



UMEÅ UNIVERSITY

# **POLICY FOR DONATION ACCEPTANCE AT UMEÅ UNIVERSITY**

|                    |   |
|--------------------|---|
| Type of document:  | Policy <sup>1</sup>                         |
| Date of approval:  | 9 June 2009                                 |
| Reg. no.:          | FS 200-1759-09                              |
| Approved by:       | Vice-Chancellor                             |
| Validity:          | Until further notice                        |
| Field:             | Governance, finance, planning and follow-up |
| Office in charge:  | Planning Office                             |
| Replaces document: |   |

---

<sup>1</sup> This document has been translated from Swedish into English. If the English version differs from the original, the Swedish version takes precedence.



# UMEÅ UNIVERSITY

## Table of contents

|    |   |   |
|----|---|---|
| 1. | Introduction.....   | 3 |
| 2. | Principles for external funding of research and education ..... | 3 |
| 3. | Special guidelines for donations.....                           | 5 |
| 4. | The process at Umeå University.....                             | 6 |



## UMEÅ UNIVERSITY

### 1. Introduction

Research and education conducted at Swedish higher education institutions must be of high scientific or artistic quality, and promote the creation of knowledge in general. To be able to best realise these objectives, support provided to the University from external sources such as companies, organisations, foundations and individuals is incredibly significant. Swedish higher education institutions are enthusiastic about the continued development of a donation culture, with expansive and long-term responsibility, and are expecting legislation that facilitates this process. In such a culture of donation, it is important that Umeå University approaches donors and society in a way that inspires trust and protects academic integrity.

Before Umeå University accepts external grants and donations, it must always conduct an assessment to ensure that acceptance is in line with acts and ordinances and the University's activities, strategies, and ethical values. Such assessments do not usually cause any problems, however on occasion, sensitive considerations must be made – often as regards ethics. The Association of Swedish Higher Education Institutions has created a position paper to help guide higher education institutions and foster a common policy for donation acceptance for the higher education sector. This proposal contains certain minor adjustments and clarifications based on Umeå University's procedures. It should also be made clear that even though clear and explicit guidelines are important, this does not mean that higher education institutions do not need to take all the relevant circumstances into consideration before making a decision.

This document does not cover all areas of donations, for example the importance of maintaining a positive relationship with a donor. Instead, it addresses the ethical questions that must always be addressed but that may require special consideration in some instances.

It begins by outlining the general principles that should form the background for all external funding. Special guidelines for accepting donations then follow. Finally, the process involved in applying the guidelines at the University is discussed.

### 2. Principles for external funding of research and education

Laws and ordinances must be followed when the University accepts donations, and the Donations Ordinance (1998:140) is particularly important.



## UMEÅ UNIVERSITY

External grants for research and education at higher education institutions are incredibly significant and are most welcome. In general, such contributions should conform to the University's current activities to ensure that the funding is used suitably and efficiently. This means that when accepting external grants and donations, the freedom of research must be respected as regards choice of research tasks, methods and publication of results. Likewise, education must have a scientific or artistic basis and develop students' ability to conduct both independent and critical evaluations.

Research must also be prepared to face discussion and criticism. Therefore, research needs to be characterised by openness, and the results made available – generally via publication in a scientific journal. Furthermore, research must be presented in a way that it can be tested. Methods and results must be documented in a way that enables independent review.

External research grants and donations must not be accepted if they result in ties that conflict with these principles of freedom and openness. Researchers must also avoid conflicts of interest, such as those of a financial and personal nature. All ties, both financial and otherwise, between researchers and funding bodies must be publicly accounted for in publications, reports and more.

Externally-funded research and education, for example those funded by donations, must meet the same scientific or artistic qualitative requirements as those in receipt of direct government funding. If there were to be lower requirements on externally-funded research or education not only would this damage the interests of the funding bodies, it would also damage all research and the University's position.

In certain cases, accepting external grants can damage the University's reputation, for example if the donor is linked to activities that could harm the respect for the University's integrity and the academic foundations of research or education. Such grants must not be accepted. However, this does not mean that research and research funding should be avoided purely to avoid conflict of opinions of various forms, if the University has assessed the case thoroughly.

Furthermore, the receiving higher education institution and its researchers and teaching staff must refuse grants intended for research or education that cannot or will not be in line with the donor's intentions.

As a public authority, Umeå University and all of its employees must follow the principle of objectivity as set out in the Swedish constitution, and maintain the objectivity and impartiality and equality before the law. By applying the regulations of the Administrative Procedure Act (2017:900) on disqualification and the prohibition from participating in secondary employment that can damage integrity as per the Public Employment Act (1994:260), the principle of objectivity can be implemented and the



## UMEÅ UNIVERSITY

authority's reputation remain unharmed when accepting external grants and donations.

The above guidelines must be applied to all external funding for research and education with consideration to all factors in each case.

### 3. Special guidelines for donations

When accepting donations and holding them in trust, the following must be observed in addition to the relevant laws and ordinances. Before a donation is accepted, each of the points below must be assessed and thorough documentation be compiled. If there are any doubts concerning one or more points, a cumulative assessment must be made. This assessment must balance all factors against each other and determine whether the donation can be accepted.

- The purpose of the donation must be in line with the University's values, other activities and mission.
- Any conditions attached to the donation need to be assessed. Only conditions that do not conflict with these guidelines may be accepted.
- When accepting donations, the University should try to ensure that the funds are as free standing as possible, partly to avoid too strong governance of research and teaching, and partly to prevent the donation from being unusable as circumstances change.
- Donation conditions with general reference to the specialisation of the type of research or education can be accepted as long as they are scientifically relevant and comply with good research ethics and teaching methods. Donation conditions that stipulate that the research must attain certain results must not be accepted. Nor can donations be accepted if they stipulate that the teaching provided must be limited to certain specific theories or doctrines.
- Donors must not have an operative role in leading the organisation or activity benefiting from the donation they have provided.
- When reviewing whether to accept the donation, the donor as a person or organisation needs to be taken into consideration. Donations must not be accepted if the University believes it will be damaged by accepting a donation, and therefore be linked with the donor's ideology, organisation or similar.
- The origin of the donation's finance must also be taken into consideration. Donations must not be accepted if their source comes from organisations or activities that defy international conventions which Sweden has ratified, or originates from criminal activities. Great



## UMEÅ UNIVERSITY

restraint must be exercised in other cases where funding may come from activities or operations that pose a danger to human health, the environment, or do not respect equal rights.

- Donations must be held in trust in accordance with the donor's intentions.
- The donation must not require any favours to the donor from the recipients. However, a donor's wishes regarding the naming of services, buildings, scholarships and so on can be met.
- Donors and the University may agree on shared financing of a project, however this information must be made public.
- If the donor wishes to be anonymous, the donation must still be assessed in accordance with these guidelines before it can be accepted. This generally presupposes that there is someone at the University who is aware of the donor's identity.

### 4. The process at Umeå University

The University is always the recipient of a donation, not individuals or an organisational entity. The Vice-Chancellor's Decision-Making and Delegation Procedure determines who may take decisions to accept donations and states that the University Director may take decisions on the receipt of gifts and grants in accordance with the Donations Ordinance. The case officer must consult with one of the University's legal officers before the matter is passed to the University Director. In the event of major or complex cases, the University Management has the ultimate responsibility and should take the decision.

This policy is to act as support for both management and individual researchers and teaching staff when assessing whether a donation can be accepted. The ethical guidelines must be taken into account when establishing agreements and contracts with external funding bodies if no equivalent guidelines are available for the individual case.