

# **Code of Ethical Fundraising Practice for the University of Bristol**

(Updated January 2013)

## **Introduction**

All those involved in fundraising for charitable organisations, whether they are fundraising professionals or volunteers, have a responsibility to donors, to the organisation, and to the cause that is being supported.

At the heart of fundraising ethics lies the need to ensure that our mission, our sense of personal integrity and the trust of the donor are not violated. This requires openness, transparency and respect.

Further, there is a critical need for the University to ensure that it does not expose itself by accepting donations from questionable or inappropriate sources.

To this end this Code of Ethical Fundraising Practice has been created for use by the University of Bristol, and in particular its Campaigns & Alumni Relations Office. The Code covers five areas of activity:

- Donor's Rights
- Fundraising Practices
- Financial Accountability
- Acceptable sources of funding
- Data Protection and Prospect Research

## **Donor's Rights**

1. All fundraising solicitations by or on behalf of the University of Bristol will disclose the University's name and the purpose for which the funds are requested. Printed solicitations (however transmitted) will also include its address or other contact information.
2. Donors and prospective donors are entitled to the following, promptly upon request:
  - the most recent annual report and financial statements;
  - confirmation of the charitable status of the University of Bristol;
  - a copy of this Code.
3. Donors and prospective donors are entitled to know, upon request, whether an individual soliciting funds on behalf of the University is a volunteer, an employee or a professional fundraiser hired by the University.

4. Donors will be encouraged to seek independent advice if the University has any reason to believe that a proposed gift might significantly affect the donor's financial position, taxable income, or relationship with other family members.
5. Donors' requests to remain anonymous will be respected as far as is legally, practically and ethically possible.
6. The privacy of donors will be respected. Any donor records that are maintained by the University will be kept confidential to the greatest extent possible. Donors have the right to see their own donor record, and to challenge its accuracy.
7. Donors and prospective donors will be treated with respect. Every effort will be made to honour their requests to:
  - limit the frequency of solicitations;
  - not be solicited by telephone or other technology;
  - receive printed material concerning the University.
8. Donors have the right to ask that their donations be allocated to a specific area of the University activity, and the University will meet these requests, wherever possible and appropriate in order to deliver its mission. (see Financial Accountability, point 3 for the treatment of restricted donations).
9. The University will respond promptly to a complaint by a donor or prospective donor about any matter that is addressed in this ethics policy. A designated member of the Campaigns and Alumni Relations Office or volunteer will attempt to satisfy the complainant's concerns in the first instance. A complainant who remains dissatisfied may request in writing a review of their complaint by the Registrar of the University of Bristol, and will be advised of the outcome of this review.

## **Fundraising Practices**

1. Fundraising solicitations on behalf of the University of Bristol will:
  - be truthful;
  - accurately describe the University's activities and the intended use of donated funds; and
  - respect the dignity and privacy of those who benefit from the University's activities.
2. Volunteers, employees and hired solicitors who solicit or receive funds on behalf of the University shall:
  - adhere to the provisions of this Code;
  - act with fairness, integrity, and in accordance with all applicable laws;
  - adhere to the provisions of applicable professional codes of ethics, standards of practice, etc.
  - cease solicitation of a prospective donor on request;

- disclose immediately to the University any actual or apparent conflict of interest; and
  - not accept donations for purposes that are inconsistent with the University's objects or mission.
3. Paid fundraisers, whether staff or consultants, will be compensated by a salary, retainer or fee, and will not be paid finders' fees, commissions or other payments based on either the number of gifts received or the value of funds raised. Compensation policies for fundraisers, including performance-based compensation practices (such as salary increases or bonuses) will be consistent with the University's policies and practices that apply to non-fundraising personnel.
  4. The University will not sell or exchange personal details of donors.
  5. The Vice-Chancellor will be informed at least annually of the number, type and disposition of complaints received from donors or prospective donors about matters that are addressed in this code.

## **Financial Accountability**

1. The University of Bristol's financial affairs will be conducted in a responsible manner, consistent with the ethical obligations of stewardship and the legal requirements of national regulators.
2. All donations will be used to support the mission of the University of Bristol.
3. All restricted or designated donations will be used as agreed with the donor. If necessary due to programme or organisational changes, alternative uses will be discussed where possible with the donor or the donor's legal designate(s). If the donor is deceased or legally incompetent, and the University is unable to contact a legal designate, the donation will be used in a manner that is as consistent as possible with the donor's original intent.
4. An annual financial report produced by the Campaigns and Alumni Relations Office in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles and standards will:
  - Disclose the total amount of philanthropic income and expenditure,
  - be factual and accurate in all material respects;
5. The cost effectiveness of the University's fundraising programme will be reviewed regularly by the Vice-Chancellor.

## **Acceptable Sources of Funding**

The University of Bristol accepts funding from a wide variety of public and private sector partners that are willing to support it accomplish its mission.

The University will not accept philanthropic funding in cases where to do so would or might:

- a) compromise its status as an independent institution
- b) suppress or falsify academic research
- c) limit the freedom of enquiry
- d) create unacceptable conflicts of interest
- e) damage the University's reputation (including deterring other donors)
- f) cause any other damage, including financial, to the University of Bristol
- g) in any other way be in conflict with the values and aims of the University

The Director of Campaigns and Alumni Relations and the Registrar are advised of all donations of £50,000 or more for consideration whether, in any case, there is conflict with any of the principles set out above. If either believes that there may be cause for concern, the gift in question will be brought to the attention of the Vice-Chancellor's Advisory Group (VCAG) for determination as to whether or not the gift should be accepted. VCAG may take prior advice formally or informally from the University Council before making a decision; and if it considers that there are significant issues involved may seek advice from nominated persons unconnected to the University.

Although gifts worth less than £50,000 may not be subject to detailed scrutiny by the Director of Campaigns and Alumni Relations, the Registrar, and/or the Vice-Chancellor's Advisory Group; acceptance will nevertheless be considered by the Campaigns and Alumni Office against these ethical guidelines and may be referred for further scrutiny if there is perceived to be conflict with any of the principles set out above.

Where concerns are raised under these ethical guidelines about a gift that has already been accepted by the University, a similar process of consideration and scrutiny will be followed to that set out above in order to determine whether it is appropriate to retain the gift, to return it to the donor or to take any other action in relation to the gift.

## **Data Protection and Prospect Research**

The Campaigns and Alumni Relations Office will ensure it is in compliance with the Data Protection Act (1998), Privacy and Electronic Communications Regulations 2003 and Data Protection Principles, and follows the advice given by the University's Secretary's Office so that it does not obtain, process, store, sell or pass on data unlawfully.

The Campaigns and Alumni Relations Office will at all times be aware of the sensitivity of information gathered and held on alumni, other individuals and organisations. This will aid our compliance with data protection legislation and ensure that information acquired via all channels, particularly information not in the public domain, is treated with the utmost respect.

When using external agencies or when data may be shared with a third party, for example mailing houses and wealth screening agencies, the Campaigns and Alumni Relations Office will ensure that all issues, such as data ownership, fitness for use and confidentiality, are governed by a legally binding contract.

When conducting prospect research, the Campaigns and Alumni Relations Office will:

- Have a clear understanding of what information is fair and relevant to the purpose it is being used for
- Not use unethical methods to obtain prospect research information
- Avoid personal prejudice and bias
- Be honest and transparent with regard to their purpose and their identity when seeking information
- Understand the strengths and weaknesses of the sources of information used
- Ensure that research when presented is accurate, relevant to its purpose and timely