Guidelines:
“Portable and attractive” items costing less than $5,000

Curtin University has an Assets Policy & Procedures that address the accounting and recording requirements for assets. Assets are defined as having “a purchase cost of greater than $5,000 (excluding GST) and a Useful Life of more than one year”.

Treasurer’s Instruction 410 Records of Assets also requires that “the accountable authority [Curtin’s Council] shall ensure that appropriate measures are taken to protect assets of minor value that are portable and attractive.” Such items might include, for example, laptops or PDAs. A list of portable and attractive items is provided below, although it should not be seen as exhaustive.

Curtin’s Audit & Compliance Committee, at its 5 August 2009 meeting, determined that the best way for such items to be controlled is at a local level across the University. Rather than introduce additional bureaucratic processes, it was considered that the existing requirements of the Ceasing Employment Policy & Procedures with regard to the handover of equipment are sufficient to meet the needs of Treasurer’s Instruction 410.

In particular, when a staff member ceases employment with an area, whether because of a transfer internally or in leaving Curtin's employment, the staff member's line manager is required to complete and sign off a Staff Exiting Checklist that confirms completion of various procedures, including the return of equipment.

Of course, in being able to sign the checklist as complete, the line manager must keep adequate records of what items are held by the staff member. This might be done by way of a note to the staff member's personnel file, but other methods might be equally effective.

It is not intended for prescriptive University-wide policies and procedures to be issued in this regard. However, it is important that each line manager is able to demonstrate, on request (for example by Internal Audit), that he or she has details of “portable and attractive” items in the possession of their staff. Consequently, individual Faculties and areas may wish to prepare their own guidelines in this regard.

What is a portable and attractive item?

There is no definition of “portable and attractive” and therefore in applying these guidelines reasonable common sense should apply. It is recommended that a minimum original cost threshold of $500 (excl. GST) be applied.

Items identified as being “portable and attractive” may include:

- Laptop computers
- Mobile phones
- PDAs
- Portable equipment
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What about portable and attractive items that are not allocated to an individual?

It is incumbent on any area to manage its property appropriately. It is not the intention of this document to provide prescriptive guidelines as to how this may be done, as each area will have its own needs and particularities.

For example, most areas may just need a simple spreadsheet or even manual record, whereas CITS has extensive records of computer equipment.

What about disposal of portable and attractive items?

It is incumbent on any area to manage its property appropriately. If an item is no longer of use to the area, it is probable that it has no value and therefore may be disposed of in a reasonable manner as the area sees fit. However, if the area is able to generate revenue (after costs of disposal) by disposing of the item, it would be appropriate to do so in a way that is transparent, effective and efficient, such as sale to another Curtin area or to staff.

What happens if you get the question: “I just bought a new iPhone. What do I do with my old mobile phone? Can I give it to my brother-in-law?” The answer would be NO. In managing your area’s resources, you should do so efficiently and effectively. If the phone is attractive to someone else, then other staff in the area should use it first. You might also consider what an appropriate replacement timeframe for such items is.

If you have any questions with regard to the matters in this document, please feel free to contact:

| For questions regarding interpretation of Treasurer’s Instruction 410 or other financial aspects: |
| Ms Hilda Janzen | Associate Director Transaction Services |
| Financial Services | x 2225 |

| For questions regarding staff exiting procedures or other HR aspects: |
| Mr Steve Lockwood | Associate Director HR Client Services |
| Human Resources | x 2721 |