

WHAT TO REPORT

Any contact (i.e., emails, telephone, personal contact) that is suspicious because of the manner or subject matter of the request. This includes requests from U.S. persons or from foreign nationals located in the United States or abroad, and may consist of:

- Unsolicited applications or requests for undergraduate, graduate, postgraduate, or other research positions
- Unsolicited requests for access to research papers or other research-related publications or documents
- Unsolicited requests for assistance with or review of thesis papers, draft publications, or other research-related documents
- Unsolicited invitations to attend and/or present at international conferences
- Unsolicited grants or gifting of funds/equipment to conduct joint research projects from foreign academic institutions or foreign governments

REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

Code of Federal Regulation (CFR) 32 Part 117, National Industrial Security Program Operating Manual (NISPOM) requires reporting suspicious contacts, behaviors, and activities.

If you suspect you or your company have been targeted, report it immediately. Recognizing and reporting indicators is critical to disrupting counterintelligence (CI) threats and mitigating risks.

BE ALERT! BE AWARE!

Report suspicious activities to
your facility security officer



DCSA
<https://www.dcsa.mil>

DCSA, Counterintelligence and Insider Threat
Directorate
<https://www.dcsa.mil/mc/ci>

Center for Development of Security
Excellence
<https://www.cdse.edu>

ACADEMIC SOLICITATION



Defense
Counterintelligence
and Security Agency

WHAT IS ACADEMIC SOLICITATION?

Foreign intelligence entity (FIE) collectors may attempt to use students, professors, scientists, or researchers to obtain sensitive or classified information.

Collectors may collaborate with U.S. research institutions under the guise of legitimate research to access developing technologies and cutting-edge research.

These attempts include requests for peer or scientific board reviews of academic papers or presentations; requests to study or consult with faculty members; and requests for software and dual-use technology.

Academic solicitation can also occur when a faculty member, student, employee, or visiting scholar seeks access to this same information.

The number of foreign academics requesting to work with classified programs is rising, and the academic community will likely remain a top target for the foreseeable future.

Although most academic contacts are legitimate, some foreign academics may take advantage of placement and access to further their country's research and development goals.

WHO IS BEING TARGETED?



Researchers, scientists, and subject matter experts (SMEs):

- Conducting classified or controlled unclassified research/projects for U.S. Government customers
- Employed at cleared components of academic institutions or with controlled unclassified information (CUI) work published in scientific or technical journals or presented at conferences
- Working on cutting-edge technology



Students, professors, and researchers:

- Access to research and technical information (especially graduate and post-doctorate students)



Subject matter experts (SMEs):

- Teaching technical courses

Researcher Pleads Guilty to Conspiring to Steal Scientific Trade Secrets from a Hospital to Sell in China

U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Public Affairs

WHAT IS BEING TARGETED?

- Classified, CUI, or export-restricted basic and applied research
- Information about military, defense, and intelligence research applications
- Developing defense or dual-use technologies
- Significant or important research-related information, including: prepublication research results; research data; laboratory equipment and software; access protocols; equipment specifications; proprietary research, formulas, and processes; prototypes and blueprints; and technical components and plans
- Information about students, professors, and researchers working on the technologies

WHY DO COLLECTORS USE THIS METHOD?

- Effective way to collect information due to collaborative nature of academics
- Exploit student access to supplement intelligence collection efforts against emerging Department of Defense (DoD) and civilian research
- Sending students to study at U.S. facilities provides educated scientists and researchers for country-specific technology development

VIGNETTES

- Foreign students accepted to a U.S. university or to a postgraduate research program receive state-sponsored scholarships from their home country's government/government-affiliated entity
- U.S. researchers receive requests to provide dual-use components under the guise of academic research
- U.S. researchers receive unsolicited emails from peers in their academic field soliciting assistance on fundamental and developing research
- U.S. professors or researchers receive unsolicited invitations to attend or submit a paper for an international conference
- Overqualified candidates seek to work as interns in cleared laboratories
- Candidates seek to work in cleared laboratories whose work is incompatible with the requesting individual's field of research
- Foreign scientists, academics, or researchers request a U.S. SME review research papers, in hopes the SME will provide information that assists with future research
- Request a foreign exchange program or one-for-one swap

COUNTERMEASURES

- Be familiar with FIE methods and operation
- Know and understand legal and institutional restrictions to research at your facility
- Ensure proprietary and controlled information is carefully protected
- Employ screening/vetting procedures before collaborating with unknown entities and conduct background checks on potential partners from foreign state-sponsored entities
- Adhere to information system security procedures and monitor computer networks routinely for suspicious activities or compromise
- When in doubt, report any questionable solicitation, engagement, or unusual activity to your institution's security official/facility security officer. Do not try to downplay or self-adjudicate the suspected interaction as it may be a small piece of information that completes the bigger picture

Chinese Professors Among Six Defendants Charged with Economic Espionage and Theft of Trade Secrets for Benefit of People's Republic of China

U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Public Affairs