Foreign Interference Policy

Section 1 - Purpose and Scope

(1) The University of Queensland (UQ) welcomes international staff, students and visitors and encourages UQ staff to engage in international collaborations which enhance the quality of research, teaching and partnerships.

(2) Foreign interference is defined as activities carried out by, or on behalf of, a foreign actor which are coercive, clandestine, deceptive or corrupting, and are contrary to Australia's sovereignty, values and national interest. In contrast, foreign influence refers to attempts by governments to influence deliberations on issues of importance to them. These activities, when conducted in an open and transparent manner, are a normal aspect of international relations and diplomacy and can contribute positively to public debate. Given the high value of research conducted at Australian universities, the university sector has been assessed as one of the sectors at the highest risk of foreign interference.

(3) The University recognises that as it operates at the forefront of research, scientific development and translation, foreign actors may seek inappropriate access to confidential, commercially valuable and sensitive knowledge owned and curated by UQ.

(4) This Policy outlines expectations and requirements regarding the management and mitigation of foreign interference risks to:

a. ensure compliance with national security regulation and legislation
b. align with University Foreign Interference Taskforce principles and strengthen the University's protections against foreign interference
c. safeguard the reputation of the University
d. protect students and staff from inappropriate influence
e. ensure continued benefit from international collaboration.

(5) UQ supports and upholds principles of freedom of speech and academic freedom and acknowledges that reasonable and proportionate limitations may occur in the application of this Policy to comply with legislative and other policy requirements.

(6) This Policy applies to all members of the University community including, but not limited to:

a. staff
b. contractors and consultants
c. students
d. visitors
e. title holders and third parties.

Section 2 - Principles and Key Requirements

National legislative framework

(7) The University’s activities must be lawful, conducted transparently and comply with all Australian legislation, sanctions, and guidelines including:

a. Autonomous Sanctions Act 2011
b. Defence Trade Controls Act 2012
c. Foreign Influence Transparency Scheme Act 2018
d. National Security Legislation Amendment (Espionage and Foreign Interference) Act 2018
e. Australia's Foreign Relations (State and Territory Arrangements) Act 2020
f. University Foreign Interference Taskforce (UFIT) - Guidelines to Counter Foreign Interference in the Australian University Sector
g. Defence Industry Security Program.

University policy framework

(8) The University’s activities must comply with all UQ policies and procedures associated with the prevention and mitigation of foreign interference risks and the safeguarding of the UQ community including:

a. Conflict of Interest for Members of Staff Procedure
b. Consultancy, Secondary Employment and Internal Work Policy
c. Administration of Research Funding - Applications, Grants and Contract Research Policy
d. Export Controls and Sanctions Frameworks Procedure
e. Foreign Influence Disclosure Procedure
f. Visiting Academic and Visiting Research Student Procedure.

(9) Other relevant policies and procedures for handling issues include:

a. Complaints Management Policy and Procedure
b. Managing Complaints about the Conduct of Research Procedure
c. Managing Complaints about the Conduct of Research - Higher Degree by Research Candidates Procedure
d. Student Integrity and Misconduct Policy
e. Staff Code of Conduct Policy
f. Student Code of Conduct Policy.

Governance and risk management

(10) The University will establish a committee to act as the accountable authority, as defined under the University Foreign Interference Taskforce (UFIT) Guidelines, to co-ordinate the protection of information and assets from foreign interference. The authority will have responsibility to:

a. maintain the University Foreign Interference Management Framework that provides operational support for this policy, including risk assessment tools and reporting and escalation mechanisms
b. oversee the implementation of this Policy.

Communication, education and knowledge sharing

(11) The University will utilise communication and education and training to raise awareness and support mitigation of foreign interference risks.

Cyber security and physical security

(12) The University has in place policies, procedures and processes for the protection of University information, land, build and facilities from foreign interference risks including:

a. Cyber Security Policy
b. Use and Management of UQ Land, Buildings and Facilities Policy
c. Information Security Classification Procedure.

Section 3 - Roles, Responsibilities and Accountabilities

(13) The Provost is responsible for:

a. chairing the accountable authority committee
b. maintaining the Foreign Interference Management Framework which sets out roles and responsibilities related to the implementation of this Policy.

Section 4 - Monitoring, Review and Assurance

(14) The Provost is responsible for the development, compliance monitoring and review of this Policy.

(15) The Provost is responsible for reporting annually on the implementation of this Policy and the associated Foreign Interference Management Framework to the University Senior Executive Team.

(16) All University records shall be managed, retained and disposed of in accordance with the Information Management Policy and Records Management Procedure.

(17) Information, including personal and sensitive information, is handled in accordance with the Privacy Policy.

Status and Details

Status	Current
Effective Date	23rd July 2026
Review Date	23rd July 2031
Approval Authority	Vice-Chancellor and President
Approval Date	20th July 2026
Expiry Date	Not Applicable
Policy Owner	Mark Blows Provost and Senior Vice-President
Enquiries Contact	Office of the Provost