Ethical behavior means being honest, telling the truth, and doing what you said you were going to do.

—Barbara Jordan

INTRODUCTION

Ethical conduct is important at work and in your relationships. To the average person, ethics means “honesty,” “integrity” or “fairness.” Ethical conduct involves putting these values to work in your choices and behavior.

In your workplace relationships, the presence (or absence) of ethical conduct leads to judgments about the integrity of the Division of Housing and Food Service (DHFS). Public trust of the organization depends on the ethical conduct of its employees.

To determine if you are upholding the public trust by behaving in an ethical manner, ask yourself:

- Is the activity legal? (Will I be violating either civil law or university policy?) If you do not know, ask your supervisor and get an answer in writing if necessary.
- Is it balanced? (Is it fair to everyone in the short term as well as the long term?)
- Does it promote “win-win” relationships?
- How will it make me feel about myself? (Will it make me proud? Would I feel good if my behavior was published in the newspaper? Would I feel good if my family knew about it?)
- Will it contribute to the positive image of DHFS or UT Austin?

Ethical conduct is everyone’s responsibility. Each employee has a role to play in maintaining high ethical standards for DHFS. This means working to support an environment where honesty, fairness and integrity are expected and required. Such an environment does not tolerate ignorance of the law, misunderstanding, apathy, negligence or intentional wrongdoing.
This document provides information that will help you navigate the situations you are likely to encounter in your job. However, every-day decision-making often involves “gray areas” that may not be clearly addressed in policy.

When you are unsure or have a question of ethics, always talk with your supervisor first. Do not make assumptions when there's any doubt whether an action or decision is appropriate. When you encounter a “gray area,” always get supervisory approval before taking any action. (Written approval is the safest.)

DHFS expects and appreciates each employee’s commitment to ensure the division’s continued success.

**DEFINITION OF TERMS**

**Ethics**
A system of moral principles.

The rules of conduct recognized in respect to a particular group or activity (as in, “workplace ethics”)

**Principles**
Accepted rules of action or conduct.

Guiding sense of the requirements and obligations of right conduct.

**Standards**
Rules or principles used as a basis for judgment.

Those morals, ethics, habits, etc., established by authority as acceptable.

**Values**
A quality desirable as a means or as an end in itself.

**Honesty**
truthfulness, sincerity, or frankness.

freedom from deceit or fraud.

**Fairness**
Being free from bias or injustice; evenhandedness.

**Integrity**
Adherence to moral and ethical principles; soundness of moral character; honesty.

*Adapted from dictionary.com, retrieved August 2014*
COMMITMENTS

The Division of Housing and Food Service makes these five commitments to student residents, suppliers, employees, the university community, and the people of the state of Texas. All DHFS employees participate in upholding these commitments. The five commitments are:

1. To be attentive and strive to maximize the value, quality and success of the operation.
2. To be the best consumer and emphasize fair competition and long-lasting relationships.
3. To treat everyone fairly and with the dignity and respect due all human beings.
4. To continue pursuing the goal of having a work environment that values diversity and inclusion.
5. To act as responsible and responsive citizens in a moral, ethical and beneficial manner to the university and the people of the State of Texas.

VALUED INDIVIDUAL TRAITS

In order to fulfill these commitments, it is important for all employees to be:

- Dedicated and loyal to our organization and the university
- Law-abiding
- Honest and trustworthy
- Responsible and reliable
- Truthful and accurate
- Fair and cooperative
- Economical in using division and university resources

UT AUSTIN COMPLIANCE AND ETHICS GUIDE

In addition to the information in this manual, DHFS employees should follow the guidelines in the UT Austin Compliance and Ethics Guide. This document can be found at http://www.utexas.edu/administration/oic/cts/cw100e/CEGOOnline.pdf.

REPORTING RESPONSIBILITY

If you observe or learn of a situation that violates ethical standards, notify the area’s supervisor immediately. If the problem is not resolved, notify the next-level supervisor.
POLICIES & PROCEDURES

The following are policies and workplace procedures that apply to all DHFS employees. These rules help us to fulfil the 5 commitments discussed above.

Some of these guidelines come from the UT Austin Handbook of Operating Procedures and Handbook of Business Procedures. Others come from state or federal law. Some are based upon UT Austin Human Resource Services best practices, and others are DHFS-specific rules.

This is not an exhaustive list of policies and procedures. There are other rules that apply to division employees. This document focuses on guidelines related to ethical conduct.

Contents

Purchasing .................................................................................................5
Cash Controls .........................................................................................6
Samples and Demonstration Materials ..................................................7
Discarded or Surplus Material ...............................................................8
Confidential Information .........................................................................9
Use of University Resources .................................................................10
Use of University Vehicles ......................................................................11
Use of Telephones ..................................................................................13
Use of Division Computers .....................................................................14
Employee Meal Plans ...........................................................................17
Breaks and Meal Periods .........................................................................18
Time Reporting .......................................................................................20
Gifts, Prizes, and Solicitation .................................................................22
Awards to Employees ............................................................................26
Awards to Non-Employees .....................................................................28
Employee Travel Regulations ...............................................................29
Conferences and Trade Shows ..............................................................31
Purchasing

All purchasing requires approval. This universal standard applies to all areas of the division.

Fiscal Agents

The Executive Director and Directors of DHFS are designated as Fiscal Agents. Fiscal Agents are responsible for ensuring that finances are handled in a responsible manner. All expenditures must receive the signed approval of the appropriate Fiscal Agent.

Purchasing Authority and Approval

DHFS purchasing policies follow the highest ethical business standards and comply with federal, state, and UT Austin regulations. The process of identifying vendor sources, seeking HUB vendors (Historically Underutilized Businesses), and evaluating bids serves to encourage appropriate competition. These procedures allow the division to maximize value while ensuring quality, performance, and a vendor’s ability to meet delivery schedules.

Most large-scale purchases must follow a competitive bid process and receive approval through the UT Purchasing Office. This includes supply purchases of $5000 or higher, as well as furniture, appliances, linens, and all non-food equipment. State contract commodities also must be purchased through UT Purchasing. Food Service Purchasing handles the purchase of whole food and supplies to support the Food Service operation.

For smaller-scale purchasing, authority is delegated to internal purchasing agents, including some managers and supervisors. These internal purchasing agents are authorized to complete supply purchases of less than $5000. For such purchases, seeking competitive bids is encouraged, if not strictly required.

Purchasing authority may be further delegated to division employees through the use of departmental credit cards (ProCards; see below) and specific requests for approval (e.g. Purchase Orders). Residence Life employees may also use petty cash for certain purchases when other methods are not appropriate. Specific rules and dollar limitations vary by department, and are set by each Director.

In any case, all purchases must be related to the business conducted by the division, and must receive the appropriate approval in advance.
**ProCard**

Using a ProCard requires prior approval. Certain DHFS employees are designated ProCard holders. They are responsible for the appropriate use of the ProCard in their care. They also ensure signed purchase logs and receipts are turned into DHFS Accounting for processing.

Employees who check out a ProCard must have supervisory approval for the purchase. All purchases made with a ProCard require an itemized receipt to be turned in with the ProCard. ProCard users are also responsible for making sure they are not charged sales tax for the purchase.

**Cash Controls**

Cash transactions are strictly controlled. All cashiers are required to complete a cash handling course that has been approved by the Office of Internal Audits.

Cash transactions are recorded according to established procedures. Any cash received must be deposited within 24 hours.

Strict cash handling procedures exist to prevent illegal activity or improper payments. These procedures also serve to prevent any question of bribery or suspicion of impropriety.
SAMPLES AND DEMONSTRATION MATERIALS

Vendor samples, models, demonstration materials should only be used for officially sanctioned product testing in the workplace. These items should not be given to employees for private consumption away from work.

Samples not used for official product testing must be given back to the vendor, sent to a recognized charitable organization, or destroyed.

**FOOD SERVICE PRODUCT SAMPLES**

The Associate Director for Projects and Procurement is responsible for samples of food products. The Associate Director for Retail Operations handles beverage samples. The process of requesting, receiving, and testing samples is coordinated by their offices.

Typically new products and recipes are sampled first by the Food Service Management group, including the Registered Dietitian. They evaluate nutrition and quality, and determine plans for further testing. Test groups typically include students and Food Service employees, and may include customers or other appropriate individuals. Student involvement and feedback will be pursued at every possible opportunity.

Any unsolicited samples received by Food Service employees should be sent to the Director for Projects and Procurement for evaluation.

**SAMPLES AND TASTING IN DINING CENTERS AND RETAIL UNITS**

When vendors wish to hold a tasting event for customers in Food Service units, a DHFS employee must be present at all times with the vendor. The vendor may not hand customers the samples. The vendor may discuss nutrition and answer product-related questions. The vendor may not market the product or compare it to competitors’ products.

**FACILITIES AND BUILDING SERVICES PRODUCT SAMPLES**

Samples of furniture, upholstery, tile, and other building materials and supplies are always requested and received by a Facilities or Building Services Manager or Director. The appropriate Manager or Director will coordinate testing and evaluation.
**DISCARDED OR SURPLUS MATERIAL**

**Employees may not take discarded university materials for personal use.** This includes all materials received through residence hall trash collection. This also includes leftover food from the dining centers.

Empty boxes are the exception to this rule. Employees may take empty boxes for personal use with supervisory approval.

**Used Items Given to Employees (By a Resident)**

Student residents may give an employee previously owned materials as an expression of appreciation. The student must provide a written statement describing the gift. The employee must show this statement to their supervisor to request permission to accept the item(s).

Once the supervisor has approved the request, the employee may remove the item(s) from university property. This should be done outside of work hours when the employee is “off the clock.”

**Surplus Food Stuffs During Closures**

At the end of each semester or the beginning of long breaks, the dining centers may have surplus food stuffs left over. This applies to perishable food that can’t be kept safely over the break to be served later.

Employees may not take home this food. The food may be prepared as staff meals to support Food Service employees working while the dining center is closed.

Food not used in this manner may be donated by Food Service to a charitable organization. The charity takes responsibility for the safe handling of the food and distributes it free of charge to people or organizations in need.

**Labels From Products**

Employees may not remove or redeem labels from university-owned food products for personal gain (goods, services, contest entries, etc.). This includes discarded packaging.
CONFIDENTIAL INFORMATION

Employees may be exposed to confidential or sensitive information in the course of their work. This information should only be shared with appropriate staff members, and only for a legitimate business need. Employees must never use their access to information for non-work related purposes.

If an employee is not sure whether certain information should be shared, the employee should keep the information confidential until receiving supervisory approval to release it.

EMPLOYMENT VERIFICATIONS

Requests for employment references for current or former division employees should be coordinated with DHFS HR. Division employees may not provide references without DHFS HR approval.

Anyone receiving a request for a reference or employment verification should refer the requestor to DHFS HR. The HR team and the manager will review the request and respond appropriately.

CATEGORY-I DATA AND FERPA

Category-I data is university data that is protected specifically by federal or state law, or university rules and regulations. Employees who have access to Category-I data are responsible for safeguarding that data and maintaining the confidentiality required.

Category-I data may include confidential student data, which is protected by FERPA (Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974). Under FERPA, students’ personally identifiable information in educational records is protected. Students can restrict distribution of directory information (such as name, address, major, etc.). Non-directory information (such as SSN or student financial information) may not be disclosed without prior written consent of the student.

Employees who have access to student data are responsible for knowing and adhering to the confidentiality standards required by FERPA and other university policies.
USE OF UNIVERSITY RESOURCES

University resources should only be used for official university business. Use of any division resources for other than official university business is considered an unauthorized and improper act. This includes facilities, supplies, equipment, and personnel (employee time).

Office Supplies

Office supplies provided by the university are not for personal use.

Personal Business

Use of university equipment and other resources (including staff time) for personal business purposes is prohibited.

University property may not be used for the benefit of a business or company in which the employee has a financial or participating interest.

University offices or equipment may not be used to make items for sale. Also, university offices or equipment may not be used to perform non-university work for a private concern or for compensation.

Refer to Handbook of Operating Procedures 4-1120-PM, Use of University Physical Facilities, Equipment, or Other Resources by Faculty and Staff, for more information.

Desks, Lockers, and Storage Closets

DHFS-owned storage closets or cabinets located in work areas should not be used for storage of personal belongings.

DHFS-owned desks, lockers or cabinets that are in a personal office space or are otherwise assigned to an employee may be used to store personal belongings, but employees should not expect privacy. DHFS property, including work areas, lockers, and desks can be inspected at any time. Supervisors have the right to open and inspect these areas as they deem appropriate.
USE OF UNIVERSITY VEHICLES

Employees may only use university vehicles to conduct official university business. Vehicles may not be used for personal errands, including purchasing food or drinks. The only exception to this rule would be during out-of-town trips using a university vehicle.

Authorization and Logs

Division employees must complete a driver safety course to be authorized to drive university vehicles. Authorized drivers must also maintain an acceptable driving record. Drivers are expected to follow appropriate sign-out procedures and track vehicle use and mileage. The Central Office maintains vehicle mileage logs and sign-out records.

Vehicle Use Around Meal Periods and Breaks

Employees using a university vehicle must park the vehicle on UT property during breaks or meal periods. With supervisory approval, university vehicles may be used for staff to travel to a meal at one of the DHFS Food Service units. Employees may not take a university vehicle to an off-campus location for their break/meal.

If the employees are performing work across campus from the parking space assigned to that vehicle, they do not necessarily need to bring the vehicle back to its original location during a break or meal period. With supervisory approval, employees may park the vehicle in another appropriate university parking space during their break.

In any case, employees must include travel time to the desired meal/break location during their allotted meal or break time. No additional break time will be given for this purpose.

Out-of-Town Trips

Division employees must have supervisory approval to use university vehicles for travel outside the Austin city limits. The Central Office has gasoline credit cards that employees may use during authorized out-of-town trips. Employees should request use of the gas card from the Central Office when scheduling use of the vehicle.

The gas card will be signed out to the responsible staff member at the start of the trip. This person is responsible for turning in the card and receipts for all fuel purchases within 24 hours of returning from the trip. Gas cards should only be used to purchase fuel.
Residence Life Staff Moves

University vehicles may be used for Residence Life employees to move their personal belongings from one residential area to another when staffing changes require them to change residences. Supervisory approval is required.
USE OF TELEPHONES

**Personal Calls – DHFS Phone Lines**

Employees may occasionally make or receive brief personal calls using DHFS phone lines. This is a privilege that must not be abused.

**Personal Mobile Phones**

Employees may occasionally make or receive brief personal calls or text messages on their personal cell phones while at work. Supervisors have the authority to restrict the use of personal phones to certain areas or certain times. For example, personal calls and texts are not allowed in Food Service work areas.

**Abuse of Personal Calls Privilege**

Personal communications must not disrupt normal business operation. Any abuse of this policy, including excessively frequent calls or texts, or excessively long calls will result in disciplinary action.

**DHFS-Owned On-Call Mobile Phones**

Employees carrying mobile phones owned by the division while serving on call may not use these phones for personal calls.

**Work-Related International Calls**

Some employees may be provided with a long distance authorization code, if their jobs require them to make international calls.

The code may only be used for work-related calls. This includes, calls to students or vendors, etc. for business purposes. Employees must not use the long distance code for personal calls.

Employees with a long distance code are responsible for reviewing the monthly call log online and reporting any unusual activity to their supervisor.
USE OF DIVISION COMPUTERS

These guidelines establish the basic policy of DHFS for the use, protection and preservation of electronic information and information systems. The guidelines also provide a legal basis for action in the event of misuse or loss of university information assets. These rules apply to all DHFS users and to all information processed by any computing device.

UT AUSTIN ACCEPTABLE USE POLICY

Under the UT Austin Acceptable Use Policy, guidelines are based on the following underlying principles:

- Information resources are provided to support the essential mission of UT Austin.
- UT Austin policies, UT System regulations, state and federal law govern your use of information resources.
- You are expected to use information resources with courtesy, respect, and integrity.
- The information resources infrastructure is provided for the entire campus. This infrastructure is finite and requires millions of dollars to maintain, and all users are expected to use it responsibly.
- Simply because an action is easy to do technically does not mean it is legal or even appropriate.

EXPECTATION OF PRIVACY AND INAPPROPRIATE ACTIVITY

Employees should not expect privacy for any data stored or any activity performed on DHFS-owned devices. Supervisors and IT staff may become aware of suspicious activity in the course of their job. If there is any cause for concern, a more thorough audit will be performed.

UT Information Security Office (ISO) also employs a system of tools and audits to ensure the security of the university’s computer networks. Activity flagged by the ISO as a security concern will be investigated and addressed.

Employees found to have willfully engaged in inappropriate computer activity will face disciplinary action.
**USE AND SECURITY POLICY**

All employees are required to follow the requirements of UTS165 – UT System Information Resources Use and Security Policy. The following points reflect the content of that document that is most applicable to all employees:

**Choose a strong password for your UT EID** and any other work-related account. A strong password is constructed so that another user or a “hacker” program cannot easily guess it. Strong passwords meet requirements for a minimum number of characters and often contain a combination of letters, numbers, and special characters (!, @, #, $, %, etc.). Strong passwords should never include any personal information like your birthday or SSN.

**Do not share your passwords with anyone.** This includes your supervisor and other coworkers. Passwords protect you. The safest thing is always to memorize your passwords. You should avoid writing passwords down if at all possible. A secure UT Solution for password management is [https://stache.utexas.edu](https://stache.utexas.edu). This will require you to remember your UT EID password, but will allow you to safely store other work-related passwords.

**Be sensitive to the privacy rights of customers and staff.** Misusing student information can be a violation of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). Discussing or sharing other people’s private information will be grounds for disciplinary action.

**Report potential security breaches immediately.** If you have any reason to suspect computer security may have been compromised, tell your supervisor.

**Protect the information you access electronically.** Take the same level of care as you would if it were on paper.

**Avoid using more of the network’s computer resources than you need to do your job.** Print only when necessary. Don’t save multiple copies of the same file or document. Delete unnecessary files.

**Use computer resources for approved business purposes.** Limited, occasional personal use is permitted, as long as it does not result in a cost or risk for DHFS. For example, checking your personal email on a DHFS computer during your break may be OK, but downloading a file or clicking on a link that might contain a virus would expose DHFS to risk.

**The use of DHFS computer and information resources for personal monetary gain will be subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination.**

**Do not make personal copies of anything installed on a DHFS computer.** This includes software, files, or any other data. If you need to copy something for your work, ask your supervisor for permission first.
Do not take any university-owned computer hardware or software away from the job site without prior approval. Portable devices (tablets, laptops, etc.) and other equipment that is checked out to you through the appropriate process may be taken off campus. For all other computer equipment, you must have written approval of the Director of Business Services to remove the item. Doing so without permission will be considered theft of university property and may be grounds for termination.

Do not download software without permission from the Information Technology Manager. DHFS Information Technology (IT) staff handle software updates. Any new software must be part of an official license agreement or must be free of charge. If you are prompted to download an update for any software, contact DHFS IT for assistance before taking any action.

Do not store Category-I Data on your computer. Category-I Data is typically sensitive or confidential information that is protected by law from being released. Such information should only be stored on authorized systems, such as the Payroll system, not on an individual’s computer. For more information on Category-I Data, see http://security.utexas.edu/policies/data_classification.html.
EMPLOYEE MEAL PLANS

Discounted staff meal plans are provided to division employees for several reasons:

- To facilitate interaction with residents.
- To help employees stay abreast of food program changes.
- To allow for more efficient use of staff time because of proximity.
- To bring all employees into our facilities so that they may better understand the full scope of our operation.

The discounted meal price in the all-you-care-to-eat dining centers is specifically for division employees. Employees wishing to treat a friend, colleague or family member to a meal in our dining centers should ask the cashier to swipe one staff meal and charge the other at the cash price.

Dine In Dollars are also meant to be used during and surrounding the hours when the employee is working. **Abuse of the meal discount can be cause for disciplinary action.**
BREAKS AND MEAL PERIODS

**Meal Periods (Unpaid)**

Employees generally receive an unpaid (off-the-clock) meal period of 30 to 60 minutes during each work shift, if the work shift is at least a certain length (typically 5 or 6 hours). The length and timing of meal periods depends on factors such as shift length and unit-specific rules.

**Breaks (Paid)**

Employees typically may take a paid (on-the-clock) break of 15 minutes during a 4-hour work shift, when time permits. An employee working an 8-hour day would generally receive two 15-minute breaks. The number and timing of the 15-minute breaks depends on factors such as shift length and unit-specific rules. These 15-minute breaks may not be saved up, combined or added onto the unpaid meal period. If workload causes an employee to miss a 15-minute break, it cannot be made up on another day.

**Scheduling of Meals and Breaks**

Meal period and break schedules are agreed upon with the supervisor and are subject to guidelines set by Human Resource Services and DHFS HR. Employees are expected to follow the established schedule. If a pattern of abuse develops, the supervisor will take appropriate disciplinary action up to and including termination.

Employees must include travel time to and from meal or break locations in the time allotted for the meal or break. Any additional time requires prior supervisory approval. Timesheets should accurately reflect any additional off-the-clock break or meal time.

**Nursing Mothers**

Under the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA), nursing mothers are allowed reasonable break time to express milk as frequently as needed during the work day for up to one year after the child’s birth. The 15 minute paid breaks can be used for this purpose. If additional break time beyond the allotted 15-minute paid break is needed, this would be off-the-clock time. Employees should discuss scheduling with their supervisor.
**TOBACCO USE ON BREAKS**

UT Austin is a Tobacco-Free campus. Employees who use tobacco products must leave university property to do so. No additional break time will be granted for this purpose.
TIME REPORTING

All DHFS employees are expected to accurately record their time using the appropriate timekeeping system.

**Intentional or willful falsification of time records is a serious infraction that will result in disciplinary action up to and including dismissal.**

**TIME CLOCKS**

Employees who use a time clock are expected to clock in and out for their shift and for unpaid meal periods. These employees must communicate to their supervisor any missed punches or other difficulty using the time clock. At the end of the period, these employees will review and approve their time sheet. The employee should verify the accuracy of both work time and time off (if eligible for sick, vacation, etc.).

**ONLINE TIMESHEETS**

Employees who record their time online are expected to accurately report the actual hours worked and record appropriate time off (sick, vacation, etc.). These employees are responsible for submitting their time sheet for approval each week.

**ACCURACY AND CORRECTIONS**

All employees are responsible for ensuring their time sheets are accurate and conform to applicable UT Austin and DHFS policies. Timesheet corrections should follow appropriate procedures to ensure the original week’s time is corrected.

**THEFT OF TIME**

Reporting hours as work time that were not actually worked is considered theft of time. This includes exaggerating or padding hours. Theft of time will result in disciplinary action up to and including dismissal.

**WORKING “OFF THE CLOCK”**

Employees should not perform work that is not reflected on their timesheets. Supervisors should not ask employees to perform work “off the clock.” This would be a violation of labor laws and university policy.
It is especially important that employees in titles that are Non-Exempt (from the Fair Labor Standards Act) receive credit on each week’s timesheet for all the hours they work that week. **Non-Exempt employees must never work off the clock or be asked to work off the clock.**
GIFTS, PRIZES, AND SOLICITATION

As an organization, our continuing objective is to provide our residents with the highest quality facilities, services and products at the best possible price. The following guidelines on gifts and prizes allow us to operate within ethical boundaries while maximizing the value for our residents.

GIFTS TO BE USED AS PRIZES FOR STUDENT PROGRAMMING & PROMOTIONS

With appropriate written approval, employees and student leaders may solicit area businesses for donation of merchandise to be given away at student programming and scheduled events. The rules and approval process is different for events sponsored by student organizations, and events or promotions sponsored by DHFS units. The following conditions apply to all:

- There must be a clear and direct benefit to students.
- These gifts may not be used for personal benefit by event organizers or employees.
- Solicited gifts should not exceed $50 in value. Exceptions require written approval from the appropriate Director.
- Employees and student leaders must not agree to provide any kind of service to the vendor in exchange for the gift. On the day of the event DHFS may recognize vendors who made contributions.

STUDENT ORGANIZATIONS

Student leaders and student organizations who wish to solicit donations of merchandise for student programming purposes must obtain written approval from the appropriate supervisor or advisor. A standardized solicitation letter should be used.
**FOOD SERVICE PROMOTIONS**

When merchandise is provided by vendors to be given as prizes at a promotional event, the giveaway must be approved by the UT Legal Office. Typically, one of two scenarios is required:

- There is an educational component to the giveaway. For example, a trivia contest would be allowed, but a lottery would not.
- The giveaway is a door prize, meaning everyone has equal chance to win. Tickets must not be sold for this purpose.

Promotions that feature a free gift with purchase are part of a formal contract with a vendor that includes a marketing allowance. The gift items are technically not given to DHFS by the vendor; the cost is included in this marketing allowance.

**OTHER EVENTS SPONSORED BY DHFS UNITS**

Solicitation of any donations requires approval of the appropriate Director and UT Legal.

**PRIZES FOR EMPLOYEE TRAINING OR TEAM DAYS**

Prizes and favors for training, team days, staff competition, and unit reward or recognition should typically be purchased with funds budgeted for this purpose. Any exceptions require Director approval and may require the approval of the UT Legal Office.

**GIFTS FROM OUTSIDE VENDORS, CONTRACTORS AND SUPPLIERS**

Division employees may not accept prizes or gifts from vendors, contractors or suppliers for their personal use. Anything that might be considered a “kick-back” may not be solicited or accepted. A kick-back would be a gift or other benefit from a vendor in exchange for making a business decision that would benefit that vendor.

Employees may not accept anything that might be intended to influence a business decision. Accepting gifts and other special favors may constitute a criminal offense, as well as an ethical violation.

Often external vendors, contractors or suppliers will offer to take employees to lunch. Accepting such a meal can be considered a “kick-back.” Instead, employees should invite the individuals to eat in one of the division dining centers. Contact the Central Office to request Guest Meal Cards for this purpose (guest names must be provided). **Any exceptions to this policy require supervisory approval.**

November 2015
**Holiday and Customer Appreciation Gifts from Vendors**

When vendors or trading partners send appreciation gifts to DHFS, such as cookies or a holiday basket, these must be freely shared with all employees in the area. They should be received by a manager or supervisor and then placed in a break room or common area for all to enjoy. Gifts that cannot be shared should not be accepted.

**Gifts to Employees from Students, Parents, Hall Government or Conference Organizations**

Division employees may accept unsolicited gifts from students, parents, hall governments or conference organizations under certain conditions:

First, the gift must be valued at or below $50. Second, the employee must notify their supervisor and request written permission to keep the item.

Alternatively, the employee may choose not to accept the gift.

Division employees may not accept monetary gifts (including tips) from students, parents, hall governments or conference organizations.

**Gifts Between Supervisors and Employees**

Supervisors should use caution when accepting gifts from employees or teams they supervise. Accepting these gifts can create the appearance of unfairness. These gifts should be discouraged except for very special occasions, such as weddings, funerals and the birth of children.

Supervisors should also use caution when giving gifts to those they supervise. Small appreciation gifts given equally to all members of the supervisor’s team are generally acceptable. Gifts to individual team members should only be given on very special occasions.

It is not the intention of this policy to interfere with the natural development of relationships. Rather, it is intended to prevent any appearance of favoritism.

The appropriate Director must approve any gifts that exceed $50 in value.
**Workplace Collections For Special Occasions**

Employees may wish to take up a collection to benefit a coworker who is celebrating a special occasion or facing a hardship. These collections may only be done in the workplace if contributions are strictly voluntary and anonymous. Supervisors should never directly ask employees to contribute.

A suggestion to keep these anonymous is to send around a card for signatures with a separate envelope for donations. This way everyone can sign the card and those who wish to contribute can do so anonymously. No employee should be pressured to give.

These collections must not be done in advance to accumulate a pool of money to be distributed at another time.

**Sales or Solicitation Between Employees**

Division employees may not solicit donations or sell merchandise, raffle tickets, event tickets or any other items during work time or on university property.

Only university-sanctioned or university-sponsored fundraisers, such as the annual Hearts of Texas campaign, are allowed.

Sales or other solicitations between co-workers are only acceptable if done outside of work hours and away from university property.

Supervisors should never ask someone they supervise (directly or indirectly) to purchase anything or donate to any cause. Employees may feel pressure or an obligation to purchase something being sold by a supervisor.

*See UT System Rules and Regulations of the Board of Regents, Rule 80103 for more information.*
AWARDS TO EMPLOYEES

**MONETARY AWARDS**

Monetary awards to employees must be processed through Payroll Services. Such an award (in any amount) is taxable income. Award payments are considered “supplemental income” under IRS guidelines. As such, they are subject to a flat percentage for federal withholding that may be different from the employee’s usual withholding percentage.

These awards must be part of a formal awards program that has been approved in advance by the Vice President for Student Affairs. DHFS Payroll handles approval requests and award payment processing.

**GIFT CERTIFICATES AND GIFT CARDS FOR EMPLOYEES**

Gift certificates and gift cards may not be given to employees. These would also be considered taxable income, but the university does not have a way to withhold the required taxes.

**MERCHANDISE AWARDS FOR LENGTH OF SERVICE OR SAFETY ACHIEVEMENT**

Length of service awards and recognition of safety achievement must be awarded as part of a meaningful presentation. It must be clear that the merchandise is not additional compensation disguised as an award. Merchandise awards for safety or length of service with a fair market value of over $400 must be included in the employee’s taxable income.

**OTHER TYPES OF MERCHANDISE AWARDS**

Merchandise awards to employees with a fair market value of over $50 must be included in an employee’s taxable income. This applies to awards for any purpose other than length of service or safety.

**FAIR MARKET VALUE OF MERCHANDISE AWARDS**

The purchase price of a merchandise award is considered the fair market value. However, if the item is personalized (inscribed), the fair market value is zero. **Work with DHFS Payroll if an award’s value requires it to be included in the employee’s taxable income.**
**USE OF PROCARD**

The ProCard may be used to purchase merchandise awards for employees. All rules regarding value and type of award apply.

Refer to Handbook of Business Procedures 9.1.8.1 for more information on gifts to employees.

**FAREWELL CELEBRATIONS**

To recognize the contributions of an employee who is retiring or otherwise leaving employment on good terms, coworkers may wish to hold a farewell celebration. The departing employee’s supervisor and team may plan a celebration that fits the desires and culture of the work group.

Celebrations held during the work day should be kept to a reasonable length, and should not interrupt essential business. Typically employees attend farewell celebrations on break time. Some supervisor discretion is permitted to allow limited work time to prepare for and attend a celebration, but this must be managed equitably throughout the team.

DHFS will provide some refreshments for an event honoring an employee who is leaving employment after a certain length of service with the division. For instructions and eligibility requirements see the request form, located at www.utexas.edu/student/housing/forms_public/cake_request.php. The departing employee’s supervisor should make the request.

Supervisors and coworkers may bring additional refreshments as desired, as long as contributions are voluntary. In some cases, refreshments may be purchased with division funds. This requires the approval of the appropriate Director and available funds budgeted for such a purpose.
AWARDS TO NON-EMPLOYEES

AWARDS VALUED OVER $50

Monetary or merchandise awards to non-employees, including residents, that exceed a fair market value of $50 must be processed through DHFS Accounting.

For either a merchandise or monetary award, DHFS Accounting prepares documentation for the Office of Accounting. Award recipients must provide their permanent address and SSN for issuance of 1099-MISC form.

The ProCard may be used to purchase merchandise awards or gift cards or certificates for non-employee awards.

Work with DHFS Accounting any time an award valued over $50 is to be given to a non-employee.

AWARDS OF $50 OR LESS

DHFS must keep a log of monetary awards and gift cards or certificates, regardless of the amount. This record must include the recipient’s name and the explanation of the award. Work with DHFS Accounting to document these awards properly.

If the ProCard is used to purchase an award, the Prize Log must be sent to the Office of Accounting with the ProCard records.

FAIR MARKET VALUE OF MERCHANDISE AWARDS

The purchase price of a merchandise award is considered the fair market value. However, if the item is personalized (inscribed), the fair market value is zero.

GIFT CERTIFICATES AND GIFT CARDS FOR STUDENT EMPLOYEES

Gift cards or gift certificates may not be given to student employees if the award is based on their role as an employee. The award must be based on the student employee’s role as a student for a gift card or gift certificate to be appropriate.

When the award is based on the student role, the rules above for Awards to Non-Employees apply.

Refer to Handbook of Business Procedures 9.1.8.2 for more information on awards to non-employees.
EMPLOYEE TRAVEL REGULATIONS

Travel for university business falls under many rules and regulations. All employees who travel are expected to follow the appropriate procedures and adhere to these rules. The Central Office can provide direction and assistance.

Refer to the UT Austin Handbook of Business Procedures, Part 11 for more information on UT travel policies.

APPROVAL FOR TRAVEL

Business travel away from the workplace for more than a half-day requires prior approval by the appropriate Director. Travelers must demonstrate how the trip will benefit DHFS.

TRAVEL ARRANGEMENTS

Some travel arrangements must be made through the Central Office, and others must be made by the traveler.

- **Air Travel:** The Central Office works with UT Travel Management Services to make all air travel arrangements. Travelers may not book their own airfare and be reimbursed.
- **Lodging:** Travelers are responsible for making their own hotel reservations. Travelers will pay for lodging up front, and request reimbursement.
- **Rental Cars:** If a rental car is approved, the Central Office will make the appropriate reservations, working with state contracted agencies. Travelers will pay for the rental car and request reimbursement.
- **Conference Registration:** The Central Office can assist with conference registration, or the traveler may self-register and request reimbursement.

TRAVEL REIMBURSEMENTS

Travelers must complete a Travel Expense Record and turn in itemized receipts for all reimbursable expenses. Only the actual expenses are reimbursed. If reimbursable travel costs exceed the approved budget or designated limit, the traveler is responsible for the difference.
Reimbursable expenses can include airfare, lodging, meals (including gratuity), parking, some baggage fees, taxi or shuttle, rental cars, and mileage for personal vehicle use (if approved). Planned expenses should be approved in advance, as not all expenses are reimbursable. Unit-specific budget limits and other restrictions may apply. Entertainment expenses outside what is included in conference registration are the employee’s responsibility.
CONFERENCES AND TRADE SHOWS

APPROVAL

Employees must have prior approval from the appropriate Director to attend a conference, trade show or food show. Follow the travel regulations and expense and reimbursement policies described above.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

Employees attending conferences and trade shows must follow the same rules and ethical guidelines as they would in their regular workplace. Employees must be especially careful to adhere to the rules regarding conflicts of interest and gifts. Refer to the UT Austin Handbook of Operating Procedures 5-2010 for more information.

GIFTS AND SPECIAL FAVORS

Employees must not accept any gratuities or gifts outside the scope of normal registration. This includes free beverages, meals, or entertainment, and any other benefit that is not available equally to all conference participants.

While attending a commercial or professional conference, staff must not participate in any social event hosted by a commercial entity that is by invitation only or by word of mouth invitation. Events must be official, open to all attendees, and included in conference registration.

CONTESTS

Employees may only enter contests that are freely available for all conference participants. Employees who win a prize should request approval from their supervisor to keep the prize for personal use. Alternatively, the employee may choose to put the prize to division use, or choose not to enter the contest or not to accept the prize. Prizes valued above $50 will become property of DHFS for division use. Prizes valued above $50 that cannot be put to division use must not be accepted. For example, something like a digital camera could be put to division use, but a vacation package should not be accepted.
PRODUCT SAMPLES

Vendors at trade shows may offer to send product samples to follow up after the conference. All samples related to the Food Service operation should be sent to the DHFS Purchasing Office, Attn: Associate Director for Projects and Procurement. Facilities-related samples should be sent directly to the appropriate Facilities Manager or Supervisor.

Conference or Trade Show attendees should not accept product samples for personal use.