Safeguarding Research at Ontario's Universities

A Shared Commitment to Protect Ontario's Research

While openness collaboration, equity, diversity and inclusion are critical to discovery and innovation, Ontario's universities recognize that vigilance is critical to preventing loss of opportunities, as well as to ensuring research conducted on campuses continues to be converted into tangible benefits and economic prosperity.

With a shared goal to safeguard Canada's research ecosystem, Ontario's universities are partnering with all levels of government – as well as allies through the G7 research security and integrity working group – to ensure research is secure.

In today's rapidly shifting geo-political environment, research security will continue to be a priority for universities across the province, as university research offices continue to take reasonable and risk-based measures to safeguard investments in research.

In fact, many Ontario universities have been leaders in establishing a national security framework for university research and have driven the creation of the Government-Universities Working Group on Research Security.

Universities will continue to follow guidelines set by national security agencies, protecting research for the benefit of Ontario and Canada, and identifying and managing the risks associated with areas of research these agencies consider to be of national strategic importance.

Enhancing the security and integrity of universities' research enterprise will help mitigate the risks of loss of research data and intellectual property and loss of potential future partnerships.

How Ontario's Universities are Helping Safeguard Canada's Research Ecosystem

Below are just some of the ways Ontario's universities are working with all levels of government and universities across Canada to safeguard our country's research and innovation ecosystem.

Ontario's universities continue to partner with the federal government and Canadian universities:

- The Government-Universities Working Group on Research Security has developed a strategy to ensure the security of the Canadian research enterprise, including developing guidelines for securing Canadian research, advice on protecting research data and outcomes and sharing best practices.

- The Working Group was consulted by the Government of Canada as it developed National Security Guidelines for Research Partnerships to integrate national security considerations into the development, evaluation and funding of research partnerships.

- The National Security Guidelines for Research Partnerships better position researchers, research and academic organizations, as well as government funders to undertake consistent, risk-targeted due diligence of potential risks to research security.

Ontario's universities continue to safeguard research on their own campuses by:

- Facilitating ongoing discussions and actions through a working group dedicated to safeguarding research and research partnerships.

- Sharing knowledge and practices across the sector, through events like "Research Security in Today's Geo-Political Era," a two-day workshop at the University of Waterloo dedicated to research security and partnerships.

- Leveraging funding from the Research Support Fund to hire security experts dedicated to addressing issues around research security and research partnerships.

- Exploring ways to increase the provincial talent in safeguarding research to address administrative demand.

- Implementing education and training for staff in research offices to help ensure staff members, beyond security experts, have an understanding of the issue and are aware of federal and provincial research assessment guidelines.

  > **These training modules will be shared across universities to ensure an efficient and consistent approach.**

- Implementing risk assessment processes and adopting shared principles that align with government guidelines and ensure research is secure.

- Engaging the provincial government, including the Ministry of Colleges and Universities and the Ontario Provincial Security Advisor, to develop best practices and approaches, as well as identifying needs for support for safeguarding research.

- Engaging with national agencies, including Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council (NSERC), Public Safety Canada and the Canadian Security Intelligence Service (CSIS), seeking advice and guidelines to further ensure research is safeguarded.

To further ensure Ontario's research and innovation ecosystem is protected, the federal and provincial governments can:

- Ensure federal and provincial governments have a harmonized approach pertaining to research security, avoiding unnecessary duplication of effort and red tape.

- Provide support for the training and tools for universities to aid in risk assessments and build risk mitigation plans, as well as clear, national security guidance to universities on safe, ethical and inclusive research partnerships.

- Provide additional resources for universities to implement the national security risk assessment framework.

- Provide greater incentives to encourage research partnerships between the domestic private sector and universities.

- Ensure that research security activities do not create barriers to achieving equity, diversity and inclusive excellence in our provincial and national research ecosystem.

- Work in partnership with the sector in the development of future research security policies and procedures.

- Provide a point of contact for institutions if they have questions/concerns about a potential research partnership.