February 2005

TOBACCO INDUSTRY FUNDING TO UNIVERSITIES: A Joint Protocol of Cancer Research and Universities UK

Cancer Research UK is a charity whose objects "are to protect and promote the health of the public in particular by research into the nature, causes, diagnosis, prevention, treatment and cure of all forms of cancer and… to provide information and raise public understanding of such matters."[1]

Universities UK acts to promote and support the work of all universities in the United Kingdom and provide services to its members, the executive heads.

TOBACCO INDUSTRY FUNDING TO UNIVERSITIES

Preamble

In pursuit of its mission to conquer cancer through world-class research, Cancer Research UK wishes to promote the highest standards in scientific and medical research, and to address major issues in relation to public health. As tobacco causes immense danger to health and life, Cancer Research UK wishes to do everything it can to avoid either direct or indirect links with the tobacco industry, and to oppose tobacco promotion and use in all its forms.

British universities are charitable bodies dedicated to teaching and research for the public good and are committed to the academic freedom of their teaching and research staff, many of whom are involved in health and medicine. UK universities would not wish to engage in activities that compromise the independence or integrity of their work or which lent support to an industry whose products caused serious damage to health.

Funding Policy of Cancer Research UK

Cancer Research UK is the major funder of cancer research in UK universities and fully supports University UK's principles of academic freedom and responsibilities set out in this document. Cancer Research UK's Conditions of Support stipulate the duties of the host institutions to which it provides grants with respect to financial, legal and ethical issues.

In particular, the Conditions contain guidelines relating to the use of human subjects and animals in research. A major ethical concern is tobacco industry funding for research, which is the subject of this protocol.

Universities UK Policy on Research

Universities UK, on behalf of UK universities, advocates the following general principles in relation to research and research funding:

- Universities and their staff are committed to the disinterested pursuit of knowledge.
- The staff of universities enjoy academic freedom.
- Universities are charitable bodies and must observe certain requirements of charity law in relation to receiving and expending funds.

[1] Cancer Research UK's Memorandum and Articles of Association 2001

- The expertise, facilities and resources of universities should not knowingly be made available for purposes that would be damaging to the public interest or common good, e.g. to public health.

- Funding should never be accepted for research where the researchers do not have freedom to conduct their work in accordance with normal scientific and research conventions, which includes publication of results.

- Universities should normally reveal the source of funds for research and should satisfy themselves that their reputation for impartiality, integrity and disinterested inquiry will not be compromised by any particular source of funds.

- Universities should have in place criteria for the acceptance of funds for research and should only exceptionally accept funds that depart from those criteria, any such departure to be fully examined and approved by the institution.

Universities UK Guidance on Tobacco Funding

Applying these general principles to the case of tobacco industry funding, Universities UK would make the following observations, while recognising that it is for each university to decide for itself what funds to accept, when to accept or reject an offer of funds and what work is to take place:

- Funding for research which does not accord full respect to academic freedom and the freedom of the researcher or research team, which does not adhere to normal medical, scientific and ethical practices and principles should normally be rejected.

- Universities will consider carefully all the circumstances and whether to accept funding from any source if to do so would be potentially detrimental to their reputation

Cancer Research UK Funding to Institutions in receipt of Tobacco Funding

In the light of the above, Universities UK endorses the following protocol formulated by Cancer Research UK governing Cancer Research UK funding for institutions:

> **Circumstances in which Cancer Research UK may make public comment on tobacco industry funding to universities**
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> While recognising that certain decisions rest with individual universities, Cancer Research UK feels it has a right and duty to comment in certain situations.
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> All universities are asked to consider the great harm to public health caused by tobacco, and the damage to their reputation if they accept tobacco industry funds. If a university accepts donations from the tobacco industry, Cancer Research UK considers it has a duty to publicly criticise such funding.
>
> Furthermore, Cancer Research UK applauds those universities which already have a policy not to accept such funds and encourages other universities to follow their lead.
>
> Cancer Research UK believes that no form of association with the tobacco industry is acceptable. Therefore, nothing in this Code shall be taken to imply that Cancer Research UK supports or approves the use of tobacco industry funding for research or any other activities.
>
> **Conditions Under Which Cancer Research UK Funding May Be Withheld (Revised 2003)**
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> Cancer Research UK has a legitimate right to protect its own research funding where there is likely to be close proximity of its funding to tobacco industry funds.
>
> Cancer Research UK will therefore not provide financial support where those who are, or would be, supported by Cancer Research UK funds are working in such proximity to others supported by tobacco industry funding that there is any possibility or likelihood that facilities, equipment or other resources will be shared. The conditions of this Code, at a minimum, apply at research team level.

Where Cancer Research UK is considering major new investments, association of the university with the tobacco industry will be a key criterion.

Definition of Tobacco Industry Funding

Tobacco industry funding includes funds from a company or group of companies engaged in the manufacture of tobacco goods; funds in the name of a tobacco brand whether or not the brand name is used solely for tobacco goods; and funds from a body set up by the tobacco industry or by one or more companies engaged in the manufacture of tobacco goods.

The following do not constitute tobacco industry funding for the purposes of this Code:

- legacies from tobacco industry investments (provided these are sold on immediately)
- funding from a trust or foundation no longer having any connection with the tobacco industry even though it may bear a name that (for historical reasons) has tobacco industry associations
- exceptions could arise when the tobacco plant is being used for research entirely unconnected with the use of tobacco for the cigarette/cigar industry, for example as a model organism for basic studies in plant molecular biology.

Cancer Research UK will have the final decision in any dispute.

To obtain a copy of the full 'Cancer Research UK Code of Practice on Tobacco Industry Funding to Universities', which includes background information on why tobacco industry funding is seen to be a special case, please go to http://science.cancerresearchuk.org/news/current/tobacconews?version=2

The Research Committee and Ethics Committee