

## Name of Policy: Gift Acceptance

**RESPONSIBLE COMMITTEE:** Development & Alumni Relations

**RESPONSIBLE OFFICER:** Principal Bursar

**LINKED DOCUMENTS: College:** Environmental, Social and Governance Policy, Financial Sanctions Policy, Freedom of Speech

**LINKED DOCUMENTS: Other:** none

**Annual Review date:** First meeting of Hilary Term

### Introduction

1. St John's College welcomes philanthropic donations from individuals, public and private sector companies, and other funding entities such as trusts and foundations. Donations play an important part in furthering the College's charitable aims of teaching and research; some of these activities would be greatly diminished without such philanthropy.

2. As a registered charity and also a constituent College of the University of Oxford, St John's is also aware of its position within, and responsibility to, the wider community in which it operates; St John's has a responsibility to ensure that the receipt of donations does not compromise its integrity, reputation, charitable purposes nor the trust of its supporters nor its commitment to its beneficiaries, staff and the wider community.

3. The College therefore realises that it would be prudent to have guidelines in place regarding the acceptance of donations, comprised of a set of specific criteria against which the acceptance of any donation will be assessed, accompanied by more general principles and practices which ought to be observed.

4. The proposed guidelines rely on best practice within Oxford and, in particular, on the guidelines used by the University's *Committee to Review Donations and Research Funding* (<https://governance.admin.ox.ac.uk/legislation/part-18-committee-to-review-donations-and-research-funding>).

### Guidelines for not accepting donations to St John's – specific criteria

When assessing whether to accept a gift, the following criteria will be used:

5. Is there sufficient credible evidence that a proposed donation would originate from an activity which is illegal or which would be considered by the College to be unethical?

6. Is there sufficient credible evidence that a proposed donation, or any of its terms, would:

i. impinge on academic freedom or limit freedom of enquiry? Noting the College's [Freedom of Speech Policy](#)

- ii.require or promote activity that is illegal or unethical or which has other serious adverse consequences?
- iii.create conflicts of interest for St John's or the collegiate University and/or the individual beneficiaries of the donation?
- iv.do serious harm to the reputation of St John's or the collegiate University?
- v.seriously harm the relationships between St John's or the collegiate University and other benefactors, partners, staff, students or other stakeholders?

## **Other considerations**

7. Where a donor has engaged in activities which led, or would have led, the College not to accept a donation, the College may consider gifts from that donor if such activities have clearly ceased.
8. Donations will not generally be accepted if an intermediary negotiates a benefaction on behalf of a donor who asks for complete anonymity. The identity of the donor must at least be known to, and acceptable to, the President, Principal Bursar and Development Director.
9. Where a gift has been accepted, if information subsequently comes to light about the donor or the gift which might have made the gift unacceptable under these guidelines and the College could not reasonably have known this at the time, acceptance of the gift may be reconsidered by the College.
10. Although donations will be assessed under these guidelines, irrespective of any previous consideration of the donor, there will be an assumption that, where a gift from a donor has previously been accepted, any subsequent gift will also be approved unless in the interim there has been a change in circumstance which might affect the College's decision as to whether to accept the subsequent gift.
11. St John's provides a range of services and benefits to donors, including invitations to events, written and digital communications and access to the College and its members. These activities, benefits and services are provided at the sole discretion of the College, and the College reserves the right to remove access to them. Without limiting the generality of the foregoing, a donor who is convicted of a criminal offence may have their access to these removed either until such time as their conviction is spent, or permanently, at the sole discretion of the College. This might affect the College's decision to accept any subsequent gifts from the donor.

## POLICY HISTORY

<i><b>Date of GB approval</b></i>	<i><b>Brief summary of changes</b></i>	<i><b>Confirmation that linked documents have updated if necessary</b></i>	<i><b>College policy register updated</b></i>
TT 2022	Policy introduced and subsequently approved by Committee and GB	Confirmed	Yes (I Burke)
HT 2024	Policy reviewed by Committee; tightened language for assessing gifts (above 5.); approved by GB	Confirmed	Yes (I Burke)
TT 2024	Policy reviewed by Committee; withdrawal of services included (11); approved by GB	Confirmed	Yes (I Burke)
TT 2025	Policy reviewed, linked to Freedom of Speech policy under 6.; approved by GB	Confirmed	Yes (I Burke)