

# POLICY ON TOBACCO INDUSTRY FUNDING TO UNIVERSITIES

## 1 Purpose

This policy sets out Cancer Research UK's (CRUK) position on tobacco industry funding to universities which researchers and universities in receipt of or applying for CRUK funding should be aware of.

## 2 Scope

This policy applies to researchers and their Host Institutions that submit grant applications to, or are funded by, CRUK. Researchers include for example CRUK grant applicants and grant holders, co-investigators, named research staff, collaborators and students. This policy also covers members of CRUK's expert reviewers as set out in our Code of Practice for reviewers.

## 3 Definitions

**Tobacco Company:** we mean an organisation, a significant part\* of whose business is the development, production, promotion, marketing, and/or sale of tobacco or tobacco products in any country of the world.

An organisation that did not meet the above will also be considered as a tobacco company if it:

- is owned or funded (more than 50%) or controlled by an organisation such as described above,
- owns (more than 50%) or controls an organisation such as described above.
- is in the same group as such a company, entity or organisation (for example, a group of parent and subsidiary undertakings) as an organisation such as described above.

\*By significant part, we mean 10% or more of its revenues derive from this activity. Less than that and it will not meet the threshold: for example, a big supermarket company that sells tobacco within their wider portfolio.

**E-cigarette companies and pharmaceutical companies** which are fully or partially owned by the tobacco industry are also considered tobacco companies under this definition.

**The Foundation for a Smoke-Free World:** was launched in September 2017, with an announcement of US\$800 million funding from Philip Morris International (PMI). Although its own communications identify it as an independent organisation, the Foundation's sole source of funding to date comes from PMI. We therefore consider funding from the Foundation for a Smoke-free World to be Tobacco Industry Funding within the scope of this Policy.

## 4 Key Points

Cancer Research UK will not provide financial support to, or be associated with, those supported by tobacco industry funding and/or those working in close proximity to others supported by tobacco industry funding.

### 4.1 Rationale for the Cancer Research UK Policy on Tobacco Industry Funding to Universities

Cancer Research UK wants to see a world where people can live longer, better lives, free from the fear of cancer – this includes preventing many more cancers from developing in the first place. Smoking is by far the biggest cause of cancer and death in the UK – causing around 150 cases of cancer every day and responsible for more than a quarter of all cancer deaths in the UK.

We want to achieve a Smokefree UK and see a world without cancers caused by smoking. To help achieve this, we call for bold and evidenced-based measures that help prevent people from starting to smoke and help those who do to stop. We also advocate for the continued protection of public health policy from the tobacco industry's influence, in line with Article 5.3 of The World Health Organization Framework Convention on Tobacco Control which recognise that "There is a fundamental and irreconcilable conflict between the tobacco industry's interests and public health policy interests".

When used exactly as recommended by the manufacturer, cigarettes are the one legal consumer product that will kill most users – 2 out of 3 people who smoke will die from smoking. The tobacco industry was aware of the serious health consequences of its product for decades yet sought to conceal the evidence from its customers.

The tobacco industry have funded research which is used as part of lobbying strategies to block, amend and delay effective public health policy including, for example, standardised packaging.

## **4.2 Conditions under which CRUK funding may be withheld**

We have a legitimate right to protect our own research funding where there is likely to be close proximity of our funding to tobacco industry funds.

We will not provide financial support to, or be associated with, those supported by tobacco industry funding or with commercial links to the tobacco industry (other than indirectly through a pension fund, managed fund, index fund or similar instrument). We will also not provide financial support where those who are, or would be, supported by our 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 Policy, at a minimum, apply at research team level.

Where we are considering major new funding, association of the university with the tobacco industry will be a key criterion.

The application of this rule would apply to e-cigarette or pharmaceutical companies which are fully or partially owned by tobacco companies.

However, we will consider funding research teams in close proximity of those funded by an independent e-cigarette company, those in receipt of funding from independent e-cigarette companies and those working alongside independent e-cigarette companies, where independence for e-cigarette companies is understood as the absence of ownership, funding, or comparable engagement with a tobacco company. We

reserve the right to place additional conditions on applicants to avoid our brand being directly associated with an individual e-cigarette company or individual e-cigarette brands. We will continue to examine the questions raised by e-cigarettes and by the rapidly changing structure of the e-cigarette industry, and we will therefore regularly review this approach.

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

- 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.

### 4.3 Requirements for CRUK funding applicants and reviewers

All researchers and Host Institutions 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.

CRUK funding applicants and expert reviewers **must** report any tobacco industry funding they have received or whether they would be working in close proximity to anyone that has received tobacco industry funding to CRUK to **policies@cancer.org.uk**.

### 4.4 Actions CRUK may take if our Policy is breached

Where there has been a breach of this Policy, CRUK will consider applying sanctions on a case-by-case basis that may include:

- removal from a grant application or grant in question.
- withdrawal of current funding. CRUK will work with the Host Institution to minimise the impact on staff working on the affected grant(s), which may include transferring the grant to another suitable investigator to allow the work to be completed.
- restriction from future grant applications.
- removal from membership of our expert review panels or committees.

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

## 4.5 Circumstances in which CRUK may make public comment on tobacco industry funding to universities

While recognising that certain decisions rest with individual universities, we feel we have a right and duty to comment in certain situations. If a university accepts donations from the tobacco industry, we consider we have a duty to publicly criticise such funding.

Furthermore, we applaud those universities which already have a policy not to accept such funds and encourage other universities to follow their lead. We believe that no form of association with the tobacco industry is acceptable. Therefore, nothing in this Policy shall be taken to imply that we support or approve the use of tobacco industry funding for research or any other activities.

## 5 Support & advice

For any queries about this policy please contact: [policies@cancer.org.uk](mailto:policies@cancer.org.uk).

## 6 Related documents

For more information, please see the following linked documents:

- [Cancer Research UK Grant Conditions](#)

<b>Policy sponsor</b>	Dr Iain Foulkes, Executive Director of Research & Innovation, CEO Cancer Research Horizons
<b>Policy owner</b>	Dan Burkwood, Director of Research Operations & Communications
<b>Subject Matter Experts (SME)</b>	Sue Russell, Senior Policy & Governance Manager, Alizee Froguel, Policy Manager
<b>Executive Board or Council approval required?</b>	Yes – Scientific Executive Board
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<b>Superseded documents</b>	v. 2 Joint Protocol of Cancer Research UK and Universities UK