

Principles and governance framework for the ethical conduct of external activity linked with the University of Kent

Principles

In accordance with its mission and values the University's activities conform to the highest ethical standards and it therefore expects the highest standards of conduct from its staff. As a body in receipt of public funds the University has obligations that go beyond those that apply to commercial companies, and the principles set out below are intended to be applied specifically to all external activities linked with the University, but they should also be regarded as having a general application to the full range of University activity.

The purpose of this policy document is to ensure that all external activities linked with the University are carried out in an ethically sound manner and in accordance with the mission and values of the University of Kent.

1. University-related external activity should not conflict with the University's strategic mission and should be in keeping with its values, including academic freedom, accountability and integrity.
2. The University seeks to foster external activities that support and enhance Kent's academic potential, academic standing, or income-generating potential.
3. External activities should be relevant and ethically appropriate for the University of Kent.
4. External activities should NOT be supported:
 - 4.1 where there is evidence that they involve in whole or in part any illegal or unethical activity, or more generally, activities that have: evaded taxation or involved fraud; violated international conventions that bear on human rights; limited freedom of enquiry; or encroached on academic freedom; involved serious dishonesty and/or serious harm;
 - 4.2 if they require any illegal or unethical activity;
 - 4.3 if they have the potential to damage the reputation of the University or its relationships with its constituencies, including donors, students, staff, and parents of current students or other stakeholders (including those with whom it holds formal or informal relationships or with whom it hopes to establish relationships);
 - 4.4 if they have the potential to create unacceptable conflicts of interest;
 - 4.5 if they have the potential to involve disproportionate costs or other burdens for the University;
 - 4.6 if it appears that they are intended or likely to influence the content, academic integrity or outcome of any work undertaken by the University, its staff or students;
 - 4.7 on terms and conditions inconsistent with what that University considers to be good practice.
5. The University has a commitment to carry out business fairly, honestly and openly and has an [Anti-Bribery and Corruption Policy](#) to ensure compliance with the Bribery Act 2010. The Policy provides guidance on the definition of bribery, hospitality, gifts, donations and facilitation payments. All staff have a responsibility to prevent bribery, which is defined by the Act as:
 - 5.1 the offering, promising or giving of a bribe (active bribery);
 - 5.2 the requesting, agreeing to receive or accepting of a bribe (passive bribery);
 - 5.3 bribery of a foreign public official in order to obtain or retain business or an advantage in the conduct of business.

Governance Framework

The following governance framework should be employed to ensure that the principles set out above are complied with in relation to external activities connected with the University of Kent. Members of staff have a responsibility to ensure that the principles are upheld in all their activities, but should there be any suspicion that the principles are being breached, the following points should be observed and action taken accordingly:

6. If any individual suspects that an external activity linked with the University is not being conducted in compliance with the principles set out above, or has the potential to raise ethical issues, it should:
 - 6.1 in the case of suspected bribery or corruption, be referred to a line manager or the Head of Internal Audit under the [Anti-Bribery and Corruption Policy](#);
 - 6.2 in cases of suspected illegal activity or fraud, be referred to a line manager or the Head of Internal Audit under the University's [Whistleblowing Policy](#);
 - 6.3 in other cases of suspected ethical misconduct, be referred in the first instance to the Chairperson of the Research Ethics & Governance Committee. The matter will be discussed by the Committee and recommendations will be made to the Research & Innovation Board, which will be responsible for taking any necessary action.
7. Where external activities are likely to damage the reputation of the University or its relationships with any of its constituencies or other stakeholders, higher consideration will be given to issues of academic freedom and the other principles underpinning the foundation of the University and of higher education.
8. External activities should not affect the University's reputation for integrity and impartiality.
9. The expertise, facilities and resources of the University should not knowingly be made available for purposes that would be damaging to the public interest or common good.

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*Approved by Board for Research & Enterprise November 2011
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