

UNIVERSITY OF DUNDEE
RESEARCH GOVERNANCE & POLICY SUB-COMMITTEE
POLICY TO GOVERN THE ACCEPTANCE OF EXTERNAL RESEARCH FUNDING
POLICY No. AERF/V1/12.10

1. Overview of Policy & Guideline for Implementation

The purpose of this policy is to establish a set of principles and procedures to prevent the acceptance of research or related funding by the University from Awarding Bodies (as defined below) whose activities are judged to be counter to the common interest and public good.

Staff and students within the University are not permitted to accept research funding where the award is associated with unreasonable restrictions on normal academic freedom, including the publication of research results, or from a source which can be considered unethical, immoral or associated with serious ill health. The acceptance of funding from the Tobacco Industry is not permitted. With recourse to Research & Innovation Services and the Chair of the Research Governance & Policy Sub-Committee, the onus is placed on the researcher to implement this policy and identify when a research award should not be accepted.

This Policy was prepared by the University's Research Governance & Policy Sub-Committee and was subsequently endorsed by the University Research Committee on 11 November 2010.

2. Definition of Terms

For the purposes of this policy the following terms shall have the meanings ascribed to them below:

"Awarding Body" shall mean any commercial or non-commercial body which awards research or related funding to universities;

"Principal Investigator" shall mean a member of University staff who is eligible to lead a research or related project on behalf of the University;

"Researchers" shall mean any member of University staff, including Principal Investigators and matriculated students of the University who are eligible to undertake work on a research or related project;

"Tobacco Industry Funding" means (i) funds from a company or group of companies engaged in the manufacture of tobacco goods; (ii) funds in the name of a tobacco brand whether or not the brand name is used solely for tobacco goods; and (iii) funds from a body set up by the tobacco industry or by one or more companies engaged in the manufacture of tobacco.

3. Policy

In order to safeguard the reputation of Researchers and the University when in the pursuit of research and related funding from Awarding Bodies, the following principles and procedures have been established.

3.1 Restrictions on Academic Freedom

Any restrictions imposed by an Awarding Body on the normal academic freedom and practices of Researchers is a potential cause for concern for the University. Such restrictions might include limiting: the

free and timely publication of research results; the use of research results in future projects; the use of research results to develop teaching materials; the freedom to commercially exploit research results; or the disclosure of the source of research funding.

Should the circumstance arise such that the acceptance of a research or related award from an Awarding Body would result in restrictions on normal academic freedom, or be associated with any form of coercive influence on Researchers by an Awarding Body, then the Principal Investigator must discuss the matter with Research & Innovation Services (RIS) and, if deemed necessary, the Chair of the Research Governance & Policy Sub-Committee. Informed by such discussion, the Principal Investigator must be satisfied that the impartiality, independence, academic integrity and potential for disinterested inquiry within the project will not be compromised as a result of receiving support from the Awarding Body before he/she decides that the award can be accepted on behalf of the University. In certain circumstances, and after discussion with RIS, limited restrictions on academic freedom may be deemed acceptable by a Principal Investigator, for example a delay in publication of research results to allow a commercial Awarding Body an opportunity to investigate possible proprietary protection of results.

3.2 Common Interest and Public Good

Whilst the University upholds the principle of institutional autonomy and academic freedom with respect to the seeking and accepting of external research funding, the University does not permit its research endeavour to be supported by funds from questionable sources or from Awarding Bodies whose activities can reasonably be considered unethical, immoral or which are associated with serious ill health.

The University's Mission states that "*...the objects of the University shall be to advance and diffuse knowledge, wisdom and understanding by teaching and research and by the example and influence of its corporate life...*". Notwithstanding personal conviction, a Principal Investigator is responsible for ensuring that the acceptance of research funding from an Awarding Body is not counter to the common interest or public good, and is commensurate with the continued good and upstanding reputation of the University including, but not limited to, the objectives narrated in its Mission Statement.

3.3 Tobacco Industry Funding

Notwithstanding the provisions stated elsewhere in this policy, under no circumstances does the University accept Tobacco Industry Funding in support of any of its activities, including but not limited to its research and related activities. For the avoidance of doubt no member of staff employed by or operating within the University is permitted to accept Tobacco Industry Funding in support of activities being undertaken within the University.

4. Referral to the University Research Committee

Where a Principal Investigator, having consulted with RIS and the Chair of the University's Research Governance & Policy Sub-Committee, cannot reach a decision on the acceptability or otherwise of an offer of research or related funding from an Awarding Body, the matter will be referred to the University Research Committee with a request that a final decision on the matter be reached.

5. Assistance with Interpretation of this Policy

Researchers can seek advice on the interpretation and implementation of this policy from Research & Innovation Services and/or the Chair of the University's Research Governance & Policy Sub-Committee (contact the Deputy Director, Research & Innovation Services in the first instance g.r.w.findlay@dundee.ac.uk).