

ULSTER UNIVERSITY**Guidelines on Acceptable External Sources of Funding for Research**

1. The University encourages its staff and students to engage with the world outside the academic sector and to seek external funding from appropriate private and public sources to support research.

However, those involved in seeking funding for research should recognise that not all sources of funding are compatible with the ethos of independent research and that the acceptance of funding from certain sources might harm or undermine the University's reputation and freedom to undertake research.

2. The general principles are that:
 - a. the University will accept funds from any legal and reputable source where there is no conflict with other university policies; and
 - b. careful consideration should be given to ethical issues and potential conflicts of interest before funding is accepted.
3. While it is beyond the scope of this guidance to provide comprehensive lists of acceptable and unacceptable sources of funding, there are circumstances in which care needs to be taken in reaching decisions on whether or not to accept funding. For example:
 - a. the original source of the funding is unclear, unknown and/or cannot be identified;
 - b. the potential funder wishes unduly to restrict or otherwise influence publication and/or exploitation of the findings of the research or wishes to exert inappropriate influence over the findings and their dissemination or wishes to use such research and its findings outwith the scope of these guidelines or for personal gain;
 - c. a member of staff or student has a material interest in or connection with a potential funder that might suggest that objectivity is compromised;
 - d. accepting funds from one source might affect the University's ability to apply for funds from other sources;
 - e. the interests, aims, practices and priorities of the potential funder are contrary to or in conflict with the University's interests, aims, practices and priorities;
 - f. acceptance of the funds is likely to result in negative publicity or harm to the reputation of the University, its staff or students; or
 - g. the research has the potential to harm the public or participants.
4. In keeping with the above, it is the position of the University that it does not knowingly accept funding from the tobacco industry. This position reflects and is endorsed by statements made by Cancer Research UK, Universities UK and the Wellcome Trust.

5. Where there is any doubt about the acceptability of a potential source of funding or it is the intention to consider accepting funding from a potentially unacceptable source, the applicant must seek the advice of the Director of Research & Impact prior to proceeding. Where the potential applicant disagrees with the advice of the Director of Research & Impact he/she may appeal to the Pro Vice Chancellor (Research & Impact) whose decision will be final.
6. Any departure from these guidelines will be exceptional and following full examination and approval by the Director of Research & Impact and/or Pro Vice Chancellor (Research & Impact). Every instance of departure will be reported to Research & Impact Committee together with an indication of the reasons for such departure.

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