

Complete Policy Title:

**Gift Acceptance Policy**

Policy Number (if applicable):

Approved by:

**Board of Governors**

Date of Most Recent Approval:

**December 15, 2011**

*(editorial revisions July 5, 2012)*

Date of Original Approval(s):

Supersedes/Amends Policy dated:

**May 4, 2006 (Gift Acceptance Policy for the  
McMaster University Campaign)**

Responsible Executive:

**Vice-President (University  
Advancement)**

Enquiries:

[University Secretariat](#)

***DISCLAIMER:** If there is a Discrepancy between this electronic policy and the written copy held by the policy owner, the written copy prevails*

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## Background

McMaster University is committed to excellence in teaching and research and to the fundamental principles of academic freedom. As such, we welcome gifts from individuals, corporations and foundations to help us achieve our academic mission and to enhance our programs and services to students.

Federal and provincial governments encourage voluntary gift support of charitable organizations like McMaster University and allow substantial tax relief to donors. The significance of the tax laws governing charitable contributions makes it an important obligation of the University to record and acknowledge all gifts received. Only the Office of University Advancement may issue official tax receipts on behalf of McMaster University. The issuance of these receipts is done in compliance with the requirements of the Income Tax Act and in accordance with procedures established by the University. It is also the responsibility of the Office of University Advancement to ensure that the highest standards of professionalism are followed in the solicitation of gifts and in working with donors.

While McMaster University invites private donations, it reserves the right to refuse gifts that require conditions or expenditures that the University deems unacceptable.

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## Purpose

This document has been established to guide decisions about the acceptability of gifts and to outline the types of gifts that McMaster University will and will not accept.

## Scope

This policy governs the acceptance of gifts made to McMaster University and, through McMaster University, to any of its subsidiaries or affiliated organizations.

- McMaster University will not accept gifts, enter into business relationships or accept external support that will knowingly compromise its public image or commitment to its academic mission and the University's essential values, as articulated in its strategic documents.
- The President has delegated authority from the Board of Governors to make decisions concerning acceptance of gifts in accordance with this Policy and is accountable to the Board for implementation of this responsibility.
- In determining the acceptability of a gift, the President may seek input and advice from other members of the senior executive team and/or the Committee on University Advancement on behalf of the Board of Governors.
- The President may delegate responsibility for decisions under this Policy for gifts of less than \$1,000,000 to the Vice-President, University Advancement.
- Acceptance of any gift that involves a proposal to name is conditional upon final approval of the naming by the Board of Governors.
- When negotiating a gift on behalf of the institution, individuals must consult with the Office of University Advancement to ensure due diligence prior to making a decision to accept a gift which:
  - i. Might expose the University to an uncertain and potentially significant liability
  - ii. Is precedent-setting or involves sensitive issues
  - iii. Has an ambiguous financial source
  - iv. Involves a proposal to name
  - v. Because of its unusual nature, presents questions as to whether it is within the role and scope of the University.

## Unacceptable Gifts

McMaster University has the right to decline any gift that is not consistent with its mission. The following are indicators that a gift is not acceptable:

- The gift creates scholarships, fellowships, professorships, chairs or lecture series with restrictive clauses that:
  - violate the Human Rights Code (Ontario)
  - give the donor or his/her representative the right to designate the recipient
  - do not meet the academic priorities of the University.
- The gift compromises the University's academic integrity or interferes with the University's academic freedom.
- The gift requires an arrangement to do business with a specified person or company or future employment at the University
- The gift is financially unsound or could expose the University to liability or embarrassment
- The gift relies on a third party appraisal provided to the donor that is perceived to be inaccurate or unreliable.
- The size or benefit of the gift is perceived to be disproportionate to the work or cost required to sustain the gift.