

Cancer Research UK Code of Practice on Tobacco Industry Funding to Universities

1. Background

Why is tobacco industry funding a special case?

Tobacco causes over a third of all cancer deaths. Eighty-five per cent of all lung cancers are due to tobacco and there currently exists no effective treatment for the vast majority of cases. In total, over 120,000 deaths per annum in the UK are attributable to tobacco.¹

Tobacco is the only consumer product which kills a high proportion of its users when used exactly as intended by the manufacturers. In total, half of all smokers will die from a tobacco-related disease. Half of these will die in middle-age, with a loss of 15-20 years of an individual's life.²

The tobacco industry has been aware of the serious health consequences of its product for decades, yet has sought to conceal the evidence from its customers. It has also continued to promote its products aggressively, especially to women, the young, the poor and to other new markets in low income countries.³

The tobacco industry has behaved reprehensibly in numerous other ways, such as:

- It has sought to influence universities which are in receipt of its funding.⁴
- It has bought scientists, infiltrated academic institutions and funded misleading research.⁵
- It is seeking to reinvent itself as "socially responsible", for example, by funding ineffective youth "anti-smoking" campaigns while opposing effective prevention measures.⁶

2. Rationale for the Cancer Research UK Code of Practice on Tobacco Industry Funding to Universities

Why is Cancer Research UK so concerned?

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. Therefore, as tobacco causes immense danger to health and life, Cancer Research UK wishes to do everything it can to avoid links, whether direct or indirect, with the tobacco industry, and to oppose tobacco promotion and use in all its forms.

In respect of its relationship with universities, Cancer Research UK believes there are two main areas where a university's links with the tobacco industry may impact on its relationship with the charity, as set out in sections 3 and 4 below.

[Cancer Research UK firmly supports the principles set out in the Joint Protocol of Cancer Research UK and Universities UK \(2004\).](#)

3. Circumstances in which Cancer Research UK may make public comment on tobacco industry funding to universities

While recognising that certain decisions rest with individual universities, Cancer Research UK feels it has a right and duty to comment in certain situations.

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.

4. Conditions Under Which Cancer Research UK Funding May Be Withheld (Revised 2003)

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 funding, 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

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

References

- ¹ *Smoking Kills. A White Paper on Tobacco.* London: CM4177. The Stationery Office 1998.
- ² Peto R, Darby S, Deo H, Silcocks P, Whitley E, Doll R. Smoking, smoking cessation, and lung cancer in the UK since 1950: combination of national statistics with two case-control studies. *BMJ* 2000;**321**(7257):323-9
- ³ Yach D, Bialous SA. Junking Science to Promote Tobacco. *Am J Pub Hlth*, 2001;**91**(11):1745-1748.
- ⁴ Cohen JE et al. Institutional addiction to tobacco. *Tobacco Control* 1999;**8**:70-4
- ⁵ Ong EK, Glantz SA. Tobacco industry efforts subverting International Agency for Research on Cancer's second-hand smoke study. *Lancet* 2000;**355**(9211):1253-9.
- ⁶ Bates C, Watkins P McNeill A. *Danger! PR in the playground. Tobacco industry initiatives on youth smoking.* ASH & CRC London 2000