



Guidance Note

Communication, education and knowledge sharing

This guidance material presents decision makers with a series of questions to evaluate their university's implementation of communication, education and knowledge sharing in accordance with this pillar of the Guidelines to Counter Foreign Interference in the Australian University Sector. This material is advisory only. It provides specific considerations for decision makers to refer to as appropriate to their circumstances. The questions are grouped under themes to assist navigation.

To successfully address risks of foreign interference, including harassment and intimidation that may lead to self-censorship and supporting safety and wellbeing, universities should implement programs to share knowledge, establish effective communication and provide educational support. These programs enhance positive security culture that is proportionate to risk and promote awareness of foreign interference risks.

Communication plans and education programs

Examples of actions universities could take to raise awareness of foreign interference include:

- Providing opportunities for students and staff to learn more about foreign interference and the implications for universities.
- Training teaching staff to manage sensitive conversations in classrooms and mitigate harassment or intimidation of individuals.
- Making information on the university's complaints process, including how to make complaints or discuss matters confidentially, readily accessible to all students and staff.
- Tracking all complaints, incidents and responses to alleged harassment, intimidation or threats to staff and students that can be reported to the accountable authority.
- Linking their Freedom of Speech and Academic Freedom policies in materials that discuss foreign interference in the form of harassment or intimidation, in order to distinguish attempts at foreign interference from the rigorous debate and contest of ideas that underpins the scientific method.
- Use existing, or establish, regular engagements with university leaders and student representatives to discuss concerns and information related to foreign interference.
- Measuring understanding of foreign interference risks and mitigation pathways amongst students and staff. Results can be used to improve future communication efforts.

Training for those at risk of foreign interference

The nature of university activities, including foreign collaboration can offer multiple entry points for potential foreign interference. Universities can provide training to staff and students on how foreign interference activities may manifest and provide information on the supports in place should they become aware of or suspect foreign interference.

Researchers should consider how their research or foreign collaboration may be the target of foreign interference. Key questions include:

- Who might be affected by the outcomes of this research or foreign collaboration?
- How might they be affected?
- Who might be targeted due to the area of research?
- Are there other considerations that should be taken into account for this research or foreign collaboration?

University guidelines and advice could adapt existing security and personal safety protections as required in light of the changing threat environment, or as advised by government.

Knowledge sharing

Universities should consider joining communities of practice which are targeted at sharing experiences of foreign interference risks and mitigations. Sharing knowledge will spread leading practice and raise sector-wide expertise. Universities are encouraged to actively contribute to the body of knowledge on countering foreign interference by participating in sector-wide forums, workshops, and communities of practice.

The Counter Foreign Interference Coordination Centre (CFICC) within the Department of Home Affairs can assist universities to establish and maintain relationships to support knowledge sharing. CFICC has officers based in all states and territories and can be contacted through the following email addresses:

- ACT: CFICC.ACT@homeaffairs.gov.au
- NSW: CFICC.NSW@homeaffairs.gov.au
- NT: CFICC.NT@homeaffairs.gov.au
- QLD: CFICC.QLD@homeaffairs.gov.au
- SA: CFICC.SA@homeaffairs.gov.au
- TAS: CFICC.TAS@homeaffairs.gov.au
- VIC: CFICC.VIC@homeaffairs.gov.au
- WA: CFICC.WA@homeaffairs.gov.au

