

New Federal Policy on Sensitive Technology Research and Affiliations of Concern

The research security landscape in Canada increased in prominence in 2021 with the implementation of safeguarding research provisions by the federal government and research security provisions by the Ontario provincial government. The early implementation of these provisions was aimed at a very narrow subset of funded research programs, namely the NSERC Alliance program and the Ontario Research Fund programs. We have provided resources to the University's research community on our [Safeguarding Research](#) webpage to help navigate these provisions.

In February 2023, the scope of these guidelines expanded with directives from both the federal and provincial governments. In addition, the federal government promised new guidelines, applicable to all federally funded programs including the Tri-Agencies and CFI, that will have implications for which foreign institutions a researcher can partner with and still be eligible for federal research funding.

On Tuesday, January 16, 2024, the Honourable François-Philippe Champagne, Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry, the Honourable Mark Holland, Minister of Health, and the Honourable Dominic LeBlanc, Minister of Public Safety, Democratic Institutions and Intergovernmental Affairs [announced](#) those new guidelines with the [Policy on Sensitive Technology Research and Affiliations of Concern](#) along with the launch of Canada's new [Research Security Centre](#). The federal government [also hosted a briefing for post-secondary institutions about the policy and the Centre](#).

When does this take effect?

While the policy was announced on January 16, 2024, it will apply to funding opportunities starting May 1, 2024. Between now and then we will work closely with our federal partners as well as with you to help you navigate these new requirements.

What can you do now?

You likely have many questions about how this will affect your research program and research processes.

The bottom line is we need to carefully look at our research activities in order to continue to receive federal funding. With these new requirements, it is more important than ever to know your research partners and understand what affiliations you may have.

As soon as possible, please review both the list of [Sensitive Technology Research Areas](#) and the [Named Research Organizations](#) list and assess whether your research is in a sensitive technology area, and if so, confirm you don't have any affiliations with the named research organizations. Not only do you need to be sure your partners are not restricted, but also that

they have similar goals and objectives for the collaboration as you. Have this same discussion with potential research partners.

Why does this matter?

An attestation to confirm you are not affiliated with these entities will be a condition of federal funding for sensitive research areas. Now is the time to assess your affiliations and terminate any that could compromise your ability to apply for future Tri-Agency funding. We do expect verifications to occur. Should there be intentional discrepancies in attestations, these will need to be considered through the Responsible Conduct of Research processes.

For more detailed information, the federal government has also released a [series of FAQs](#) about the new policy – please review them and if you have further questions, please don't hesitate to reach out to research.security@uoguelph.ca.

We are here to support you.

In anticipation of the new guidelines, and reaction to increased scrutiny on international research partnerships since 2021:

- We have hired for the position of Research Security Specialist, Amy Allison, who will be involved in supporting researchers in research security assessments of their research and partnerships, providing education and outreach to researchers as well as developing, administering and managing associated processes and procedures. Amy started with the University on October 16, 2023.
- We have subscribed to, and are using a digital platform to support due diligence screening of partners, (Kharon Clearview).
- We are and will continue to provide updates and communications to stakeholders related to research security and related requirements.
- Regular updates to the Research Advisory Board (RAB) and the Research Services Sub-Committee (RSSC) have been occurring and will continue.
- We will be available to support the assessment of the potential risks of incoming visiting international research students and visiting international researchers in accordance with the Ministers' statement and based on their affiliations with high-risk institutions.
- We have created a designated email address for any research security questions or concerns: research.security@uoguelph.ca.
- Research Security will continue to be a topic of discussion at RAB and RSSC and as more information becomes available on these federal guidelines and research security matters in general we will update you at those meetings, through communications like this, on our [Safeguarding Research website](#) (updates on these new guidelines coming soon) and through our Research Alert system.

While this Research Alert update contains information about the new federal guidelines, as has been discussed at our RAB and RSSC meetings, we know our research partnerships are already being checked by the province and we know that the federal and provincial guidelines don't always align. This is something else [we are working through with our provincial partners](#) and will keep you updated as information becomes available.

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Please share this information with researchers and grad students in your areas. If you have or receive any questions please feel free to contact research.security@uoguelph.ca.

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