# Guidelines for the appropriate and ethical use of public resources

Public resources are limited, and must be used to deliver departmental services.

Generally, expenditure on staff benefits or incentives beyond normal remuneration, award entitlements or items that are explicitly allowed by [Public Sector Directives](https://www.forgov.qld.gov.au/directives-awards-and-legislation) or other Whole-of-Government or departmental policy (for example, official travel expenses or personal protective equipment) is inappropriate.

The department’s [policy](https://ppr.mpe.qed.qld.gov.au/pp/appropriate-and-ethical-use-of-public-resources-policy) defines principles for the appropriate and ethical use of public resources. The following examples show appropriate and ethical use of public resources and the relevant principles that apply. These examples should not be considered exhaustive. If you would like further guidance as to whether a particular expense is appropriate, you should contact Finance Branch through the [Services Catalogue Online](https://qldqed.service-now.com/sco/?id=sc_cat_item&sys_id=9439a2511be2dd505d17631b274bcb56) (DoE employees only). Customers and users external to the department should email [financialpolicy.finance@qed.qld.gov.au](mailto:financialpolicy.finance@qed.qld.gov.au).

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| **To boost staff morale by rewarding individuals or teams who have provided exceptional service** | |
| Consider low or no cost options such as:   * publicly acknowledging performance * a user-pays team event * using personal funds to purchase a token gift (not in the form of cash or readily convertible to cash, in line with the [Gifts and benefits procedure](https://ppr.mpe.qed.qld.gov.au/pp/gifts-and-benefits-procedure)) * (in schools) conducting an annual event to recognize staff, such as World Teachers’ Day. Schools cannot fund the event; however, P&Cs may choose to do so on behalf of the school community. P&Cs may also choose to recognise staff and volunteer contributions at any time. | *Do not* use public resources for:   * gifts or rewards for individuals or groups outside of recognised award and recognition programs (principles 1, 5 & 6 in the [policy](https://ppr.mpe.qed.qld.gov.au/attachment/appropriate-and-ethical-use-of-public-resources-policy.pdf#search=appropriate%20and%20ethical)) * catering in contravention of the [Catering and hospitality procedure](https://ppr.mpe.qed.qld.gov.au/pp/catering-and-hospitality-procedure) and [Catering guidelines](https://ppr.mpe.qed.qld.gov.au/attachment/catering-guidelines.docx) (principles 1, 5 & 6 in the [policy](https://ppr.mpe.qed.qld.gov.au/attachment/appropriate-and-ethical-use-of-public-resources-policy.pdf#search=appropriate%20and%20ethical)). |
| **To promote unity in the workplace or to promote workplace identity to customers** | |
| Do:   * Seek advice about allowable tax deductions for uniforms and laundering (purchased by staff). | *Do not* use public resources to purchase or subsidise uniforms and clothing for staff, other than where personal protective equipment (PPE) is required. (principles 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 & 6)\*\*. |
| \*\* Limited circumstances could arise where it may be appropriate to purchase or subsidise uniforms. For example, where student safety is considered at risk at offsite publicly accessible sporting events or on overseas tours. In considering these circumstances, the principles of the policy must be maintained, including an assessment of what is reasonable, defensible and economical.  Departmental funds may be used where PPE, including Sun Smart clothing is required for staff as part of their role, for example, facilities and grounds maintenance staff, boat officers and agricultural staff. Departmental funds cannot otherwise be used, e.g. for optional, celebratory or theme-based clothing. | |
| **To provide reasonable assistance for a staff member who is injured or taken ill in the workplace or on the journey to and from work** | |
| Do:   * Take preventive health, safety and wellbeing measures, such as under the department’s [Staff Wellbeing Framework](https://intranet.qed.qld.gov.au/Services/HumanResources/payrollhr/healthwellbeing/Documents/staff-wellbeing-framework.pdf), or the [Staff flu vaccination program](https://intranet.qed.qld.gov.au/Services/HumanResources/payrollhr/healthwellbeing/staffwellbeing/planningstaffwellbeingprogram/PhysicalWellbeing/Pages/staff-flu-vaccination-program.aspx) (DoE employees only) * Follow mandatory Health, safety and wellbeing and workplace rehabilitation procedures * Assure all staff members’, students’ and customers’ safety. * Use judgement in offering staff transport to medical treatment, home, or another location. | *Do not* use public resources for:   * staff medical bills, except for WorkCover claims (principle 1) * staff transport for minor ailments (principles 1 & 6). |
| **To mark a special occasion for an individual, to express sympathy for a current or former staff member, student or customer, or to maintain relationships within the local community** | |
| Consider one or more of:   * Collecting voluntary contributions * Using personal funds * Creating a personalised gift – such as a booklet or photograph containing personal messages of condolence * Reminding staff of the services provided by the department’s [Employee Assistance Program (EAP)](https://intranet.qed.qld.gov.au/Services/HumanResources/payrollhr/healthwellbeing/staffwellbeing/Pages/employeeassistanceprogram.aspx) (DoE employees only) provider, support available, and [leave entitlements](https://www.forgov.qld.gov.au/employment-policy-career-and-wellbeing/pay-benefits-and-leave/leave)   You *can* use public resources for:   * in schools, an expression of sympathy, on behalf of the students and school community, for serious illness or death of a student * ANZAC Day commemorations * reasonable decorations for customer-focussed activities, such as school formals and graduations * [special payments](https://intranet.qed.qld.gov.au/Services/Finance/expenditure/expensetypes/Pages/Special-payments.aspx) (DoE employees only), such as:   + compensation for loss of or damage to property caused by unidentified persons   + modest gifts to maintain relationships with school neighbours. | *Do not* use public resources for:   * gifts, gift cards, flowers, greeting cards, or decorations for staff or staff spaces (principles 1 & 6) * staff absences over and above employee entitlements (principle 1 & 6) * catering in contravention of the [Catering and hospitality procedure](https://ppr.mpe.qed.qld.gov.au/pp/catering-and-hospitality-procedure) and [Catering guidelines](https://ppr.mpe.qed.qld.gov.au/attachment/catering-guidelines.docx) (principles 1 & 6). |
| **To boost workplace productivity by improving staff health, fitness, and wellbeing** | |
| Consider one or more of:   * Improving access to healthy food alternatives (e.g. [user paid] fruit and vegetable snacks instead of unhealthy vending machines) * Establishing a walking group before or after hours, or during lunch * Accessing free preventive programs offered by organisations such as Queensland Health (e.g. [10,000 Steps](https://www.10000steps.org.au/), [Get Healthy Information and Coaching Service](https://www.gethealthyqld.com.au/), and [free screening and health checks](https://www.qld.gov.au/health/conditions/screening)) * Encouraging staff to use existing technology, such as step counters on smart phones, or personally purchase low cost equipment, such as pedometers * Negotiating staff discounts at local gyms, and/or (in schools) encouraging staff to access the school gym and swimming pool (in line with the [Community use of state school facilities procedure](https://ppr.mpe.qed.qld.gov.au/pp/community-use-of-state-school-facilities-procedure), and its health and safety requirements ) * Encouraging staff to access resources to support mental health and wellbeing, including the department’s [Employee Assistance Program](https://intranet.qed.qld.gov.au/Services/HumanResources/payrollhr/healthwellbeing/staffwellbeing/Pages/employeeassistanceprogram.aspx) (DoE employees only) and resources available through the [Staff wellbeing page](https://intranet.qed.qld.gov.au/Services/HumanResources/payrollhr/healthwellbeing/staffwellbeing/Pages/default.aspx) (DoE employees only) in relation to [Psychological wellbeing](https://intranet.qed.qld.gov.au/Services/HumanResources/payrollhr/healthwellbeing/staffwellbeing/planningstaffwellbeingprogram/Pages/psychologicalwellbeing.aspx) (DoE employees only)          Encouraging staff to increase financial literacy and access resources available at [Financial wellbeing](https://intranet.qed.qld.gov.au/Services/HumanResources/payrollhr/healthwellbeing/staffwellbeing/planningstaffwellbeingprogram/Pages/financialwellbeing.aspx) (DoE employees only). | *Do not* use public resources for:   * catering in contravention of the [Catering and hospitality procedure](https://ppr.mpe.qed.qld.gov.au/pp/catering-and-hospitality-procedure) and [Catering guidelines](https://ppr.mpe.qed.qld.gov.au/attachment/catering-guidelines.docx) (principles 1 & 6) * child minding, personal grooming or social activities (principles 1 & 6) * fitness equipment and/or fitness trackers purchased exclusively for staff use; gym and/or fitness program memberships; or massages for staff (principles 1 & 6). |
| **To enable staff to attend meetings, camps and excursions, or other activities for official purposes in locations other than their usual place of work** | |
| * Follow the department’s [Domestic travel procedure](https://ppr.mpe.qed.qld.gov.au/pp/domestic-travel-procedure)   You *can* use public resources for:   * overnight accommodation at the beginning or end of official travel where travelling would be unreasonable or unsafe (e.g. where the officer needs to be at a different location early in the morning, or to avoid driving when tired), at the travel approving officer’s discretion * expenses under [Domestic Travelling and Relieving Expenses (Directive 03/23)](https://www.forgov.qld.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0020/407621/directive-13-23-domestic-travel.pdf) or [International Travelling, Relieving and Living Expenses (Directive 10/11)](https://www.forgov.qld.gov.au/documents/directive/1011/international-travelling-relieving-and-living-expenses) where staff travel is for official purposes, including to supervise school camps, provided the expenses are not otherwise covered by the department * with the travellers’ agreement, providing minor catering, e.g. coffee, snacks, etc.) equal to or below the value of the total daily incidentals allowance in lieu of paying daily allowances to individuals . This provision also applies to purchasing shared catering for individuals working overtime in lieu of overtime meal allowances. See also, [Catering guidelines](https://ppr.mpe.qed.qld.gov.au/attachment/catering-guidelines.docx). | *Do not*:   * use public resources for:   + unofficial travel expenses like in-room movies, personal toiletries, luggage and short vehicle hire for personal use (principles 1 & 6)   + baggage and excess baggage, unless directly related to the official travel   + any expenses associated with an unofficial activity, such as optional activities on conference programs (principles 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 & 6) * claim higher airfare or accommodation expenses because of personal components of travel (e.g. extending the stay to include a weekend) (principles 1, 2 & 6) – refer to the [Domestic travel procedure](https://ppr.mpe.qed.qld.gov.au/pp/domestic-travel-procedure). |
| **To help employees improve their professional knowledge, competence, skill, capability and effectiveness.** | |
| Consider whether internal training is available that will meet the development needs.  You *can* use public resources for purchasing:   * professional development activities relevant to an employee's role. For example, as part of the employee’s professional development plan. * professional development activities for groups of employees.   Staff purchasing training should refer to the [purchasing and procurement](https://intranet.qed.qld.gov.au/Services/Procurement_Purchasing/Pages/Purchasingforyourschoolorworkunit.aspx) (DoE employees only), and the [Professional development (PD) training supply arrangement](https://intranet.qed.qld.gov.au/Services/Procurement_Purchasing/Supplyarrangements/Pages/professional-development.aspx) (DoE employees only). | *Do not*:   * use public resources for: * professional membership fees\* of employees, unless it is a specific entitlement under their relevant award / certified agreement. * approve expenditure which creates a conflict of interest * approve expenditure that provides a personal benefit to yourself except where it is a minor indirect benefit (e.g. group professional development that the approving officer attends, along with multiple colleagues). |

\*Note: Professional membership fees refer to all charges or dues required for an employee to maintain the benefits of membership in professional associations, registration/accreditation bodies or other groups. This includes joining fees, periodic fees (for example, annual fees), and other fees that are required to maintain membership. For information about payment of *blue card* fees for school-based public service employees, cleaners and teachers’ aides, refer to: [Blue card system](https://intranet.qed.qld.gov.au/Services/strategymanagement/integrity-employee-relations/Pages/blue-card.aspx) (DoE employees only).