

## **Lobby to end UCL's relationship with arms companies**

### **What would you like the Union to do?**

1. Obtain transparent disclosure of UCL's relationship with arms companies.
2. The Union to Lobby UCL to sever any ties with arms companies (including sponsorships, investments, events on campus etc.) and to invest in more ethical companies, with values consistent with UCL's reputation as a humane, progressive and respectful institution.

### **Why would you like to do this?**

In recent years, UCL has received sponsorship from arms companies. Arms companies produce the weaponry and equipment that facilitate conflict and repression. For example, openDemocracy has revealed how BAE Systems has given close to £50,000 to sponsor University College London's (UCL) Centre for Ethics and Law from 2017 to 2021. UCL decided not to accept any further corporate sponsorship in 2021, but a representative from BAE Systems is still a member of the centre's advisory board [1].

In a recent bulletin by Provost Michael Spence, he outlined UCL's 'approach to ethical research and investment'. In his update the Provost stated 'our university operates on a basic principle of academic freedom. Our staff and students should be free to conduct research within the law'. The Provost has also worked with the 'Research, Innovation and Global Engagement and Finance portfolios for an examination of these questions in relation to our research collaborations and endowment investments'. In this email, the Provost states he is satisfied that UCLs' investments are ethical. However, it is not clear as to what criteria this judgement has been made [2]. Therefore, the Union should lobby UCL to ensure that any research collaborations and endowment investments are in fact ethical, humane and progressive.

The Union has previously had a policy of a similar nature which lapsed in October 2023 [3]. This policy proposal is an updated version of the lapsed policy which reaffirms the Union's commitment to lobbying UCL to engage in ethical, humane and progressive investment.

### **How will this affect students?**

By advocating for the cessation of UCL's connections with arms companies, students can rest assured that their university is committed to ethical conduct. and does not indirectly support activities that constitute human rights violations.

## References:

[1]: <https://www.opendemocracy.net/en/dark-money-investigations/universities-millions-defence-companies-israel-gaza/>

[2]: [https://uclnews.org.uk/cr/AQjSsgIQ9fnzBhiv3\\_P4AfGUNWySnclIGV1OHhYIHdVIRymSkatDFevGPVOeUtRj](https://uclnews.org.uk/cr/AQjSsgIQ9fnzBhiv3_P4AfGUNWySnclIGV1OHhYIHdVIRymSkatDFevGPVOeUtRj)

[3]: <https://studentsunionucl.org/policy/up2101/lobby-to-end-ucls-relationship-with-arms-companies>