

Senior Associate Vice President and University Controller