



Addendum to the 2025 Annual Supporter Policy Review

In their annual Supporter Policy Review statement, published on 4 November 2025, Trustees stated that when they met in October 2025 to conduct their annual review, no suggested amendments to the policy had been proposed to them during the year. However, members may wish to be aware that eight members on two occasions, in December 2024 (through a series of emails), and in a joint letter to Trustees dated 28 February 2025, did raise concerns about the policy. Trustees did make reference in their October review meeting to the concerns the eight had raised. However, Trustees believed these concerns had been adequately addressed in their two subsequent replies to the eight members on 18 December 2024, and on 21 May 2025, and in an article relevant to the Supporter Policy in the July issue of The Gazette. Trustees therefore concluded the concerns did not need to be re-visited in their annual review in October 2025. However, the eight members have contacted the Trustees to suggest that specifically excluding from the Trustees' annual review statement the members' concerns that the Society is not aligning with the IUNS Private Sector Engagement Policy, this could be misleading to the Society's members, who may share their concern. Trustees have agreed with this suggestion, and have therefore set out below their current position, as confirmed at their October 2025 annual review (and published in the July 2025 Gazette) as an addendum to their original statement.

Trustees wish members to be aware that the eight members believe the Society should fully align the Society's Supporter Policy with the IUNS Private Sector Engagement Policy. Trustees do not believe such an alignment is in the best interests of the Society. Trustees wish members to be aware of their rationale in reaching such a conclusion.

The IUNS Private Sector Engagement Policy states: 'The IUNS encourages all Adhering Bodies to consider these guidelines when engaging with the private sector. While the IUNS cannot enforce specific guidelines on each adhering organisation, it is expected that each Adhering Body will comply with these principles for all activities in which IUNS is a sponsor, partner, or contributor.'

In reviewing the IUNS policy as part of the creation of the Society's Supporter Policy, Trustees noted the issue of 'will comply' is only expected when partnering with IUNS (such as hosting the IUNS ICN). That said, Trustees did review in their October 2025 meeting the IUNS policy, and the report from the President's IUNS Task Force, which reported in October 2024 on the issue of private sector engagement.

Trustees noted the Society's Supporter Policy is, for the most part, compliant with IUNS' policy. For example, the Society use the ATNI score and follows the IUNS guidelines of a Health Score of 3.5 as a minimum. In addition, in complying with IUNS, the Society does not pay speaker fees, access to Gala Dinners is not included in the delegate registration fees, and the Society does not produce print materials at its conferences.

But, there are two areas of divergence. Firstly, IUNS wish to see invited speakers' travel expenses only paid on a needs basis – Trustees disagree, and believe Society conferences should always cover the costs incurred by invited speakers. Secondly, Trustees were disappointed in the President's Task Force not reaching a conclusion on the nuanced flexibility required on engagement with multi-national organisations. IUNS will not allow any engagement from private sector organisations who

manufacture breast milk substitutes. This in effect means Nestle, Danone, Friesland Campina (who score 3.7, 6.4 and 5.6 respectively on the ATNI and meet the IUNS minimum 3.5) are excluded.

Trustees believe today's research landscape demands collaboration across sectors, with a number of funding streams from the EU and UKRI, such as those led by BBSRC and Innovate UK, requiring academia and private sector organisations to work together on complex food, nutrition and health challenges. While such partnerships often require appropriate ethical and legal oversight, they also provide opportunities to develop and reformulate products with improved nutritional value. Drawing on industry expertise in product development, scaling, and consumer insight helps accelerate the translation of nutrition science into healthier, more accessible diets for all – so, by excluding the world's largest food manufactures from potential collaboration because of one element of a vast global portfolio, this is not an IUNS policy supported by Trustees.

Trustees acknowledge that any engagement with external supporter organisations, including the private sector, carries an element of risk. Trustees wish to reassure members the Society's Supporter Policy contains safeguards to ensure the correct levels of due diligence and risk management are in place and adhered to.

Finally, Trustees have agreed with the eight members who have raised the concern over the lack of alignment with the IUNS Private Sector Engagement Policy, in the interests of full transparency, to publish their names. They are: Professors Geraldine McNeil, Louis Levy, Alan Jackson, John Mathers, Joe Millard, Harry McArdle, Paul Trayhurn, Dr Alison Tedstone.