

# Frequently Asked Questions

## Gambling Activities

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The following FAQs are intended to help [UW Medicine workforce members](#) navigate the applicable laws, policies and rules governing gambling activities. Gambling activities are activities in which a person pays money or risks something of value with the hope of winning something of greater value. Gambling activities include, but are not limited to, sports pools, betting pools, lotteries, and raffles. Gambling activities are highly regulated in Washington State and, as such, are largely incompatible with state employment and thus prohibited at UW Medicine except in very limited circumstances – which are discussed in the questions below.

If you have questions about whether a particular gambling activity is prohibited, consult with your department chair, director, supervisor, or manager before undertaking such an activity, or contact UW Medicine Compliance at [comply@uw.edu](mailto:comply@uw.edu) / 206.543.3098.

### 1. Are any gambling activities allowed at UW Medicine?

Yes, gambling activities like raffles are allowed under specific conditions. They must be part of a fundraising event organized by a UW Medicine entity and approved by senior leadership. Gambling activities must follow all the rules set by the Washington State Gambling Commission, which allow charitable and nonprofit organizations, like UW Medicine, to conduct raffles. It is important to note that fundraising events like live and/or silent auctions are not considered gambling activities. That is because the winner is the highest bidder rather than determined by chance, like with raffles. You are welcome to participate in these types of events.

### 2. What is the difference between a raffle and a drawing?

Raffles and drawings are often confused, but there is an important difference:

- Raffles involve paying money or giving something of value for a chance to win a prize. Because of this, raffles are considered a form of gambling.
- Drawings, on the other hand, are free to enter—no payment or risk is involved—so they are not considered gambling.

However, even though drawings aren't gambling, they still require approval from your department leadership. That's because they use state resources, like your time at work, and can only be done as part of preapproved work events.

### 3. Can we hold a drawing at a work event, such as a holiday party or other social event?

Yes, as long as you obtain approval from department leadership and ensure:

- All staff who participate in the event have an equal chance to win the drawing; *and*
- No money or anything of value is paid/risked by anyone for a chance to win.

**4. What about sports and other betting pools, or fantasy football – are these permitted in the workplace?**

No. Sports pools, betting pools or other forms of gambling are not permitted in the workplace or on work time. However, these and all other gambling activities are fine to do outside of work when you are not on work time. Examples of prohibited activities include but are not limited to, betting on the Super Bowl, UW athletic events, National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) Brackets for the annual basketball tournament (“March Madness”), National Basketball Association (NBA) Playoffs, election pools, and any other sports pools, betting pools, or fantasy football.

**5. Can employees ever pool their funds at work where the participants can compete for the money as a prize?**

No. You may not engage in any kind of gambling activity in the workplace except as detailed in Q&A # 1 above. You can, with senior leadership approval, organize morale-building events; however, you must avoid any pooling of money for prizes.

**6. Can I go offsite to buy a lottery ticket on my lunch break?**

Yes, you are free to purchase a lottery ticket away from the workplace and on your own time.

**7. Can several of us employees pool our funds at work to send someone out to buy lottery tickets?**

No. You cannot pool funds in the workplace to support any gambling activities. You could, however, decide to collect money for this activity when you and the others are away from work and on your own time.

**8. I went to a work-related conference paid for by UW Medicine. Each attendee was automatically eligible to win a door prize, and I won a tablet donated by a vendor. Can I keep it?**

No. Prizes won while attending work conferences and other work-related events are the property of your entity. You may either decline to accept the tablet or you may contact UW Medicine Advancement at **206.543.6472** to have the prize processed as a gift to your entity.

**9. What if I paid my own way to the same conference, including travel, lodging and conference registration fees, and used my vacation time to attend? Could I keep the door prize?**

Yes, the prohibitions only apply to work-sponsored conference attendance; not to activities done on your own time and expense.

**10. Can I use my UW Medicine business card to enter drawings while at a work-related conference?**

No. It is never appropriate to use your UW Medicine business cards (a type of state resource) to enter any kind of drawing, regardless of whether you paid for the conference yourself or UW Medicine paid for the conference.

**11. A commercial entity wants to give a presentation on-site and they have a door prize to giveaway. Is this permitted?**

No. Commercial entities are not allowed to offer and you are not allowed to accept door prizes or any other personal gifts when they come on-site. You can accept free, local education provided by vendors, including on-site vendor visits that are educational or instructional in nature.

**12. If a vendor or outside entity gives UW Medicine a gift, can we utilize it for employee morale?**

It depends on the circumstance. Contact UW Medicine Advancement at **206.543.6472** to discuss whether the gift can be accepted, and how it might be used.

## References

[UW Medicine Compliance Code of Conduct](#)

UW Medicine Compliance FAQ - [Gifts, Food, and Meals from External Sources](#)

UW Administrative Policy Statement 47.2 – [Personal Use of University Facilities, Computers and Equipment by University Employees](#)

[UW Medicine Advancement](#)

RCW Chapter 42.52, [Ethics in Public Service Act](#)

[WA State Executive Ethics Board Advisory Opinions:](#)

- 02-02A – [Use of Resources Q&A](#)
- 02-05 – [Use of State Facilities to Gamble](#)
- 98-10 – [Door Prizes](#)

[WA State Gambling Commission – Fundraising Events](#)

[WA State Gambling Commission – Raffles](#)

[WA State Law on Gambling](#)