

External collaboration guidelines

Part of UvA Policy on External Collaborations

Includes assessment
process, flowchart &
questionnaire

These external collaboration guidelines serve to increase awareness of UvA staff regarding the societal impact (both positive and negative) of their work and aim to provide an accessible toolkit to support UvA staff in reflecting on external collaborations and making informed decisions as part of academically responsible research, education, valorisation and patient care activities. Furthermore, these guidelines provide the normative basis for assessment by the Advisory Committee on External Collaborations (ACEC). These guidelines are part of the UvA Policy on External Collaborations which further includes a policy framework that defines context, guiding principles and responsibilities, and the ACEC terms of reference.

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I. Introduction

Collaborations across national, organisational and/or disciplinary borders are an inherent aspect of the exchange of ideas and scientific advancement. The University of Amsterdam (UvA) aims to foster value-driven collaborations with partners that share common values.¹ Over and above this, the UvA aims to contribute to furthering human well-being and societal prosperity through its high-quality education, research, transfer, and patient care. At the UvA, we recognise the wide variety of forms that such collaborations can take, the diversity of our partners, and the complexity of the (geo)political contexts in which international partnerships operate. We apply the 'do no harm' principle in every activity with the intention of doing good. Although not all partners may share or practice the same values as the UvA or operate in (geo)political contexts that resemble ours, such diversity does not need to preclude external collaborations as such collaborations can help to build bridges and address shared challenges, for example through science diplomacy. Positive outcomes resulting from this approach may decisively outweigh potential risks if these clearly contribute to the intended objectives. This requires tools to carefully assess collaborations in the light of the following three dimensions:

- involvement in or contribution to armed conflict or gross and systematic human rights violations;²
- risks to knowledge security,³ incl. likelihood of dual-use or misuse of research results and its application for military or terrorist purposes;
- serious and irreversible adverse impact on climate, environment, biodiversity, human health, cultural heritage and animal well-being.

¹ See also *UvA Instellingsplan 2021-2026: Inspiring Generations*; *Strategisch Kader Onderzoek*; *Strategisch Kader Internationalisering*; *Onderwijsvisie*; *Bevordering van integere wetenschapsbevordering*; the *KNAW position paper on academic freedom (Dutch)* and the UvA External Collaborations Policy Framework.

² Gross human rights violations relate to the nature of the violations (e.g. serious attacks on the physical and psychological integrity of individuals and groups); systematic human rights violations are violations that occur recurrently, which means that they can no longer be regarded as occasional, but can reasonably be assumed to be inherent in a partner's established practice or policy. See also <https://uhri.ohchr.org/en>.

³ Knowledge security is evaluated in relation to significant risks for the security of human dignity, life, health, freedom, property, the environment or peaceful coexistence. Security-relevant risks arise, in particular, in research which produces knowledge, products or technologies that could be misused directly by third parties. Also see the *KNAW position paper on knowledge security*.

What kind of collaborations

While all types of collaborations should be carefully considered by those involved, these guidelines apply to formal collaborations, i.e. collaborations concluded with a document signed by the UvA, either by the Executive Board or one of the Deans. Partners can be entities that are directly involved in research, education, patient care, or valorisation activities (including, but not limited to, faculties, departments/institutes, companies, governmental bodies and non-governmental organisations) as well as the funders of such activities. For academic institutions, the level of assessment for partners depends on the level of formal collaboration, e.g. whole university, faculty, department/institute, depending on who is signing the agreement. In the case of multi-partner consortia, the extent of UvA staff members' direct involvement with individual partners should be taken into account on a case-by-case assessment. Collaborations on, for instance, a joint paper, presentations at conferences, guest lectures, or an internship/semester abroad by an individual student at another institution, therefore, do not count as *formal* collaborations. Nevertheless, UvA staff members should assess the risks of all collaborations in the light of the present guidelines and follow the steps below, if necessary.

The Advisory Committee on External Collaborations (ACEC) focuses on formal collaborations and other agreements that are signed by the UvA, for example:

- Student exchange programmes (including collective clinical internships)
- Research conducted within multi-partner consortia (e.g. Horizon Europe)
- (Research) collaborations with e.g. companies, non-profit organisations or government agencies
- Unilateral external funding of activities at UvA⁴
- Professorships by special appointment⁵
- Data Sharing Agreements

The ACEC focusses on the combination of topics/activities, partners and (geo)political context within a collaboration and operates alongside the existing body of faculty-based ethical committees. The ACEC does not replace the faculty-based ethical committee's tasks or responsibilities regarding subject-related ethical questions.

⁴ In this context, unilateral funding refers to financial support granted by an external entity – such as a government agency, a company or a non-profit organisation – for a project in which the UvA or the Dutch government does not provide any financial contribution.

⁵ The procedure for professorial appointments is laid down in the UvA Professorial Appointments Policy. ACEC advice may only be required in case the applicant deems that further scrutiny of the funding source is warranted. This would, therefore, be a complementary step; redundancy of procedures should be avoided.

Outline

These guidelines are set out as follows. Section II outlines the dimensions and standards of the assessment criteria and process. Section III provides the evaluation process for collaboration and presents tools to assist UvA staff and management. Section IV and V specifically provide guidance in helping UvA staff deliberate on the ethical and moral aspects of a collaboration and decide whether the collaboration should be submitted for review to the ACEC, as part of the *UvA policy on external collaborations*.

The evaluation process outlined in section III follows the UvA Governance model in setting mandates and determining actors.⁶ The guidelines start from the perspective of the (individual) applicant, but formal UvA bodies such as programme committees, examinations board and faculty's ethical committees can also advise the Dean or Executive Board to request the ACEC's advice on a case-by-case basis.

These guidelines as well as the UvA policy on external collaboration will be subject to periodic reviews and updates. Please consult the *website* for the latest version of this document. As these guidelines present a new instrument, the UvA will evaluate and revise these guidelines after the implementation phase when necessary. A first formal evaluation of these guidelines and the collaboration assessment process is scheduled one year after coming into force and will consider (at least) the effectiveness of the procedure in preventing unwanted effects, any potential implementation issues (e.g. timing, suggested mitigation), the impact on the UvA's appeal as a consortium partner, the impact on UvA staff participation in projects and the alignment with UvA policies, policies of funding agencies (e.g. NWO, Dutch government, EU) or legislative changes.

6 *UvA Governance Model*

II. Dimensions and standards for the assessment of external collaborations

Assessing external collaborations requires careful consideration of risks on three dimensions: the topic and activities of the collaboration, the collaboration partner(s), and the (geo)political context in which the collaboration takes place. Within the UvA, the mandates and responsibilities of this process are aligned with the UvA Governance Model and involve process steps at the faculty-level, and in some cases at the UvA-level, in case ACEC advice is warranted. The process steps are detailed in section III below. This section focuses on the key standards for the assessment of external collaborations, which will be elaborated upon in the Terms of Reference of the ACEC.

The **topic and activities** refer to the content, goals and activities of the collaboration, such as the research area, the technologies involved, the intended application of results, and the nature of the research that will be carried out, for instance, types of data collection.

The **collaboration partner** refers to the organisation or entity involved in the partnership, such as a university, a department or institution within a university, a company, government body, or NGO, with whom a document is concluded signed by the UvA, either by the Executive Board or one of the Deans. Given the definition of formal collaborations provided in section I, collaborations with individual researchers or teaching staff on, for instance, a joint paper, presentations at conferences, guest lectures, or an internship/semester abroad by an individual student fall beyond the scope of the definition of a formal collaboration.

The **(geo)political context** refers to the broader (geo)political environment in which the collaboration takes place, for instance the political situation in the state in which the partner is based or the location where the research activities are conducted.⁷ The risk-level of collaborating with a specific partner depends on the values it respects/stands for, such as academic freedom, academic integrity, diversity, equity, human rights and environmental, social and economic sustainability. It may also depend on how it operates within a specific geopolitical context, e.g. the level of autonomy within an authoritarian regime. For academic institutions, the level of assessment depends on the level of formal collaboration, e.g. the whole university, faculty, department/institute, depending on who is signing the agreement.

⁷ The term (geo)political is used throughout to cover both political and geopolitical contexts, even though these contexts are more often political than strictly geopolitical. However, in the current policy context, 'geopolitical' has become the default terminology to refer to developments including regime changes, evolving bi- and multilateral relations, and tensions related to trade and economic policies.

In addition, as indicated in section I, collaborations by UvA staff should be assessed against **three core standards**. The first two refer to a particular context within which a collaboration takes place; the third refers to consequences of a collaboration, irrespective of a particular context:

- whether the collaboration is linked to armed conflict or a situation where gross and systematic human rights violations occur, and it credibly can be linked to breaches of fundamental rules of international law in such a context (war crimes, crimes against humanity, genocide, gross and systematic human rights violations);
- whether the collaboration entails risks to knowledge security, such as a risk that sensitive data or knowledge will be available for, or appropriated by state or non-state actors for military or terrorist purposes; and
- whether the collaboration involves activities that are credibly expected to cause serious and irreversible harm to global values, in particular the climate, environment, biodiversity, human health, cultural heritage, or animal well-being.

While in some cases there may be certainty that a collaboration violates one or more of the standards, such situations are expected to be rare. In most cases, the assessment will need to focus on the **risk** that a collaboration contributes to violating the standards. In this context, risk refers to the combination of the **likelihood** that a collaboration contributes to violating one of these standards and the **severity** of its potential impact. The likelihood depends on the nature of the evidence and is captured by the term ‘credible’ in the formulation of the standards. The list of trusted sources (Appendix 6) serves as a reference point to assess the evidence. The severity is also expressed in the formulation of the standards themselves: a link to a particular breach of a norm only becomes relevant, when the norm is fundamental (e.g. genocide, gross human rights violations) and/or the nature of the harm is ‘serious and irreversible’. Not any link with violation of a particular standard, even if likely, will be sufficient to determine that the risk-level an (envisaged) collaboration is unacceptable.

The risks, understood as a combination of likelihood and severity, that a particular collaboration conflicts with these standards, individually and in combination, are to be graded as very low, low, medium or high. These risks are operationalised in the Risk matrix in Appendix 3.

Taken together, these three dimensions (topic, partner, context) and the three standards against which they are assessed (war crimes / human rights, knowledge security, global harm) provide the foundation of the assessment criteria and process for determining whether a collaboration aligns with UvA’s commitment to responsible, value-driven academic engagement.

III. Collaboration assessment process

Each assessment process follows a clear and consistent path. It starts with the applicant – UvA staff member or formal body – moves through the relevant director and Dean⁸, and is then submitted for ACEC advice, if needed. For new collaborations applicants start the reflection and assessment (step 1-2 below) at the faculty level at **the earliest possible stage** prior to the start of any collaborative activities (for example, joined submission of a grant application after pre-award) to allow for the ACEC to issue their advice, if required. Early initiation is important as a delayed assessment may make it more difficult to withdraw from an intended collaboration without causing negative consequences for the other parties involved. Please note that collaboration partners need to be known at this stage.

In the case of existing collaborations, start the (re)assessment process as soon as one of the conditions for reassessment are met (section VI).

Several collaboration types should **always** be submitted to the ACEC. These include research projects involving partners from the fossil fuel industry and proposed PhD projects by CSC-funded PhD candidates, as previously determined by the Executive Board. Additionally, collaborations involving military or dual-use research, collaborations leading (in)directly to human rights violations, collaborations involving risks related to foreign interference and knowledge security or collaborations and activities that are fully externally funded warrant extra deliberation at faculty level. Each collaboration should be evaluated individually based on its specific context.

⁸ Throughout: or UvA Executive Board in those cases where the Executive Board is signing the agreement.

Process step-by-step⁹

1. Reflection on collaboration. (Faculty level)

Applicant Reflect on the normative aspects of the collaboration with colleagues in your institute/department and at faculty level. The goal here is to identify benefits and risks of and/or ethical and moral dilemmas involved in the collaboration for you, the UvA, and the external collaboration partner(s). The flowchart and the questionnaire described in section IV provide tools to support your deliberation at faculty level and help determine the level of risk regarding the topic/activities, collaboration partner(s) and (geo)political context. Also reflect on the strategies you could apply to mitigate the risks identified. If the collaboration involves a multi-partner consortium, reflect on the different relations between the different partners. If any of the risks identified exceeds *very low* (green) in the questionnaire and you wish to proceed with the collaboration, see step 2. Even if initially the risks are very low, **periodical re-evaluation** of the collaboration is warranted, also see section VI.

2. Assessment of collaborations. (Faculty level)

Applicant Discuss the results of your deliberation and assessment of the collaboration
Dean with the relevant director. Use the Risk Matrix and Action Table, in Appendices
Director 3 and 4 respectively. The relevant director or the Dean can decide to consult
Faculty contact person any relevant formal bodies, in house experts and/or other existing support within your faculty.
 If – after completing the flowchart and questionnaire – the intended collaboration is considered to be *low risk* (yellow) or *medium risk* (orange), contact your Dean.¹⁰ The Dean decides whether to consult the ACEC.
 If the collaboration is considered to be *high risk* (red), obtaining ACEC advice is mandatory if you want to pursue the collaboration.

Guidance note: The applicant decides together with the relevant director on how to proceed and whether advice from the ACEC is warranted. When disagreement arises between you and your director on how to proceed (e.g. when you wish to pursue the collaboration in question against the negative advice of the relevant director), approach the Dean. The Dean can either agree with the director (resulting in not pursuing the collaboration) or decide to submit for ACEC advice.¹¹

In all cases the assessment should be archived with the faculty contact person.

⁹ Actors are further defined in the Glossary in Appendix 5.

¹⁰ Please consult your faculty specific policy on how to contact your Dean or relevant faculty contact person.

¹¹ If the applicant disagrees with the Dean or Executive Board, they can appeal the decision following the UvA appeals procedure.

3. Requesting advice. (Faculty level)

Applicant	The Dean decides whether to submit the collaboration for ACEC advice. The
Dean	Dean asks applicants to fill in the request form, available via the UvA intranet.
Director	The form asks applicants to (a) provide a short project description, incl. the
Faculty contact person	goals of research, research area/problem, and methodology; (b) elaborate on your and your partner's motivation for and benefits of collaboration; (c) reflect on (i) the ethical and moral dilemmas, and (ii) possible risks of the project/ collaboration for you, the UvA, and the partner and measures you can take to minimize these risks. The request should be accompanied by the results of step 1-2 (flow chart, questionnaire and Risk Matrix).

The faculty contact person archives the request for advice.

4. ACEC deliberation.

ACEC	<p>The ACEC examines submitted requests in a confidential process of deliberation. To facilitate deliberation and formulating their advice, the ACEC can request additional information or expert opinion(s). The ACEC also considers the legal and reputational consequences of (termination of) collaboration and/or suggests conditions under which the collaboration could be pursued. The advice on a specific collaboration is informed by weighing of arguments and alternatives on a case-by-case basis.¹²</p> <p>ACEC updates the applicant(s), faculty contact person, relevant director, and Dean on the process (e.g. check on completeness request, acknowledgement of receipt, timeline deliberation and timeline draft advice). The deliberation process takes four to six weeks.</p>
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5. ACEC Draft Advice. (optional)

ACEC	The ACEC may decide to send a draft advice to the applicant(s) to check for
Applicant	factual inaccuracies. The draft advice describes the process followed and considerations by the ACEC.

6. ACEC Final Advice.

ACEC	The ACEC sends the final advice to the applicant(s), faculty contact person,
Faculty contact person	relevant director, and Dean.
	The faculty contact person archives the final advice.

¹² The responsibilities, processes and composition of the ACEC are defined in its Terms of Reference.

7. Decision on entering the collaboration. (Faculty level)

Dean	The Dean as the entity signing the agreement decides on entering the
Faculty contact person	collaboration or not. ¹³ The faculty contact person archives the final decision.

¹³ If the applicant disagrees with the Dean or Executive Board, they can appeal the decision following the UvA appeals procedure.

IV. Assessment toolkit

The flowchart in Appendix 1 consists of questions for a first assessment at faculty level to determine whether a broader ethical and moral consideration, and risk assessment is warranted in the initial stages prior to the start of any collaborative activities. If so, the questionnaire in Appendix 2 helps assessing potential collaboration risks and helps identify scenarios in which increased awareness and reflection is necessary. The questions aim to reflect on (un)intended impacts of a collaboration through the lens of academically responsible research, education, valorisation, and patient care activities. It helps you identify and specify the most relevant direct risks in the collaboration.

The questionnaire covers three different aspects of a collaboration: the topic/activities, the collaboration partner, and the (geo)political context. These questions and the list of trusted sources in Appendix 6 help your moral deliberation and identify benefits and risks of and/or ethical and moral dilemmas involved in the collaboration. Not all questions might apply to all collaborations. The overall risk level of the collaboration depends on the specific combination of risks within the combination of the topic/activities, collaboration partner and the (geo)political context in which the collaboration partner operates. The colour coded answers in each category of the questionnaire will help determine the overall risk level in the Risk Matrix (Appendix 3) and whether to request ACEC advice through the Dean.

Even if initially the risks are very low, **periodical re-evaluation** of the collaboration is warranted, also see section VI.

V. Risk matrix

The Risk matrix in Appendix 3 shows the overall risk level associated with a collaboration based on the colour coded answers per category to the questionnaire in Appendix 2. Questions answered with *yes* or *high risk* (red) in two or more categories, or *medium risk* (orange) in all three categories warrant ACEC advice. When answering the questions, consider not only potential harms, but also the anticipated benefits of a collaboration for science and society and possible risk mitigation strategies. The latter two do not impact the risk assessment in Appendix 2 itself but can impact risk acceptance. Examples of risk mitigation strategies include adjusting the study design to diminish adverse consequences of the research to animal well-being, measures taken by the partner to prevent damage to cultural heritage, explicit agreements on the teaching activities and housing of students, explicit agreements on reuse of data in case of data sharing, or an inclusion of special provisions (e.g. avoiding greenwashing). Once you determine the risk level, the necessary follow-up steps are given in the Action table in Appendix 4.

VI. Re-assessing existing collaborations

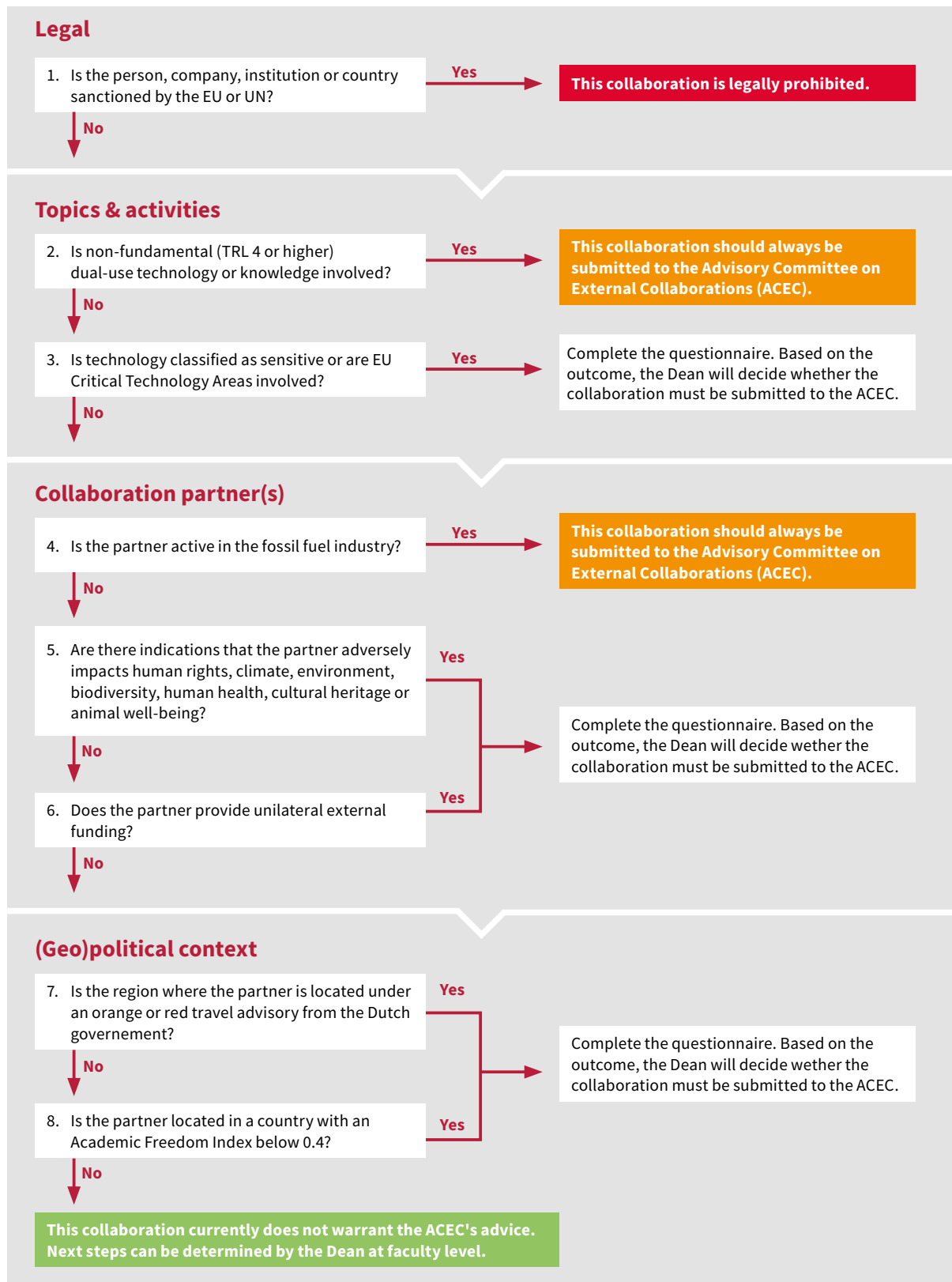
Collaborations with external parties may need to be reassessed due to intensification of risks associated with a partnership or (geo)political context. The Dean or Executive Board (signatory entity via the faculty contact person) initiates reassessment in the events listed below.¹⁴ Applicants, relevant directors, and formal UvA bodies such as programme committees, examinations board and faculty's ethical committees can advise the Dean or Executive Board to request reassessment. Educational partnerships need to be reassessed before contract extension. Collaborations are reassessed by repeating the steps in section III.

- Developments in *the (geo)political context in which collaborating institution operates*:
 - Emergence of an armed conflict;
 - Regime change having adverse consequences with regard to topics/activities, collaboration partner(s), or (geo)political context;
 - Serious or repeated accusations of gross and systematic violations of human rights;
 - Sanctions or travel restrictions by the Dutch government, European Commission or other international bodies;
 - Resolutions by international bodies: Council of Europe, United Nations;
 - Rulings by international or regional courts.
- Changes in *the profile/status of a collaboration partner*:
 - Changing status of the funder/ funding scheme (from '(very) low risk' to 'medium to high risk'; see Risk matrix in section V);
 - Changing status regarding knowledge security (from '(very) low risk' into 'medium to high risk');
 - Partner listed as an organisation/country that violates the *UN Global Compact Ten Principles*;
 - Documented accusations of gross and systematic human rights violations and/or complicity in such violations that take place in the (geo)political context in which it operates.

¹⁴ List is not exhaustive.

Appendix 1:

Flowchart external collaborations



Appendix 2: Questionnaire

A list of trusted sources to help your moral deliberation and identify benefits and risks of and/or ethical and moral dilemmas involved in the collaboration can be found in Appendix 6. This list is also to be used to substantiate assertions regarding collaboration partners and/or geopolitical context.

Topic/activities

The same topic/activity may pose different overall risk levels depending on the collaboration partner and/or the (geo)political context in which the partner operates. It is mandatory to follow existing legal frameworks and (disciplinary) guidelines.

Examples of high risk topic/activities include those that:

- > may lead to military or dual use application;
- > involve or lead to gross and systematic human rights violations;
- > involve risks concerning foreign interference and knowledge security;
- > have serious and irreversible adverse impact on climate, environment, human health, cultural heritage, and other ecosystems;
- > negatively affect wellbeing of animals.

Do the activities concern research into, production of, or trade in goods that fall under the 'Common EU Military List'? Or is it specifically intended for military purposes?

☐

no

☐

yes

Are the activities subjected to trade-restrictive measures (sanctions)?

☐

no

☐

yes

Do the activities involve research with a (possible) military or terrorist application, or will it result in software, technology or products covered, for instance, by the 'EU list of dual-use goods'?	<input type="checkbox"/> very low risk	<input type="checkbox"/> low risk	<input type="checkbox"/> medium risk	<input type="checkbox"/> high risk
Do the activities involve technology classified as sensitive or covered by the 'EU Critical Technology Areas'?	<input type="checkbox"/> very low risk	<input type="checkbox"/> low risk	<input type="checkbox"/> medium risk	<input type="checkbox"/> high risk
Do the activities involve research that can be used for cyber-attacks, espionage, or surveillance of citizens?	<input type="checkbox"/> very low risk	<input type="checkbox"/> low risk	<input type="checkbox"/> medium risk	<input type="checkbox"/> high risk
Do the activities involve or contribute to serious and irreversible adverse impact on climate, biodiversity, environment, cultural heritage, and other ecosystems? See e.g. the Nagoya Protocol.	<input type="checkbox"/> very low risk	<input type="checkbox"/> low risk	<input type="checkbox"/> medium risk	<input type="checkbox"/> high risk
Do the activities concern research with a significant risk of abuse by third parties, for example, the development of a highly pathogenic virus, a technology that can decrypt all encryptions, or interfering with media, public opinion or election?	<input type="checkbox"/> very low risk	<input type="checkbox"/> low risk	<input type="checkbox"/> medium risk	<input type="checkbox"/> high risk
Might the activities lead to suppression of minorities, or cause or directly contribute to gross and systematic human rights violations, e.g. through misuse of findings or applications? See e.g. Universal Human Rights Index.	<input type="checkbox"/> very low risk	<input type="checkbox"/> low risk	<input type="checkbox"/> medium risk	<input type="checkbox"/> high risk

Collaboration partner(s)

The risk level of collaborating with a specific partner depends on the values it respects/stands for, such as academic freedom, academic integrity, diversity, equity, human rights and environmental, social and economic sustainability. It may also depend on how it operates within a specific (geo)political context, e.g. the level of autonomy within an authoritarian regime. For academic institutions, the level of assessment depends on the level of formal collaboration, e.g. the whole university, faculty, department/institute, depending on who is signing the agreement.

Examples of high risk partner include

- a partner subjected to a form of embargo;
- a partner involved in gross and systematic human rights violations;
- a partner directly involved or activities causing serious irreversible adverse damage to climate, biodiversity, environment, human health, cultural heritage, and other eco-systems and/or causing animal suffering.

Are any of the collaboration partners subjected to any form of embargo and/or listed among companies, organisations or governments that violate the Ten Principles of the UN Global Compact? (also see: EU sanctions tracker)	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> yes
Over the past 3 years, have there been accusations that any of the collaboration partners are involved in gross and systematic human rights violations? See e.g. the Universal Human Rights Index.	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> yes
Over the past 3 years, have there been accusations that any of the collaboration partners is involved in serious environmental damage or animal suffering?	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> yes
Over the past 3 years, have there been accusations that any of the collaboration partners acts in violation of the EU Corporate Sustainability Due Diligence Directive (CSDDD), EU regulations on animal research or otherwise contributing to animal suffering?	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> yes

Over the past 3 years, have there been accusations that any of the collaboration partners are systematically violating academic freedom of their staff, fellows and/or students?	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> yes		
Do any of the collaboration partners extract fossil fuels (including oil, natural gas, coal and lignite) from the earth?	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> yes		
Is there a possibility that collaboration partners provide unilateral external funding for activities at UvA with secondary motives?	<input type="checkbox"/> very low risk	<input type="checkbox"/> low risk	<input type="checkbox"/> medium risk	<input type="checkbox"/> high risk

Collaboration partner(s) – extra questions for exchange and fellowship programmes

Are UvA students or staff participating in the exchange or fellowship programme, etc., put in a setting where their exercise of human rights, such as freedom of expression or freedom of movement, is likely to be unduly restricted?	<input type="checkbox"/> very low risk	<input type="checkbox"/> low risk	<input type="checkbox"/> medium risk	<input type="checkbox"/> high risk
Is there a possibility that UvA students or staff participating in the exchange or fellowship programme will or have to participate in or contribute to research that violates human rights in a gross and systematic way?	<input type="checkbox"/> very low risk	<input type="checkbox"/> low risk	<input type="checkbox"/> medium risk	<input type="checkbox"/> high risk
Is there a possibility of UvA students or staff entering an unsafe setting in terms of security? (Consult travel restrictions/negative travel advice issued by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs)	<input type="checkbox"/> very low risk	<input type="checkbox"/> low risk	<input type="checkbox"/> medium risk	<input type="checkbox"/> high risk

Geopolitical context

The (geo)political context in which a partner operates impacts the risk level of the collaboration, even if the topic/activity or partner itself can be considered low risk. Such as risks to knowledge security, the likelihood of dual-use or misuse of research results and applications, the likelihood of partners involvement or direct contribution to gross and systematic human rights violations and/or activities that have serious and irreversible adverse impact on climate, environment, human health, cultural heritage or animal well-being. It may also affect academic freedom of both scholars and students.

Examples include:

- areas affected by an armed conflict;
- areas where gross and systematic violations of human rights have been documented (see, for example, UN resolutions, international and regional court rulings, etc.);
- contexts where the (authoritarian) regime may affect the cooperation (e.g. through large-scale discrimination against a certain ethnic group that is likely to affect research activities; systematic censorship and undue limitations of academic freedom) contexts in which academic institutions are instrumentalised by the government in a policy of serious and gross human rights violations (e.g. cooperation in prosecuting dissidents or legitimising human rights violations);
- countries subjected to a form of (international) embargo.

Is the country in which the partner operates subject to sanctions and/or travel bans, for example, those imposed by the Dutch Government, the EU, the UN? (See e.g., Sanctions list)	<input type="checkbox"/> no		<input type="checkbox"/> yes	
Does the collaboration take place in a (geo)political context where gross and systematic human rights violations have been documented? See e.g. the Universal Human Rights Index.	<input type="checkbox"/> very low risk	<input type="checkbox"/> low risk	<input type="checkbox"/> medium risk	<input type="checkbox"/> high risk
Does the collaboration take place in a (geo)political context where academic institutions are likely to be instrumentalised by the government and/or where academic freedom of scholars and students is likely to be unduly limited by the government? See e.g. an academic freedom index or a democracy index.	<input type="checkbox"/> very low risk	<input type="checkbox"/> low risk	<input type="checkbox"/> medium risk	<input type="checkbox"/> high risk

Appendix 3: Risk matrix

	(very) low risk topic/activity	Medium risk topic/activity	High risk topic/activity
(very) low risk partner in (very) low risk (geo)political context	very low	low	medium
(very) low risk partner in medium to high risk (geo)political context	low	medium	high
Medium to high risk partner in (very) low risk (geo)political context	medium	medium	high
Medium to high risk partner in medium to high risk (geo)political context	high	high	high

Appendix 4: Table to identify action to be taken based on identified risk level

	Explanation	Action
Very low	<p>The topic/activity, the collaboration partner and the (geo) political context are identified as low risk. However, the collaboration may entail unidentified risks, and the risks assessed here may change in the future.</p> <p><i>E.g. research on treatment of addiction funded by Public Health Services in a (geo)political context in which academic freedom is guaranteed</i></p>	<p>In case of doubt, you can discuss the collaboration with your relevant director.</p>
Low	<p>The same topic/activity may be identified as low risk with one collaboration partner, but not with another or the risk lies solely in the topic/activity itself. The identified risk level is low. However, the specific aspects of the collaboration potentially pose a heightened risk and the risks assessed here may change in the future.</p> <p><i>E.g. research on treatment of addiction funded by Public Health Services in a (geo)political context in which academic freedom is not guaranteed</i></p>	<p>Discuss with your relevant director the risks involved in collaboration and possible mitigation strategies. Jointly decide if the ACEC should be consulted.</p>
Medium	<p>A medium to high risk topic/activity must always meet the legal requirements. If the research has a fundamental nature (low Technology Readiness Level; TRL 1, 2 or 3), it may be excluded from legal requirements. The same topic/activity may be medium to high risk with one collaboration partner, but not with another. The identified risk level is medium. Pay attention to risks and mitigation strategies.</p> <p><i>E.g. research on treatment of addiction funded by the tobacco industry in a (geo)political context in which no gross and systematic human rights violations occur or research into a universal decryption tool financed by Dutch Research Council, regardless of (geo)political context</i></p>	<p>Discuss with your relevant director the risks involved in collaboration and mitigation strategies. Jointly decide if the ACEC should be consulted.</p>

High

A high risk topic/activity must always meet the legal requirements. If the research has a fundamental nature (low Technology Readiness Level; TRL 1, 2 or 3), it may be excluded from legal requirements. Collaborations with a medium to high risk collaboration partner and/or in a medium to high risk (geo)political context is prohibited by law in some cases but deserves extra attention regardless. Potentially medium to high risk topics/activities require extra scrutiny when the collaboration is with a medium to high risk collaboration partner and in a medium to high risk (geo)political context. The identified risk level is high. Undertake action on identified risks.

E.g. research on treatment of addiction funded by the tobacco industry in a (geo)political context in which gross and systematic human rights violations occur or research into a universal decryption tool financed by a military research agency, regardless of (geo)political context

If you wish to continue exploring the intended collaboration, consult with your relevant director and submit a request for advice to the ACEC.

Appendix 5: Glossary

ACEC	Advisory Committee on External Collaborations
Applicant	UvA staff member(s) who want(s) to collaborate
Collaboration partner	Partner directly involved in research, education, patient care or knowledge valorisation activities as well as the funders of such activities. For academic institutions, the level of assessment depends on the level of formal collaboration, e.g. whole university, faculty, department/institute, depending on who is signing the agreement
Dean	Dean of the faculty or mandated body
Director	Director of Research, Education, Valorisation, Care, Graduate School, etc.
Dual-use	Goods and technology designed for civilian use that could be misused to suppress human rights or that have military or terrorist applications
EU	European Union
Executive Board	Executive Board of the UvA
Faculty contact person	Faculty support staff responsible for follow-up, clarification, and archiving collaboration assessments
Formal collaboration	Collaborations concluded with a document signed by the UvA (Faculties and/or Central Services)
TRL	<i>Technology Readiness Level</i> ; a scale to indicate the maturity of a technology ranging from TRL 1 (basic principles observed) to TRL 9 (proven in an operational environment)
UN	United Nations
UvA	University of Amsterdam

Appendix 6: List of trusted sources

Academic Freedom Index
Bureau Biosecurity (RIVM)
Common EU Military List
Democracy Index
Dutch government policy on international sanctions
EU Corporate Sustainability Due Diligence Directive (CSDDD)
EU Critical Technology Areas
EU Export control (dual-use)
EU Regulations on animal research
EU Sanctions Map
EU sanctions tracker - Entities
Nagoya Protocol
Universal Declaration of Human Rights
Universal Human Rights Index
Sustainable Development Goals
Reports of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change
Scholars at Risk
Nederlandse Gedragscode Wetenschappelijke Integriteit 2018 (Dutch)
Ten Principles of the UN Global Compact
Travel Advisories Dutch National Government (Dutch)
The European Code of Conduct for Research Integrity

Please note this list is non-exhaustive, applicants may also consult similar sources, for instance, reports by NGO's, and other discipline specific guidelines and protocols.