



## Integrity and Standards (ISU) Unit

# INFORMATION SHEET

No. 1, Feb 2016



Please refer to the [ISU website](#) for information on:

- [Complaint Resolution Process](#)  
(complaint procedures, guidelines, process flowcharts, templates)
- [Conflicts of Interest / Gifts, Benefits and Hospitality](#)  
(CofI Register, CofI procedures, CofI types, process flowchart, FAQs)
- [Public Interest Disclosures](#)  
(what, how, when, links to Public Sector Commission information)
- [Fraud and Corruption Prevention](#)  
(plan, policy, risks, case studies, red flags)

and to access the:

- [Code of Conduct](#)
- [Online Complaints Portal](#)
- [Valuing Integrity booklet](#)
- [External avenues for lodging a complaint](#)

### Fraud and Corruption Control Plan

The ISU has developed a [Fraud and Corruption Control Plan](#) which is now available on the ISU website.



The Plan, which was approved by the Curtin Planning & Management Committee, embodies the University's framework for controlling the risks of fraud and corruption, and is aligned with the Australian Standard for Fraud and Corruption Control (AS 8001:2008).

A number of initiatives have already been progressed or completed as part of the Plan:

- A new [Fraud and Corruption Control Policy](#);
- A comprehensive Fraud and Corruption Risk Assessment;
- Risk Treatment Plans; and
- An Awareness, Education and Training Strategy involving development of training workshops on fraud and corruption topics.

### Protecting parties to a complaint

Making, managing, having to respond to or being involved in a complaint can be a stressful time for the parties concerned. The ISU and other stakeholders work with the various parties to help alleviate their concerns wherever possible, depending on each situation. Further to this, here are some common concerns that arise:

#### • Are the parties to a complaint protected?

As per the [Complaints procedures](#), no one may threaten, intimidate, harass or victimise any party who makes, assists in or is responsible for the resolution of, or is the subject of, a complaint. If such behaviour is reported, the action taken by the University will depend on a number of factors, including who has allegedly engaged in the behaviour e.g. staff, student or member of the public.

#### • What happens if a complainant acts unreasonably during the complaint resolution process?

Complainants are personally responsible and

liable for the content of their complaints. As such, they must not provide information that they know to be inaccurate or misleading. If a complainant exhibits unreasonable conduct in their dealings with the University, their conduct may be deemed by the Vice-Chancellor to be unreasonable, resulting in further access to Curtin's complaints service being restricted.

#### • What happens if personal safety or security concerns arise at any stage of the complaint resolution process?

The University has two multi-disciplinary safer communities response teams (SCRT) - one for students and one for staff - which are responsible for coordinating a proactive and preventative approach to addressing threats and other troubling behaviours on WA campuses (including those possibly arising from complaints). The teams meet regularly, or may be convened at short notice in emergency situations.



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## Complaint Data—12 months ending 31 December 2015

The ISU collects and reports on complaint data on a quarterly, rolling 13 months, and end of financial year (12 months) basis. For the 12 month period ending 31 Dec 2015:

- 335 matters which met the University's definition of *complaint* were registered in 2015 .
- 226 other matters were received concerning feedback, enquiries, duplicates, and matters to be dealt with by other areas. These were directed to the appropriate party for attention.
- 62% of complaints came from students, while 24% came from staff; the rest were evenly divided between anonymous complainants and complaints from the public.
- 66% of all complaints registered were assigned to the four Faculties.
- 35 complaint matters registered in 2015 were still outstanding at time of reporting. 83% of these were registered in the last half of 2015. Note that the complaints handling process is overseen by the Integrity and Standards Unit which follows up outstanding complaint matters on a regular basis to ensure matters are dealt with promptly.
- In terms of complaint status at year end, the ratio of upheld to not upheld complaints was approximately 1:1.
- Analysis of data shows the typical cyclical nature of complaint notification whereby complaint numbers tend to ebb and flow in alignment with the academic cycle and the presence of staff and students on campus i.e. complaints tend to peak during the second and third quarters each year when the University is at its busiest .

## When is a gift not a gift?

The [Conflicts of Interest Procedures](#) (the Procedures) were revised in 2015 to provide clearer direction to University staff in relation to handling conflicts of interest and gifts, benefits and hospitality.

Here are some common questions relating to conflicts of interest and the receipt of gifts at work which the ISU deals with on a regular basis:

- *If a contracted sponsor gives me free tickets to an event or other benefits, can I decide on my own what to do with them?*

No, these types of benefits are not gifts but arise from University business and therefore belong to the University in the first instance. As such, you need to register them in the Conflicts of Interest Register and nominate your line manager as the person who will make that decision (see [section 7 of Appendix 1](#) to the Procedures).



- *Is there a difference between personal benefits received under a sponsorship or procurement agreement (e.g. from accumulated rewards points) and a personal gift, benefit or hospitality received in the course of University business?*

Yes, as previously stated, benefits received under a supporting University agreement or other formal relationship **must always be registered as a conflict of interest** in the first instance — they belong to the University

because they arise out of University business.

Gifts, benefits and hospitality (hereafter referred to as *gifts*), if offered to or received by you in the course of your duties, are not the result of any legal obligation placed upon the provider to do so and should not create an expectation or obligation placed upon you to do something in return. As such, they need to be treated differently.

In the first instance, it is wise to politely refuse, return or repay any such gift obtained in the course of your duties. If not possible, then you as the recipient must make a judgement call as to whether, by receiving the gift, an actual, potential or perceived conflict of interest would arise, and:

- i) If so, the gift must not be accepted (or should be returned or repaid), and consequently, there is no need for you to register the gift.
- ii) If not, then there is a need to handle the item in accordance with the rules for disclosure outlined in [section 6 of Appendix 1](#) to the Procedures).

This [flowchart](#) found on the ISU website provides a simple explanation of the processes involved.

- *I won the door prize (a free iPad) by attending a conference over east. Do I have to declare it?*



Yes, assuming that you attended the conference on University time, and the University paid your conference fees, airline fares, accommodation, taxi fares etc, then the iPad belongs to the University and the item must be registered as a gift in the Conflicts of Interest Register (in the same manner as if you had received the item as a benefit arising from a sponsorship or other type of University agreement).

## When can I make a protected disclosure?



The Public Interest Disclosure (PID) Act 2003 (the Act) encourages you to report wrongdoing in the public sector (which includes Curtin University) without your identity being revealed or fear of reprisal.

There are a number of conditions that have to be met before a matter may be classified under the Act as a PID, so if you are intent on making a disclosure at Curtin, it should not be registered via the Complaints portal.

Of particular note is that a disclosure of wrongdoing under the Act must be in regard to **public interest information**; it must be more than just a general complaint about dissatisfaction with a product or service, or a grievance that can be resolved between parties.

So advice should first be sought from the University's PID Officers. For more information, please refer to the [Public Interest Disclosures](#) web page.

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