



MEMORANDUM

TO: Deans, Directors, and Department Heads

FROM: Warwick A. Arden, Executive Vice Chancellor and Provost
Mladen Vouk, Vice Chancellor, Research and Innovation

SUBJECT: Undue Foreign Influence in Federally Funded Research

DATE: August 12, 2019

NC State values and encourages international collaborations and educational opportunities, which promote openness in research and scholarship, serve our research and teaching missions, and advance academic freedom. Affiliations with foreign institutions, collaborative research, and scholarly exchanges are an essential part of the academic community. At the same time, the university must be careful to comply with U.S. laws and regulations that govern how international engagements are managed and reported.

Over the past 18 months, members of Congress and federal agencies have raised serious concerns that some foreign entities are attempting to exploit the open nature of the research-and-development environment at U.S. universities. For example:

- Dr. Francis Collins, Director of the National Institutes of Health (NIH), issued a [“Foreign Influence Letter to Grantees”](#) on August 20, 2018, and testified to the Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee regarding concerns about systematic programs of foreign influence in U.S. research. Dr. Collins reminded the research community that it’s required to *“disclose all forms of other support and financial interest, including support coming from foreign governments or other foreign entities...in accordance with the NIH Grants Policy Statement, [on] all applications and progress”* and indicated that NIH’s Office of Extramural Research (OER) will provide additional information in the future.
- Dr. France Córdova, Director of the National Science Foundation, issued a [Dear Colleague Letter](#) on July 11, 2019, announcing changes to the format of biographical sketches and disclosures of current and pending support information to include all foreign academic appointments, which are part of electronic proposal submissions.
- The U.S. Department of Defense (DoD) issued a memo on March 20, 2019, outlining disclosure requirements for all key personnel listed on research and research-related educational activities supported by DoD grants and contracts.

- The U.S. Department of Energy (DoE) issued a memo on January 31, 2019, stating it would prohibit employees, contractors, fellows, interns, and grantees from participating in foreign-talent recruitment programs. DoE also stated it would require scientists and grant recipients to disclose any connections of this nature, and those disclosing these types of connections will be required by DoE to sever ties, as necessary, in order to obtain or maintain DoE-sponsored funding. On June 7, 2019, DoE issued a [directive](#) regarding foreign influence and talent recruitment programs, reiterating its position. The directive states DoE is prohibiting those working under a DoE contract from participating in a foreign talent recruitment program: *“DoE will take appropriate actions to prohibit DoE employees and DoE contractor employees, while employed by DoE or performing work under a contract, from the unauthorized transfer of scientific and technical information to foreign government entities through their participation in foreign government talent recruitment programs of countries designated by DoE as a foreign country of risk.”* **NOTE:** The U.S. Government has not formally defined “foreign talent programs” or “foreign talent recruitment programs.” Read Section 7E of the [June 7 directive](#) for the DOE definition of a “foreign country of risk;” read Section 7G for the DOE definition of a “foreign government talent recruitment program.”

To immediately increase the transparency of research faculty and staff relationships with foreign entities, adjustments are being made to NC State’s Conflicts of Interest (COI) and Notices of Intent (NOI) to Engage in External Professional Activities for Pay reporting systems. We are adding new questions, regarding faculty and staff relationships with foreign entities, that all EHRA employees will be required to complete as part of the COI disclosure process. The changes will also be incorporated in the integrated [Enterprise Research Administration system](#), currently under development. Pending further discussion and resolution at the federal level, we want to ensure that NC State faculty and support staff are made aware of these requirements and the resources available for additional information.

A [website](#) has been created to provide the most current information on this topic, as well as guidance for ensuring continued compliance. NC State staff in the Office of the Vice Chancellor for Research and Innovation (ORI), the Office of Sponsored Programs and Regulatory Compliance (SPARCS), and the Office of General Counsel (OGC), who are familiar with the evolving regulations and policies governing research oversight, are available to help you understand and comply with the obligations that govern research conduct.

NC State remains committed to international collaboration and freedom of inquiry, and we will continue to support such efforts vigorously. It is critical, however, that all members of the NC State community make every effort to understand the evolving policies that govern research and scholarship and thus take all necessary steps to comply. Making full and transparent disclosures of foreign relationships and activities consistent with established university expectations and existing practices will help ensure that international collaborations and other global engagement activities are in full compliance with applicable federal and university regulatory requirements.

Your help and cooperation will support our efforts to continue leveraging the immense value of collaboration with organizations and researchers from across the globe while ensuring we maintain our institutional integrity and protect our research enterprise.