



**NSF SECURE Center**

## NSF SECURE Center Research Security Briefing

*Safeguarding the Entire Community in the U.S. Research Ecosystem (SECURE)*

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*The SECURE Center distributes research security briefings and timely alerts via its listserv. The Briefing provides a centralized resource for research security-related information, including new statutory and research funding agency requirements, new or updated federal and community resources, and significant news items and scholarly works. The Center will also assess and provide commentary, interpretation, or implementation considerations on new requirements, notices and resources, working with higher education associations, legal partners, or agencies as needed.*

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# Federal Agency Updates

## NSF Updates *Important Notice 149*

On June 30, 2025, the National Science Foundation (NSF) issued *Important Notice 149*, described in detail in the July 10, 2025, *SECURE Center Research Security Briefing [Volume 2](#)*.

On the same day *Briefing Volume 2* was published, NSF issued an updated version of *Important Notice 149*, now dated July 10, 2025. The comparison below outlines the material changes made between the two versions. The revised *Notice* also included some additional minor edits for clarity and formatting.

### Effective dates

The effective dates have been changed from October 1, 2025, to October 10, 2025, for three areas:

- Research Security Assessment and Required Recipient Documentation
- Research Security Training
- Certification Regarding IHEs Hosting or Supporting Confucius Institutes

No other changes were included in these sections. As listed in the *Important Notice 149*, all other areas covered by NSF Research Security Policies are in effect.

### Foreign Financial Disclosure Report (FFDR), Public Release

Under this section, guidance on the information regarding the ability for an Institution of Higher Education to request an opt-out for the name and address of a foreign source has been removed. Previously, NSF indicated they were working on a mechanism for such requests.

As it has in prior guidance, in the July 10, 2025, the updated version of *Important Notice 149*, NSF states:

“While it is NSF’s intention to make public the information provided or collected in the FFDR disclosures, certain data elements will be treated as confidential to the extent required or permitted under applicable Federal law.”

### USDA’s *National Farm Security Action Plan*

On July 8, 2025, the US Department of Agriculture announced the release of its [National Security Action Plan](#)

Per the press release, the *Action Plan* builds upon prior efforts including the May 5, 2025, [Executive Order](#) “Improving the Safety and Security of Biological Research,” as well as [NSPM-33](#)-related policies and guidance. Seven topical areas are identified:

- Secure and Protect American Farmland
- Enhance Agricultural Supply Chain Resilience
- U.S. Nutrition Safety Net Must be Protected from Fraud, Abuse, and Foreign Adversaries
- Enhance Research Security
- Evaluate USDA Programs to Ensure America First Policies
- Safeguard Plant and Animal Health
- Protect Critical Infrastructure

New initiatives are described in these areas. It is anticipated USDA will issue further guidance on these topics.

## U.S. Congressional Activities

House Select Committee on the CCP urges U.S. universities to cut ties with the China Scholarship Council

On July 9, 2025, the House Select Committee on China sent letters to seven universities calling on them to reconsider joint programs associated with the China Scholarship Council (CSC). Letters to the universities including Dartmouth College; Temple University; University of California, Davis; University of California, Irvine; University of California, Riverside; University of Notre Dame; and the University of Tennessee are linked in the [press release](#).

*Per the letters, “Unlike other international student programs, the CSC has faced increasing scrutiny and criticism due to concerns over academic freedom, surveillance of students, ideological control, and potential espionage. For example, CSC mandates that sponsored students return to the PRC upon completing their studies and serve the PRC for at least two years,” and “Additionally, CSC requires these sponsored students to submit a report to PRC embassies or consulates every three months, detailing their academic progress, laboratory work, research outputs, and publications. PRC diplomatic missions are tasked to monitor the ‘ideological and academic progress’ of CSC-sponsored students.”*

The letters include a series of questions for the institutions, with responses due by July 22, 2025. Among the information requested are:

- All documents regarding the contractual relationships between the institution and CSC;
- A list of which Chinese entities CSC-sponsored students came from between May 2020 and May 2025;



- A list of those that came to the institution under a non-STEM program and subsequently switched majors to a STEM program;
- Whether any CSC-funded students worked on research funded by any U.S. government entity or funds used from any government entity were used to support CSC sponsored students and scholars;
- Whether CSC-sponsored students are currently studying or doing research in STEM fields at the university;
- Whether any CSC-sponsored students in STEM fields stayed at the institution for postdoctoral research after completing their Ph.D. and whether federal funding has been used to support their post-doctoral research.

## Research Security News and Reports

*Please note, articles linked below may require a subscription to view.  
NSF SECURE Center cannot distribute copies of subscription-based articles.*

After Northwestern scientist questioned for China ties died by suicide, family sues and speaks out (NBC News, 7/12/2025)

“The Wu family suit, filed on June 23, says that the school’s treatment of [faculty member Jane Wu], including its alleged efforts to oust her, her physical eviction from her office and forced hospitalization, was a ‘substantial and decisive factor in her decision to end her life.’” ([more](#))

Canada’s Leap Forward in Research Security (Minerva, 7/8/2025)

The authors highlight key events over the past decade that have played a significant role in shaping Canada’s current research security posture and posit that the country’s responses to them — including those from the federal government, individual provinces, and academia — illustrate a distinct change in Canada’s position on the securitization of research. The authors assert that, prior to 2024, Canada’s research security efforts were focused primarily on education and awareness-raising. However, the federal government’s recent adoption of more assertive policies, including the January 2024 implementation of the [Policy](#) on Sensitive Technology Research and Affiliations of Concern (STRAC), indicates a transition from a position of “Scientific Globalism” to one more representative of “Scientific Nationalism.” ([more](#))

NIH restores grants to South Africa scientists, adds funding option for other halted foreign projects (Science, 7/3/2025)

“The National Institutes of Health (NIH) has softened a controversial change to its foreign funding policy that had put many clinical trials abroad in limbo. Staff guidance dated 30 June maintains that grant renewal and new applications including a foreign subaward submitted after 1 May will not be reviewed until the new tracking system is in place. But the document

describes an exception for human subject research in applications submitted earlier, and for ongoing human studies. As a temporary measure, NIH grants staff can convert the subawards within these projects to special ‘supplements’ to the main grant that will go directly to the foreign collaborator, the document says.” ([more](#))

## Upcoming Research Security-Related Events & Conferences

### NCURA Annual Meeting

Registration is open for the 67th annual NCURA meeting in Washington DC, August 10 - 13, 2025. The event includes several research security-related offerings, including concurrent sessions and a pre-meeting workshop. ([more](#))

Research-Security Related Sessions at Upcoming NCURA Annual Meeting:

- Research Security and Export Controls for the Research Administrator
- Research Security Programs: Agency Implementations and the Road to Compliance
- Managing Compliance in the Proposal Process
- Leveraging ORCID in Research Administration
- Building Capacity to Manage RISC: Investing in Research Integrity, Security, and Compliance at Mid-Sized and Smaller MSIs and HBCUs

Additional details and meeting registration information are available [here](#).

### FDP Virtual Meeting

Registration is now open for the Federal Demonstration Partnership (FDP) Virtual September 2025 meeting, taking place Monday, September 15th (11 AM ET – 5 PM ET), Tuesday, September 16th (11 AM ET – 5 PM ET) and Wednesday, September 17th (11 AM ET - 2 PM ET). ([more](#))

### COGR October Meeting

Registration is now open for our October 23-24, 2025 meeting in Washington D.C. at the Washington Marriott in Georgetown. ([more](#))

### Save the Date for ASCE 2026

Mark your calendars now for the 2026 Academic Security and Counter Exploitation Program. Next year is the 10th anniversary of the largest research security conference in the world: February 24 - 26, 2026. through noon (CST) on August 31, 2025. Proposals are being accepted through noon (CST) on August 31, 2025 ([more](#))