

Maynooth University Hospitality and Entertainment Policy

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1. Introduction

The university sets out in this policy, the regulations and procedures in relation to the expenditure on Hospitality and Entertainment.

The policy recognises that the university has a regular calendar of events that require expenditure on food and beverages. Also, the regular provision of hospitality for official guests of the university that would include quality peer reviewers, external examiners, potential donors, visiting lecturers is governed by this policy.

The policy outlines the university's approach in general terms and is not expected to cover every possible situation. Any items not covered by the policy, or of an unusual nature should be raised in advance with the Finance Department and any advice given should be attached to the subsequent claim or invoice.

In general, hospitality/ entertainment expenses are not permitted on externally funded research grants. Where discretionary spending is allowed, the requirements of funding agency should be checked in advance with the Research Development Office.

2. Purpose and Scope of Policy

The purpose of this policy is to present a fair set of rules and procedures to be applied when authorising and undertaking all necessary entertainment activities on behalf of the university.

The policy has been framed regarding the following principles: -

- 2.1 The hospitality has been provided wholly exclusively and necessarily for the business of the university.
- 2.2 The hospitality is properly documented so that a third-party reviewer can understand the business/ promotional purpose for which the expenditure occurred.
- 2.3 The hospitality is managed in a cost-effective manner.
- 2.4 Where a hospitality event is held on campus, the on-campus caterer under the single supplier framework agreement must be used. It is not permitted to use off-campus providers. Any invoice submitted for an unapproved catering supplier will be rejected. If for any reason, the invoice proves payable, a levy of €250 will be charged to the Business Unit for a first offence and €1,000 per occurrence thereafter.

- 2.5 An exception to the above policy is a departmental gathering, for example, student events or book launches, where supermarket supplies can be acquired up to a maximum value of €200. All hospitality and entertainment expenditure is covered by this policy.

3. Authorisation & Responsibility

- 3.1 All expenditure should be reasonable and stand up to public scrutiny.
- 3.2 In the case of hospitality and entertainment being claimed through expenses, it must be ensured that receipts show details of expenditure appropriately itemised and that a list of attendees is attached to the claim. Credit or debit card receipts are not acceptable and will not be reimbursed.

4. Guidelines and Rules

Alcohol

- 4.1 With all events and entertainment, moderation and care should be exercised in relation to alcohol expenditure, with consideration of whether it is appropriate at all. At campus events (e.g. graduation ceremonies, publication launches) where finger food and refreshments are provided, alcohol is permissible. In the case of expenses for meals in relation to entertaining third parties, the alcohol should not exceed one-third of the total restaurant bill.
- 4.2 Alcohol is not permissible in relation to meals being claimed in respect of university staff only.
- 4.3 Expenditure on alcoholic drinks will not be paid from externally funded research grants.

Official Guests of the university

- 4.4 The university recognises that the provision of hospitality for guests is essential. Official guests include visiting lecturers, external examiners, quality peer reviewers, overseas visitors, donors and potential donors, visitors from research organisations, visitors from other universities, guests involved in development of new programmes, and business and community leaders.

- 4.5 Discretion should be exercised in relation to the cost of meals. Modest gratuities are allowable, and alcohol should not exceed a third of the total bill. Expenditure may be queried and rejected if found to be excessive.

Departmental Staff Events

- 4.6 Events exclusively for Departmental staff in regard to team building/quality review either on or off campus are allowable where a university business purpose is fully documented. The payment request should be accompanied by an agenda and full list of attendees. The university will not pay for alcoholic drinks at such events. Prior approval from the Head of Department is required and should be documented on the agenda. These events should be limited to one day only.
- 4.7 Entertainment of university staff alone is not an allowable expenditure. Meals will not be reimbursed in these cases.
- 4.8 Where working lunches on campus are organised, it is essential that they be ordered through the properly procured campus catering services.

Gifts/ Prizes/ Awards

- 4.9 Nominal gifts are only allowable where a non-staff individual has made a contribution to the university, with the gift being an expression of thanks to the individual (e.g. visiting academic or conference speaker). An upper limit of €250 will apply in most cases. These gifts require the prior approval of the Head of the Business Unit.
- 4.10 Prizes may be given to students in structured award schemes or gift vouchers given for contributions on departmental matters.
- 4.11 Awards may be presented to staff for outstanding service as part of schemes sanctioned by the University Executive.
- 4.12 Gifts to mark family occasions are not allowed.
- 4.13 In all the above cases, it is preferable that payment is through the university's procedure of acquiring gift tokens. (See Finance Website).
- 4.14 Corporate gifts may be exchanged with other Universities or bodies where appropriate.

5. Documentation

- 5.1 In most cases, the cost of on-campus hospitality will be raised by purchase order through our contracted catering supplier and charged directly to the appropriate business unit.
- 5.2 All hospitality invoices must be accompanied by a listing of attendees on the form available from the Finance Office website. The exceptions to this are large scale university events (conferrings, some Christmas events, events open to public or general student body). In particular, no meals will be reimbursed through the Core online expenses system where attendees are not listed. A separate section exists on the Core online expenses system for entering attendees, but the standardised form can be scanned up where there are larger numbers.
- 5.3 Where an internal or external event that is not part of the regular university calendar is likely to exceed €5,000, the written permission of the Bursar or relevant Vice-President should be sought prior to the event and submitted with the documentation.

6. Conclusion

It is essential that staff act in a prudent and reasonable manner when entertaining on behalf of the university, bearing in mind that all expenditure should stand up to scrutiny by the Comptroller and Auditor General, Internal Auditors and to the general public.