

DONATIONS FRAMEWORK

Overview

Swinburne University of Technology values the ongoing involvement of, and relationships with, donors. To protect donors and the University from publicly expressed concerns or perceptions of undue donor influence over academic, administrative, curriculum, building, admissions and student programming decisions, this framework provides guidance to assist both potential donors and University staff in understanding where those boundaries lie.

The University welcomes the active participation of donors in shaping a gift that meets their ambitions. In accepting donations, Swinburne University of Technology must also ensure alignment with strategic objectives and core values. This does not preclude donors from actively engaging to help determine the scope of a gift but does place limits on the areas in which a donor may properly be involved.

Choices about curriculum and assessment, appointments to academic positions, selection of students, the design of research and the awarding of scholarships are academic decisions and remain under University control.

Involvement of Donors

The involvement of donors with their gift and the University is welcome and an important part of philanthropy today. Gifts to the University are expended in line with the expressed wishes of the donor. However, for a gift to be tax-deductible, the donor transfers absolute control of the gift to the University. Donor involvement must also respect the fundamental academic values of the University - to preserve, defend and promote the traditional principles of academic freedom. This is encapsulated in Swinburne University of Technology's [Governance framework](#). All University policies and regulations can be found [here](#).

Scholarships

When establishing a new scholarship through a gift, donors can express a preference for the type of student and academic discipline they wish to support. The awarding of scholarships is an academic responsibility and carried out by the University. In cases of scholarship programs where selection criteria go beyond pure academic criteria (for example, bespoke engagement, cohort characteristics, leadership and purpose or non-academic skills such as sporting ability), it may be appropriate for Advancement to facilitate the review and consideration of applicants with the donor (or the donor's representative) and Swinburne representatives.

Academic Positions

Academic appointments are governed by the University People, Culture and Integrity Policy, which embeds the highest ethical standards for academic appointments to ensure that academic standards are maintained.

Donors are welcome to work with the University to identify an academic position in a particular discipline that they might wish to support, but the University will not accept gifts that require that an academic hold a particular political or philosophical view, or teach, or conduct research in a particular manner. We welcome external perspectives and while neither donors nor their representatives may be part of a selection panel for an academic position, they are welcome to contribute to the development of position descriptions and recruitment plans, recommend potential candidates and meet with and express their views on shortlisted candidates.

Research

Philanthropically-funded research is subject to the established University ethical commitments regarding the research it will undertake. A donor may determine the broad field of research that they wish to support, in discussion with the University. Researchers must be free to come to whatever conclusions the evidence and their analysis lead them to. The donor may not require that the research utilise particular methodologies, rely on particular sources, or produce particular results. These are matters of independent academic judgement.

Teaching

Donors may choose to support teaching programs in a particular discipline but must allow the University to control the details of the curriculum, the content, pedagogy, assessment or philosophical or political orientation of the teaching. Under no circumstances will the University admit a student or give any preference or priority to a student at the request of the donor.

Infrastructure

Donors who support infrastructure projects are welcome to contribute their views on design and finish during the design stage. Final decision on design and finish lies with the University. The University will determine the selection of architects, contractors and other suppliers involved in capital projects subject to its Governance framework. A donor or the donor's representative will have no power to influence or veto decision-making on these matters.

Gifts-in-Kind and Cultural Gifts

Gifted material, such as artwork, property or books, becomes the property of the University. They are subject to the same conditions as existing collections and assets, including processing, retention, location, use and disposal. Once gifted, a donor or the donor's representative will have no power to influence or veto decision-making on the management of these assets.

University Co-Contributions

In some cases, for an agreed use of a gift to be viable, the University may be required to make a financial or other contribution (for example personnel, time, space, etc). These instances will be considered on a case-by-case basis and within the University's normal approval processes.

When a University contribution is possible, the University will need to ensure that a source of funding or other contribution is available and approved and that there is a strong alignment of the University's strategy with the proposed gift.

Authority

This Framework is supported by policies contained within the Policy Library:

- Academic Partnerships Policy
- Finance Policy
- People, Culture, and Integrity Policy
- Courses and Awards Policy
- Admissions and Enrolment Policy
- Philanthropic Gift Acceptance & Fundraising Conduct Statement of Practice Research Training Policy
- Privacy Guidelines
- Conflict of Interest Framework
- Counter Foreign Interference guidelines and Australian Federal Government University Foreign Interference Taskforce – Guidelines to counter foreign interference in the Australian University Sector

These policies are made under the [Swinburne University of Technology Act 2010](#) and support compliance with other relevant legislative requirements listed in each policy.