



Ministers for the
Department of Education
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Taskforce to protect universities from foreign interference

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The Hon Dan Tehan MP

[link:<http://ministers.education.gov.au/tehan-0>]

- Minister for Education

The Morrison Government will establish a University Foreign Interference Taskforce to provide better protection for universities against foreign interference.

Minister for Education Dan Tehan said the taskforce would include representatives from universities, national security organisations and the Department of Education. Its work will focus on four key strategic areas:

- Cyber security – to ensure our ecosystem is resilient to unauthorised access, manipulation, disruption or damage; and to better manage and protect our networks, as well as detect and respond to cyber security incidents should they occur.
- Research and intellectual property – to deter and detect deception, undue influence, unauthorised disclosure or disruption to our research, intellectual property and research community, while protecting academic freedom.
- Foreign collaboration – to ensure collaboration with foreign entities will be transparent, undertaken with full knowledge and consent, and in a manner that avoids harm to Australia's interests.
- Culture and communication – to foster a positive security culture through engagement with government and the broader community to educate, uplift awareness and improve research and cyber resiliency.

The Government is working with the sector on the development of guidelines to protect against foreign interference. The guidelines will be based on five overarching principles:

- Security must safeguard academic freedom, values and research collaboration;

- Research, collaboration and education activities will support the national interest;
- Security is a collective responsibility with individual accountability;
- Security should be proportionate to organisational risk; and
- The safety of our university community is paramount.

“Our Government is taking action to provide clarity at the intersection of national security, research, collaboration and a university’s autonomy,” Mr Tehan said. “Universities also understand the risk to their operations and to the national interest from cyber attacks and foreign interference and we are working constructively to address it.

“This taskforce will complement work currently underway involving Defence, other relevant agencies, universities and industry to develop practical, risk-based legislative proposals to address identified gaps in the Defence Trade Controls Act.”

For more information

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