



RESEARCH  
AND ENGINEERING

## UNDER SECRETARY OF WAR

3030 DEFENSE PENTAGON  
WASHINGTON, DC 20301-3030

7 JAN 2026

MEMORANDUM FOR SENIOR PENTAGON LEADERSHIP  
COMMANDERS OF THE COMBATANT COMMANDS  
DEFENSE AGENCY AND DOW FIELD ACTIVITY DIRECTORS

SUBJECT: Fundamental Research Security Initiatives and Implementation

We must protect Department of War (DoW) funded research from malign foreign influence, intellectual property theft, and other forms of research exploitation adverse to the United States. While the Department has taken significant steps to mitigate risk, our adversaries continue to adapt, requiring a more comprehensive and enforceable approach across the DoW. To that end, pursuant to the "Department of Defense Memorandum on National Security Presidential Memorandum-33 Implementation," dated December 14, 2022, I am directing the following actions to strengthen the June 2023 Policy for Risk-Based Security Reviews of Fundamental Research:

1. DoW Component Heads will prohibit entities identified on the most recent version of the "Chinese Military Companies Operating in the United States" list, as outlined in Section 1260H of the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) for fiscal year (FY) 2021, as well as entities with a documented history of patent or intellectual property theft, from receiving funding from fundamental research assistance awards within 60 days of the Office of the Under Secretary of War for Research and Engineering (OUSW(R&E)) update to the Fundamental Research Risk Review Matrix.
2. DoW Component Heads will conduct annual spot checks of all fundamental research awards with mitigation measures and at least 25 percent of all other fundamental research awards. Components will provide semiannual reports of their enforcement activities to OUSW(R&E). Additionally, Component Heads are reminded that covered individuals are required to report all sources of current and pending support, including funding for students and postdoctoral researchers funded by an entity other than their own institution.
3. DoW Component Heads will identify an office executing their Fundamental Research Risk-Reviews to support the OUSW(R&E) establishment of a Department-wide Fundamental Research Risk Review Repository, cited as "Component Office" in this memorandum. The Component Office will submit all relevant information, including disclosure forms, documented risk-based reviews, mitigation plans, and compliance documentation to the Science and Technology Program Protection (S&TPP) office within OUSW(R&E) within 60 days of signature of this memorandum. Components will submit subsequent documentation within 30 days of the review or award, whichever is later. The repository will improve the management of the Department's fundamental research risk review process and enhance the efficiency of information collection and sharing. OUSW(R&E) will deliver a minimum viable product in the

second quarter of FY 2026, with full operational capability anticipated by the fourth quarter of FY 2026.

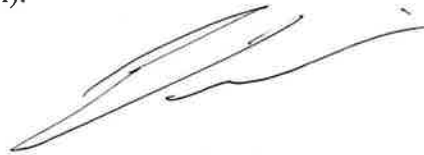
4. Component Offices will provide information on their research security activities as part of the annual data call issued by the OUSW(R&E) Basic Research Office. This includes dedicated personnel by type (civilian, military, or contractor), software and tools employed with associated costs, the number of grants reviewed and awarded in the prior FY, the number of proposals requiring mitigation, and the number of proposals involving controlled unclassified information. OUSW(R&E) will direct the inclusion of any future relevant information as needed.
5. Component Offices will nominate entities to the OUSW(R&E) S&TPP office to be included on the list published in response to Section 1286 of the NDAA for FY 2019, as amended. Components must focus on the quality and evidentiary basis of submissions and ensure that all nominations meet statutorily defined criteria. These submissions will be assessed by OUSW(R&E) during the year and feedback provided to the components on the quality of the information provided.
6. Component Offices shall provide, at least annually, training to research security personnel to improve the quality and consistency of research security analysis across the workforce. Additionally, within 60 days of signature of this memorandum, Components will provide OUSW(R&E) S&TPP with information on the type and frequency of training that is currently offered to their research security personnel. Based on these responses, my office will explore standardizing annual training requirements across the Department.
7. DoW Component Heads are responsible for ensuring compliance with statutory and DoW requirements for managing and retaining grant records. In particular, OUSW(R&E) will issue a Grant Instruction Notice and amend applicable policy to require the inclusion of grant numbers in all publications.<sup>1</sup> This measure aims to strengthen transparency and accountability in assistance funding and will be implemented within 45 days of signature of this memorandum. The OUSW(R&E) Basic Research Office, in coordination with the Chief Digital and Artificial Intelligence Office (CDAO) and the components, will also define requirements and provide a cost estimate for a common research grant database.
8. Component Offices will assist OUSW(R&E) Basic Research Office in a one-year “damage assessment” of selected cases, which will be initiated within 45 days of signature of this memorandum. This assessment will include selected cases identified in recent reports by the House Select Committee on the Strategic Competition Between the United States and the Chinese Communist Party.
9. The Office of the CDAO will help identify and develop, as appropriate, automated vetting and continuous monitoring capabilities. A report of the CDAO’s findings will

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<sup>1</sup> As mandated by 10 U.S.C. § 4027, recipients of DoW research and development funds must acknowledge the funding in any public document associated with the funded activity. Exceptions to this requirement are limited to documents with fewer than 280 characters or instances where the Department has issued a waiver.

be provided to OUSW(R&E) S&TPP within 180 days of signature of this memorandum.

These measures represent a decisive step toward strengthening the Department's ability to safeguard its DoW Fundamental Research from adverse exploitation, ensure accountability in the stewardship of resources, and preserve the research and technological superiority of the U.S. military. By fostering a culture of vigilance and collaboration across the entire DoW, the Department will be better equipped to anticipate emerging threats, adapt to evolving adversarial tactics, and maintain its position as a global leader in defense, innovation, and research. My point of contact for this memorandum is Mr. Kristopher Gardner (kristopher.e.gardner2.civ@mail.mil).

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Emil Michael', with a stylized, sweeping flourish extending from the end of the name.

Emil Michael