

University Consortium Policy on Overhead/Indirect Costs

Effective Date: May 2024

Purpose: The purpose of this policy is to establish guidelines for the University Consortium (“The Consortium”) regarding the allocation of funds, ensuring that resources are directed towards research, educational, and collaborative activities. This policy also clarifies that no overhead or indirect costs can be taken off the funding allocation provided by the Consortium.

Background: The University Consortium is a collaborative group of groundwater researchers and industry sponsors founded in 1987 at the University of Waterloo as “The Consortium for Solvents in Groundwater Research.” Initially focused on Dense Non-Aqueous Phase Liquids (DNAPLs) in groundwater, The Consortium has expanded its research scope significantly over the years to include a wide-range of soil and groundwater contaminant threats but continues to focus on threats to groundwater quality and quantity due to anthropogenic activities with an emphasis on field studies. The lead institution for the University Consortium moved to the University of Guelph in 2008 with agreement to the operating principles and funding with sponsor contributions as membership fees without overhead agreed to by the Office of Research, College of Engineering and Physical Sciences (CEPS) and the Ontario Agricultural College. More information about The Consortium can be found on our website <https://theuniversityconsortium.org/>.

Currently, The University Consortium consists of dozens of principal investigators from American, Canadian, and European universities, and research institutions (e.g. CSIRO in Australia) that collaborate with many other universities and institutes locally and globally. These membership fees are leveraged within the Consortium framework to support fundamental and applied research directed by the Principal Investigators often pooling funds into grant proposals that are matched within Provincial (i.e. ORF, OCE) and Federal grant programs (i.e. NSERC, CFI). The Consortium’s research budget with matching contributions approaches \$10 million annually.

Policy:

1. The University Consortium recognizes the importance of supporting collaborative research and educational initiatives among member institutions. These research and initiatives are made possible through funds provided by industry sponsors directly to Consortium Principal Investigators at their respective universities.
2. Funds allocated by the University Consortium through sponsor contributions are intended to directly support research, educational, and collaborative activities in a flexible and unbiased manner. To enable this, industry sponsors acknowledge and agree that their contributions are provided with “no strings attached” and use of those funds is directed solely by the Consortium

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Principal Investigators, provided those funds are used for the purpose of research, educational, and collaborative activities.

3. Indirect costs, including but not limited to administrative expenses, project management, facility costs, financial management, and general institutional expenses, will, wherever possible, be included in direct project budgets.
4. The University Consortium does not allow for additional overhead or indirect costs to be taken off sponsor contributions.

Implementation:

1. This policy is effective immediately upon approval.
2. All future funding allocations provided by the University Consortium will adhere to this policy.
3. Members of the University Consortium are responsible for ensuring compliance with this policy.

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