

**TRUSTED
RESEARCH**

Implementation – communications pack



National Protective
Security Authority



National Cyber
Security Centre

This pack provides communications resources for institutions to use on their internal intranets, social media accounts or websites. These resources can help institutions raise awareness of Trusted Research and educate their audiences on research security risk.





Statistics

You may wish to use these statistics on your website, social media accounts or in email bulletins to raise awareness of the UK's international collaboration landscape.

Statistic 1 was sourced from the Association of Research Managers and Administrators (ARMA) Complex Collaborations report.¹

Statistics 2 to 17 were sourced from Universities UK International facts and figures 2023 publication.²

Please note that some of these statistics may be based on bibliometrics, which have known limitations.

1. 84% of research organisations surveyed by ARMA have begun to adapt their processes in response to the risks highlighted by Trusted Research.
2. 61.5% of the UK's research output was produced with international co-authors in 2022.
3. The UK has the highest level of international co-authorship.
4. From 2021 to 2022, 21.5% of UK research funding came from international sources.
5. From 2021 to 2022, international industry investment in UK university research grew by 9.7%.
6. The UK's top research collaboration partners are the US, China and Germany.
7. The UK has the highest field-weighted citation impact.
8. International students make up 23.8% of the total UK student population.
9. International students make up 45.4% of all postgraduate students in the UK.
10. The UK is the second most popular destination for international students.
11. Engineering and technology, and computing were the second and third most popular subject areas for international students, respectively.
12. International academic staff represent almost a third (32%) of all academic staff in the UK.

1 https://arma.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/Trusted-Report_Booklet_v7.pdf

2 <https://www.universitiesuk.ac.uk/universities-uk-international/insights-and-publications/uuki-publications/international-facts-and-figures-2023>



- 13.** The UK is a world leader in transnational education (TNE). From 2021 to 2022, 160 UK universities delivered TNE to over half a million (558,085) students in over 230 countries.
- 14.** The UK was the fourth largest producer of research publications in 2022.
- 15.** In 2022, the top three producers of research publications were China, the US and India, respectively.
- 16.** In the past decade, the UK has seen the largest growth in internationally co-authored publications.
- 17.** The UK's top 10 areas of international co-authorship were all STEM subjects (with the possible exception of multidisciplinary research).

Newsletter template

As an institution, you may wish to develop a newsletter that is focused on Trusted Research. The amount of Trusted Research related content your institution produces will determine the regularity of the newsletter.

In some instances, it may be more appropriate to incorporate some of the content suggestions below into any existing newsletters or bulletins which your institution already regularly produces for your audiences.



Content suggestions

- Introduction from the senior level Trusted Research owner.
- Spotlight on a case study from the institution. This could be a ‘good news’ story or a learning angle.
- Highlights section, which may include:
 - successful engagements with RCAT
 - positive take-aways from Trusted Research related events/conferences e.g. HEECA, NPSA STEM Universities Trusted Research Forum
 - interesting cases resolved by institutional review boards
- A ‘learning zone’, which may include:
 - a spotlight on a suggested training material or course
 - upcoming training dates (e.g. induction training)
- A ‘policy zone’, which could be used to:
 - highlight any changes in institutional policies relevant to research security risk
 - raise awareness of specific policies and/or processes
- Trusted Research in numbers – a metrics area which may be used to show:
 - the number of mandatory and/or voluntary notifications made under the National Security and Investment Act
 - the number of export control licences requested and/or granted
 - the number of end-user checks submitted
 - the number of due diligence checks undertaken
 - the number of Trusted Research training and/or awareness events run
 - metric for staff engagement with the institution’s research security comms
 - metric for the number of international collaborations successfully stood-up



Blog outlines

The blog templates below have been drafted with ‘**[insert]**’ sections for institutions to tailor the content to be relevant to your experiences and processes.

Institutions may wish to make these blogs personalised and linked to the experiences of staff at their institution. As such, we have recommended who may be best placed to post these blogs based on the content.

At the end of each blog there is a ‘useful links and resources’ section where institutions can add their own resources or include points of contact for assistance relating to the blog topic.

Blog 1 – We must protect our research

This blog would ideally be posted by an individual currently involved in publishing academic research or who did so as part of their career.

As a specialist in **[insert research area here]**, and like all academics working in STEM, research underpins my whole career. Contributing to academic progress means striving to explore new opportunities, which itself means establishing and developing new research partnerships.

Working with others is often crucial to answering research questions, and in my own case, answering research questions about **[describe your research questions here e.g. seemingly unanswerable/stretching/ground-breaking]** depended on international collaboration to expand my knowledge and practice.

At the beginning of my career I was only really aware of **[insert what you knew about research security risk – this is likely to be a foundational level of understanding]**.

Then, **[outline an international collaboration you undertook which was pivotal in your understanding of the relevance of research security risk to your area of study/ in which you came to know Trusted Research]**. But it’s not just **[insert your research area here]** where Trusted Research applies. Trusted Research is good practice to use for all research disciplines, but we should be especially stringent in protecting our research when it falls within STEM disciplines.

This is especially the case when our research is in sensitive areas like **[insert examples here e.g., emerging technology, dual-use technology, commercially sensitive research areas]**, because these areas are at the most risk from those who want to take this work and use it for malign purposes.

As academics, our research is our pride and joy, we've nurtured it for months and years, and we're proud of it. It surely deserves to be taken good care of for its own good, but even more so, our careers and reputations depend upon our research. We must protect our research to protect these things too.

So, what is Trusted Research? Trusted Research is advice and guidance that was originally created in 2019 by the National Protective Security Authority (NPSA) and the National Cyber Security Centre (NCSC) to support the integrity of the system of international research collaboration. The guidance was created in consultation with the academic sector and since 2019, the NPSA and the NCSC have continued to work collaboratively with the sector to develop further iterations of the guidance. The guidance:

- outlines the risks to UK research and innovation
- helps researchers, UK universities and industry to have confidence in international collaboration and make informed decisions around those potential risks
- explains how to protect research and staff from potential theft, misuse or exploitation

For me, **[explain how Trusted Research/identifying and understanding research security**

risks has been critical to your success – how it has presented you with opportunities and steered you away from scenarios in which you or your research could have been exploited]. Trusted Research does more than protect us as individuals, it protects the UK's academic freedom by ensuring safety in international partnerships.

Our research office **[or insert equivalent function]** provide **[insert offering here e.g. tailored advice, 1-to-1 support, training, a due diligence service, briefings etc.]** to help academics here at **[insert institution here]** to effectively identify and mitigate against research security risks. Whether you're at the start of your career or a seasoned and well-published academic, I would urge you to explore the Trusted Research advice and guidance, and engage with our research office **[or insert equivalent function]**. There's so much at stake which might not seem obvious even to researchers who are long into their careers. In my experience, you can never be too proactive about protecting your research.

Useful links and resources:

[Insert how to get in touch with your research office or equivalent department]

www.npsa.gov.uk/trusted-research-academia

Blog 2 – We’ve all heard of due diligence, but what is it really?

This blog would ideally be posted by an individual from your institution’s research office (or equivalent function) who is familiar with the institution’s due diligence process.

As the **[insert role here]** at our institution’s research office **[or insert equivalent function]**, I’m often asked, “What do you mean by ‘do your due diligence when collaborating internationally?’” This is a good question, especially because those two words hold a lot of meaning which can sometimes change depending on the collaboration.

Essentially, due diligence for international collaboration is a process we undertake to ensure that we have identified all the potential risk factors, as well as the contractual and legal obligations which must be considered before moving forward. In connection with these considerations, due diligence is also undertaken on international collaborations to protect the UK’s national security.

The due diligence process is carried out to help with the identification and implementation of appropriate mitigations or, in some instances, to make an informed decision to halt the collaboration. Your research is something you care deeply about, so it’s important you can identify those risks and act accordingly.

I’ve explained what due diligence is, but what about how to do it properly?

At **[insert the institution here]**, we have a set process for conducting due diligence for which my team [or insert appropriate team] can give you guidance and support. **[Insert information about your institution’s due diligence process – what is it, how does it work, who is responsible for the process and how can people find out more? If you have flow diagrams you may want to insert those for a visual aid].**

The due diligence process is often a joint endeavour between the research office **[or insert equivalent function]** and the researcher. As researchers you have a responsibility to know your research and to know your research partners. Your insight into these areas is incredibly important to informing the due diligence process, and there are some foundational questions you can consider.

1. The partner (or funder)

- Who are they?
- What institutions are they associated with? Do they have any government or military associations?
- What is the risk profile of their geographic location?
- Does working with them pose any reputational risk?

2. The research

- Is it sensitive or dual-use?
- Where will it be stored? Who will be able to access it?
- Do you have any existing IP protections? Do you need to put any in place? Will they be upheld in overseas jurisdictions?

3. Legal obligations

- Is your research subject to export control?
- Does the collaboration require you to engage with Academic Technology Approval Scheme (ATAS) or the National Security and Investment Act (NSI Act)?
- Are there any considerations under the Data Protection Act?

4. Contractual obligations

- Are there any conflicts of interest/ commitments with your institution or existing partners/funders?
- Do you have a contractual obligation to communicate new undertakings to existing partners?
- Does this collaboration overlap with any existing partnerships and require segregation?

The questions above aren't exhaustive, but hopefully they give you a sense of what must be considered before an international collaboration gets the go-ahead. In many cases, determining the suitability of the partner can be the most complex part, but thankfully there's a range of resources we can use to inform that question, such as:

- US export entity control list³
- UN sanctions list⁴
- Country corruption index⁵
- Trade restrictions on export⁶
- The Human Freedom Index⁷
- The World Justice Project Rule of Law Index⁸
- Online news articles

Useful links and resources

NPSA collaboration checklist.⁹

3 <https://www.bis.doc.gov/index.php/documents/regulations-docs/2326-supplement-no-4-to-part-744-entity-list-4/file>

4 <https://www.un.org/securitycouncil/sanctions/information>

5 <https://www.transparency.org/en/cpi/2021>

6 <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/uk-trade-tariff-export-prohibitions-and-restrictions>

7 <https://www.cato.org/human-freedom-index/2023>

8 <https://worldjusticeproject.org/rule-of-law-index>

9 https://www.npsa.gov.uk/system/files/npsa_tr_checklist_final_web.pdf



Trusted Research Pride and Joy campaign: introduction text for internal/external mailing lists

Trusted Research is a joint NPSA and NCSC campaign which provides guidance for researchers and staff to help protect sensitive research from the risks inherent in international academic collaboration. NPSA and NCSC have recently launched a new promotional campaign to drive further engagement and awareness of the Trusted Research agenda across the sector. Known as ‘Pride and Joy’ it emphasises that your research is precious and should be treated as such.

Here at **[insert organisation name]** we take research security seriously and strongly support the Trusted Research agenda. You may have seen **[the research department/our Director of Research/the organisation highlight the adverts on LinkedIn]** and/or **[the digital displays around campus]** or perhaps come across the adverts on Research Gate. We encourage you to visit the NPSA website and check out the available guidance and share the campaign with your colleagues.

Insert if appropriate: We are developing new training and awareness sessions based on the new material from NPSA, using case studies and scenarios to help explain the potential risks and help you identify sensible and appropriate steps you can take to mitigate those risks. Please keep an eye out for those sessions, which will be running in [insert date].

You can find all the latest material, which includes simple step-by-step checklists, accessible and relevant guidance, and training resources on the NPSA website,¹⁰ and the **[insert organisation name]** guidance is available **[insert link]**. For more information, contact **[insert organisational PoC name and role/job title]**.

¹⁰ <https://www.npsa.gov.uk/trusted-research>

Disclaimer

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