



WORKER RIGHTS CONSORTIUM

Frequently Asked Questions Concerning U.K. University Affiliation

The WRC has been contacted by a number of universities in the U.K. expressing interest in affiliating with the WRC. This document provides answers to questions that British institutions considering affiliation may have. Please note that this information is complementary to the information provided in the general [FAQ](#), which will likely also be of interest to British stakeholders.

What is the cost of affiliation for British institutions?

For British universities that do not collect royalties from a licensing program, there is a flat annual fee of £1000. For British universities that collect royalties from a licensing program, the fee is 1% of the previous year's gross licensing revenue (with a minimum of £1000 and a maximum of £35,000). This fee structure is comparable to the structure in place for U.S. and Canadian institutions.

What areas of apparel purchasing, procurement, and licensing does WRC affiliation cover for British institutions?

There are two primary ways in which British universities differ from U.S. and Canadian universities in relation to their dealings with apparel companies: (1) At most British universities, most apparel contracts held by universities relate to the procurement of garments for use by university staff or consultants; large licensing programs are unusual; (2) Relative to the U.S. and Canada, a more substantial portion of consumer-facing business involving university-themed apparel at British institutions is handled through student unions. In view of these differences, the WRC's affiliation program for universities in the UK covers both university garment procurement and apparel goods sold by student unions, as well as licensed apparel where such programs exist.

Decisions concerning the purchasing of garments at British institutions are often split between the university and the student union; how does affiliation with the WRC work in this context?

University administrations and their respective student unions are encouraged to affiliate at the same time. The university administration and student union are free to split the affiliation fee in a manner they deem appropriate in view of the relative size of their apparel programs. However, if

an administration or student union of a particular university joins prior to the other joining, the first to join should provide one half of the overall annual affiliation fee (£500).

What are recommended approaches for handling factory disclosure data, particularly where apparel orders are managed by or through an association or consortium?

Each affiliate university is responsible for (1) ensuring that vendors disclose the names and locations of factories that produce apparel goods sold to the university or student union and (2) including a manufacturing code of conduct in contracts with vendors. In taking these steps, each university is free to work with any other entity or association. In the United States, most universities coordinate the disclosure process through one of two organizations (the Collegiate Licensing Company and the Licensing Resource Group) which assist universities in brokering licensing relationships with apparel companies. These organizations gather disclosure data on behalf of their member universities and provide this information to the WRC. This approach eliminates substantial redundancy where numerous universities have relationships with the same apparel companies. In the UK, opportunities exist for similar kinds of coordination. In the case of U.K. student unions, the WRC understands that purchases are generally handled at a centralized level via NUS Services Limited (NUSSL) with a relatively small number of suppliers serving most unions, and that NUSSL already requires suppliers to disclose factory locations and to commit to compliance with a code of conduct. For this reason, it may be sensible to coordinate code of conduct and disclosure data gathering activities with NUSSL. Similarly, in the case of university administrations, it may be sensible to coordinate the gathering of disclosure data at the level of regional university procurement consortia. Such arrangements would need to be made by participating student unions and university administrations.

What approach can be taken relative to disclosure data at institutions where purchases are decentralized and where the size of individual contracts is small?

The expectation of affiliate institutions is to make a good faith effort to gather disclosure data from the university's vendors so that monitoring can take place. The WRC recognizes that in the case of some vendors (for example, purchases made from local shops), it may not be practical to gather disclosure data. The WRC recommends that universities implementing a code of conduct for the first time begin by focusing on the largest contracts and most significant vendors, particularly those which supply multiple universities, and to the extent feasible to work with other universities, through regional consortia or other groupings, to coordinate disclosure data gathering activities.

Given the ways in which British universities differ from U.S. and Canadian universities with respect to dealings with apparel companies, is monitoring and enforcement relevant and feasible for universities in the U.K.?

With some significant exceptions, British universities lack the kinds of sportswear licensing programs established by major U.S. universities. However, it is also the case that most

universities in the U.S. that have established codes of conduct and have affiliated to the WRC are small institutions with very small or no licensing programs. The

WRC's work over the last decade has shown that it is possible for such institutions to participate effectively in the university code of conduct movement. Such work has proven most effective where multiple universities have dealings with common vendors, a dynamic clearly present in the U.K. context.

As a U.S.-based organization, can the WRC effectively meet the needs of British institutions?

The WRC has the experience and capacity to perform monitoring in all major apparel producing countries. The supply chains of the business partners of universities in the U.K. that affiliate to the WRC are subject to the same complaint-based monitoring program, utilizing the WRC's experienced staff and wide network of NGO and union contacts around the world, that is available to participating U.S. and Canadian universities. Moreover, British universities have all of the same avenues for participation in the WRC available to U.S. and Canadian affiliates – including membership in the university caucus, nomination and potential election to the Board of Directors, participation in membership meetings and conference calls, and access to communications for university affiliates.

What provisions are schools required to include in their codes of conduct?

Affiliates are encouraged to adopt a code as strong in all respects as the WRC model code (which, for example, includes a provision requiring payment of a living wage). However, affiliates are not required to do so. The code of a college or university is sufficient to meet WRC affiliation requirements if it provides basic protection for workers in each of the following areas – wages, hours of work and overtime compensation, freedom of association, workplace safety and health, women's rights, child labor and forced labor, harassment and abuse in the workplace, non-discrimination and compliance with local law. The Worker Rights Consortium will use the model code of conduct below as the basis for its investigations.