

## **University of Warwick Ethical Principles for Research Funding and Partnerships**

### **Introduction**

The University of Warwick is committed to ensuring that it makes research funding and partnerships decisions responsibly and with integrity, having due regard to ethical, social, environmental and governance principles.

This document sets out the principles under which the University operates when accepting research funding or working with partners or collaborators on research projects.

These principles ensure that the University only accepts funding or engages in partnerships with companies or organisations that act in an ethical manner, and which operate in alignment with the values and culture of the University.

### **Our Approach**

At the University of Warwick, we strive to undertake research which is internationally recognised as world class, with impact and purpose. We aim to change the world, making lives healthier, fairer, safer, more just, resilient, and enriched.

The University of Warwick is committed to advancing and safeguarding the highest academic and ethical standards in all its research activities. The University's Research Governance and Ethics Committee has oversight of the University's governance and ethical policies and procedures and ensures ethical conduct of research across the University through the Research Code of Practice, and the Code of Practice for the Investigation of Research Misconduct.

Our research receives appropriate academic rigour and ethical scrutiny. All individuals acting on our behalf uphold principles and practices in accordance with our [Research Code of Practice](#). The University works within external governance frameworks and standards of 'best practice', such as the Concordat to Support Research Integrity, the National Protective Security Authority's Trusted Research framework, export controls regulations and the National Security and Investment Act.

We undertake due diligence on all proposed research projects and activities, which includes a review of the research funder or partner and any associated risks, alongside the nature of the project activity, the scope of work, and expected project outcomes. We also conduct financial due diligence checks.

The University recognises that many valuable innovations arise from research which deliver wide benefit to the public and society; however, it is mindful that certain areas of research require greater scrutiny to ensure it does not inadvertently undertake research which is unethical or negatively impacts the University.

The following principles set out our approach in respect of certain areas of research:

## **Defence**

The University will not conduct any research project or activity which directly manufactures, assembles or supplies components for offensive weapons<sup>1</sup> which could potentially be used in conflicts. Further, the University will not engage in research projects with companies or organisations that are subject to UK sanctions imposed by the government or are themselves directly associated with human rights violations.

The University conducts research work with, and accepts research funding from, companies and organisations working in the defence sector where this is not in conflict with the principle above. Innovation in the defence sector has been shown to accelerate development of new research and innovation in other sectors, delivering wider benefits for the public. The University also recognises it has expertise which can support the UK government to help protect the people of the UK against national security threats and hostile actors.

The University recognises and is live to the risks that some of the companies and organisations that it engages with on research projects operate in both civilian and military arenas, which could lead to dual use applications. Our research is undertaken in compliance with UK export control regulations which ensures that the University does not conduct defence research on prohibited technologies with countries and organisations that are not approved by the UK government.

## **Fossil fuels**

The University will typically not conduct research work with, nor accept research funding from, companies or organisations which aim to extract and/or refine fossil fuels (coal mining, oil refining, extraction of petroleum or natural gas). An exception may be made for research projects or activities for which the primary aims are supporting a shift towards sustainable and renewable sources, or more generally in advancing or developing the field of sustainable and renewable energy, in line with the University's commitment to sustainability.

## **Gambling**

The University will typically not conduct research work with, nor accept research funding from, companies or organisations whose business intends to endorse, promote or increase gambling or betting activity. An exception may be made for research projects or activities for which the primary aims are actively remedying or alleviating the harm inflicted by this industry, or in the cases where the project area is not linked to gambling related research such as National Lottery funding to enhance the UK's sports and culture offering.

## **Tobacco**

The University does not conduct research work with, nor accept research funding from, companies or organisations, 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, in recognition of the conflict with the University's medical research objectives. An exception may be made for research projects or activities which seek to reduce or eliminate the use of tobacco.

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<sup>1</sup> Defined as explicitly designed or developed to attack with the intention to cause harm or inflict injury

## **Research involving human participants or animals**

The dignity, rights, safety and well-being of human participants are the primary consideration in any research project. Any University of Warwick student or member of staff, who wishes to undertake research involving human participants, their data and/or tissue must obtain appropriate ethical approval.

The University applies the principles of replacement, refinement and reduction to ensure humane animal use in research. Any research involving animals undergoes comprehensive scrutiny on a project-by-project basis and is approved by all applicable ethical and regulatory bodies to ensure the anticipated benefits of the research justify the use of animals.

Whilst the above represents the ethical principles by which the University of Warwick conducts its research, it should be noted that each project is reviewed on a case-by-case basis and the University may decide to decline to conduct research in an area not listed above, where it is perceived that the research is high risk or contradicts our ethics and values.