

Vice Dean David Gisselson Nord

Handling procedure for the global responsible engagement checklist at the Faculty of Medicine

Approved by the Faculty Board 2024-03-13

Background

In the current multipolar world order, international collaborations in research and higher education are becoming increasingly complicated. Academic freedom is the basic principle of the faculty's international work. At the same time, research and education are no longer a zone protected from international conflicts of interest.

As support for students, researchers and teachers, several guidelines have already been written for how international collaboration can take place in a way that protects the integrity of research and academic freedom. Examples include STINT's guidance on responsible internationalization as well as a large number of similar documents from other countries (see list of sources on page 3). In 2023, Lund University drew up comprehensive guidance regarding global responsible engagement (GRE), also containing a checklist. The checklist is intended to identify potential risks and ethical considerations in international cooperation.

There is currently a lack of concrete operational routines at the Faculty of Medicine to assess risks with international work at research group level. Based on the faculty's subject area, including, among other things, the handling of large-scale amounts of sensitive personal data as well as research on humans and animal models, there are reasons to formulate adapted guidelines that clarify the guidance given within GRE and how a checklist should be applied.

Purpose

The checklist below is intended as support for research group leaders and heads of departments when assessing international collaboration. The purpose of the checklist is to capture situations where the faculty as a whole may need to make strategic considerations regarding the risks of a planned international collaboration and where specific measures for de-risking may have to be taken.

The checklist contains a number of indicators that a collaboration may need to be discussed at faculty level before it is formalized and implemented. If one or more of the indicators are met, the collaboration must be assessed by the International Council of the Faculty of Medicine (MIR), which then provides feedback to the research group leader/head of department regarding risk management. MIR is also advisory to the Dean, who makes the ultimate decision regarding a collaboration.

In difficult cases, MIR can seek advice from LU's Forum for Responsible Internationalization and/or through direct dialogue with the Vice-Chancellor/Deputy Vice-Chancellor responsible for internationalization.

If no indicator is met, no action is required from the research group leader or head of department. The collaborative effort can continue as planned.

The list must be consulted when establishing new collaborations of such dignity that they are regulated by contracts or other written agreements, such as memoranda of understanding, student exchange agreements, applications for shared research grants with foreign partners, longer working visits of LU staff abroad, as well as transfer of large-scale biological data or biological material. The list should also be applied at employment of staff with salary from LU and/or a foreign university (including PhD students). The list should also be used for visiting researchers, teachers and PhD students from abroad who are to be given an access card to Lund University premises.

The list should not be used when admitting PhD students with scholarships from abroad, as this is governed by a separate procedure. It is not mandatory to use the list for joint publications or other academic activities which do fall under the situations above, but may be consulted for advisory purposes.

Indicators for risk assessment at faculty level

If one or more of the following conditions exist, MIR should be contacted for advice. The request is made by e-mail to MIR chairperson and secretary [see the faculty's intraweb for contact information] which describes the purpose and scope of the cooperation and who the foreign partner is, including contact person, organization and address/geographical location. Potential partners outside the academic sphere, such as commercial actors and authorities, must also be indicated. Please also list the indicator(s), which have given rise to the inquiry.

If you have any questions about the use and interpretation of the indicators, or how to formulate your question, please contact directly the Vice Dean for International Affairs at the Faculty of Medicine.

Indicator 1: Democratic principles and constraints of academic freedom

Is the partner connected to a country where democratic rights and freedoms are restricted and/or where human rights violations are well documented? Can the partners be pressured so that they are forced to disclose information about you or the project to the parent institution/home country without your knowledge? Are there sanctions imposed by the EU or the UN on the partner country? Will the project or related activities conflict with LU's core values?

[Link to EU Sanctions Map](#)

[Link to Freedom in the World](#)

[Link to World Justice Project Rule of Law](#)

[Link to Academic Freedom Index](#)

[Link to the core values of Lund University](#)

Indicator 2: Risk of military use or other connections to national security

Does the cooperation include, or can it be linked to, an actor within or closely linked to the armed forces or defence industry? Is there an obvious application of the intended research in military or security services/surveillance, so-called dual use? Does the collaboration or project contravene export control legislation for dual-use items?

[Read more about export control and dual use](#)

Indicator 3: Risk for security of sensitive personal and large-scale biological data

Does the collaboration include sharing of sensitive personal data or large-scale biological data that can be traced back to personal data to countries outside the EU, ESS, or the UK? Are there concerns about information security, such as the absence of a data transfer agreement? Are large-scale biological data from Sweden shared without corresponding data being obtained in the same proportion (asymmetric data sharing)? Are there any doubts about ethical review and/or informed consent regarding data generation in the partner country?

[Read more about personal data and data protection](#)

[Read more about information security](#)

Indicator 4: Risk of ethical dumping

Does the collaboration include analysis in Sweden of animal or human experiments performed abroad, where the collaboration has not already been reviewed by the Swedish Animal Ethics Committee or the Swedish Ethical Review Authority? Are there doubts about the corresponding authorization in the partner country? Does the collaboration involve the sharing of personal data or large-scale biological datasets that can be traced back to personal data without a data transfer agreement?

[Read more about research ethics and animal experiments](#)

Indicator 5: Personal safety

Will the collaboration expose Lund University staff or doctoral students, partner colleagues or students, to increased personal risk related to, for example, transferable diseases, terrorist threats, crime, corruption, espionage, or information theft? Is there any risk of discrimination or oppression of Lund University's or its partner's representatives - legally as well as in practice?

Indicator 6: Risk of IP/patent conflict

Does the collaboration include projects that in the near future are perceived to lead to a patent application and where the distribution of rights between partners could be perceived as unclear? In that case, start with contacting LU Innovation for advice regarding setting up a contract. If the risk persists after these measures have been taken, consult MIR.

[Link to LU Innovation](#)

Relevant reports and links

Afrapportering - Udvalg om retningslinjer for internationalt forsknings- og innovationssamarbejde

<https://ufm.dk/publikationer/2022/afrapportering-udvalg-om-retningslinjer-for-internationalt-forsknings-og-innovationssamarbejde>

Australian Government, Department of Education. Guidelines to counter foreign interference in the Australian university sector

<https://www.education.gov.au/guidelines-counter-foreign-interference-australian-university-sector>

Australian Strategic Policy Institute (2019): The China Defence Universities Tracker

<https://unitracker.aspi.org.au>

Cambridge University Trusted Research Checklist

<https://www.research-integrity.admin.cam.ac.uk/trusted-research-checklist>

CASI-projektet. Samordnad analys för strategisk internationalisering.

<https://www.medarbetarwebben.lu.se/forska-och-utbilda/internationella-mojligheter-och-samarbeten/internationalisering/casi-projektet>

Shih, T., Gaunt, A. & Östlund, S. (2020). *Responsible internationalisation: Guidelines for reflection on international academic collaboration*. Stockholm: STINT, 2020.

https://www.stint.se/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/STINT_Responsible_Internationalisation.pdf

UK Trusted Research Portal <https://www.cpni.gov.uk/trusted-research>

- guidance for academia <https://www.cpni.gov.uk/trusted-research-academia>

University Engagement with China – An MIT Report. November 2022

https://global.mit.edu/wp-content/uploads/2022/11/FINALUniversity-Engagement-with-China_An-MIT-Approach-Nov2022.pdf