

University Hospitality Policy

1. Introduction

This document defines the provision of internal hospitality at Edge Hill for the benefit of all University staff and associated third parties for key university activities such as open days, VIP visits, external events, and commercial activities or when University departments are hosting important visitors or high-profile meetings including external guests.

This Hospitality Policy is to outline the guidelines and principles for providing internal hospitality at the University for key university activities to ensure that it is used appropriately, for valid business reasons, and that it is offered in a consistent, fair, and financially responsible manner that ensures that the university complies with all licensing, food safety and other relevant regulations that apply to the provision of food services.

By adhering to this Policy, the university aims to provide high-quality hospitality that enhances the experience of staff, students, and visitors while maintaining financial responsibility.

This Policy applies to all departments within the University and will be reviewed regularly to ensure compliance and to make any necessary adjustments to ensure it continues to meet the University's needs and is in line with budgetary requirements.

2. Rationale For the Policy

Hospitality at EHU is provided by the university's internal Catering department under the management of Facility Management (FM), and all hospitality taking place on university premises must be requested through the internal Catering team. This is critical as the Catering team is responsible for ensuring compliance with food safety legislation when food service is provided on Campus and any licensing conditions if alcohol is included. Any breaches of food safety legislation can have significant health, financial, and reputational implications for the University. Therefore, for this reason, no staff outside of the Catering & Hospitality teams should purchase, deliver, or prepare food items for Hospitality events.

The 'in-house' service delivers a more cost-efficient use of university resources than using an external supplier. The direct cost to the University of Internal Hospitality is the wholesale cost of food and drinks. Costs from external providers will include labour costs and VAT on the total cost so generally will be more expensive than the internal offer.

The general rule is that the use of external catering providers is not permitted. The internal Catering team will endeavour to meet all hospitality requirements but may use approved external caterers in exceptional circumstances where highly specialised requirements are needed or when the internal Hospitality team is unable to fulfil the specific requirements but will source alternative external suppliers on behalf of the client.

The only exception to the above is in the Catalyst building, where the external catering contractor based in that building is permitted to provide small-scale refreshments but only within the Catalyst building.

3. Types of Hospitality

Hospitality for EHU Staff – Refreshments and Working lunches

Internal hospitality such as lunch or refreshments at meetings should be by **exception only** and should always be approved by the budget holder in advance. The University does not budget for staff refreshments to be provided at regular staff meetings, this should only be requested within a limited number of circumstances as detailed below.

Key considerations:

- Refreshments should not be arranged for meetings that do not extend beyond 2 hours.
- Food may be provided if the meeting lasts for the majority of the day with a need for continuity over a 'lunch break' or where the timing and duration of the meeting unavoidably prevent attendees from having their normal personal meal break or it is not practical for staff to bring their own food.

Hospitality for Visitors/Business Entertaining

Refreshments for meetings involving University staff, the Board of Governors, and external guests may be permitted with the prior approval of the Budget holder where there is a 'valid business reason'. Examples of this would include providing hospitality for external examiners, visiting lecturers, external contributors to research seminars, and visiting business contacts with whom the University either has or is seeking to develop a relationship.

A key consideration will be the ratio of external guests to EHU staff, the prestige and expectations of the event, the potential of the event to improve the reputation or profile of the University, or to generate income for the university; or to further any other of its' strategic aims.

University staff hosting meetings with only one or two external guests should request vouchers for only their guests through the online hospitality system, which can be redeemed at any one of the catering outlets. The typical voucher value per person is £5.00. If required, additional funds can be added to the value of the vouchers at the point of purchase.

Key considerations:

- All hospitality should take place on the University premises.
- There must be a 'valid business reason'
- There should be more external representatives (visitors & students) than staff at any single event. If there are more members of staff than representatives receiving Hospitality, then this could result in a taxable benefit in kind for the members of staff involved and for the University.

Hospitality for Student Events

Hospitality for students and their guests is permitted for formal EHU events i.e. Open Days, Graduation & Conferences, with staff present where appropriate and required, provided that the majority present at the function are students. The type and value of hospitality should be appropriate to the nature of the student event and follow the same principles outlined above. As with all hospitality provided, the University's Catering department must be utilised.

4. General Principles Underpinning this Policy

In summary, this policy supports the following fundamental principles of internal Hospitality:

- All internal hospitality must be made through the in-house Catering team by submitting a hospitality request form.
- The Hospitality Brochure is available from the Catering department, but bespoke packages may also be available by prior agreement.
- Only those staff who have been authorised to do so, may order catering through the Hospitality service
- Budget holder approval is required in advance before ordering.
- Purchases of hospitality are not permitted on personal or university credit cards.
- Internal hospitality must be undertaken on university premises only
- Internal hospitality must not include anything other than food and non-alcoholic drinks
- Internal hospitality must be an appropriate use of university money i.e. must be a clear and valid business reason
- Internal hospitality must be appropriate to the occasion, be infrequent, and not be excessive. It cannot be requested for routine, regular staff meetings it can only be requested as an exception based on the criteria in section 2 above.