

# Foreign Interference

## what

### What is foreign interference?

Foreign interference occurs when activities are 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 interests. It can take various forms and can be difficult to identify.

Examples of foreign interference:

- Inappropriate solicitation and recruitment of post-doctoral researchers and academic staff
- Efforts to alter or direct the research agenda
- Cyber intrusions
- Siphoning off of intellectual property
- Restricting free speech or debate on sensitive topics
- Economic pressure

## why

### Why do I need to be aware of foreign interference?

The Australian Security Intelligence Organisation assesses that espionage and foreign interference continue to pose a real threat to Australia, our sovereignty and the integrity of our national institutions.

The [Guidelines to counter foreign interference in the Australian university sector](#) provide guidance to Australian universities to address this threat. Flinders is working in accordance with the Guidelines to mitigate the risk posed by foreign interference. As part of that effort, Flinders has a policy that all staff who are aware of, or reasonably suspect, that foreign interference is occurring in relation to university activities must report it to the General Counsel.

## how

### How do I determine if there is a foreign interference concern?

The Flinders University [Foreign Interactions Due Diligence Tool](#) helps you consider whether there is a foreign entity or individual involved who might potentially be of concern. If there is a potential for concern, the tool helps you to consider whether the context of their engagement with Flinders could give rise to an increased foreign interference risk that needs to be further considered. The tool provides information about how the risk might be mitigated in some situations.

## when

### When should I consider this issue?

Staff should always keep in mind the potential for foreign interference when foreign actors are involved. At a minimum, you should use the [Foreign Interactions Due Diligence Tool](#) where it is proposed that Flinders enter an arrangement with a foreign entity or individual. Please keep in mind that there is potential for foreign interference even without formal documentation.

## where

### Where do I go if I have a concern about foreign interference?

If you have a foreign interference concern related to research, please contact your College's Senior Research Support Officer. If you have a foreign interference concern unrelated to research, please contact your College's Non-Research Contracts Officer. They may seek additional advice on your behalf, as appropriate.

If you would like further information about foreign interference, you can access the [Flinders Foreign Interactions](#) staff resource.