

Research and Sponsored Projects Manual (RSP)

RSP 404: Classified Research

Effective: 11/14/1986

Revised: 07/01/2025

Purpose

To identify the circumstances under which the university will accept agreements requiring access to government [classified information](#) and to protect the special interest of the university to carry out research in an open and unrestricted manner.

Sources

Arizona Revised Statutes § 39-101 to -161, Arizona Public Records Act

Arizona Revised Statutes § 15-1640, Public records exemptions; intellectual property; historical records; donor records

Arizona Board of Regents Policy Manual, ABOR 3-202

Knowledge Enterprise (KE) Research Operations Office of Research Integrity and Assurance (ORIA)

Office for Research and Sponsored Projects Administration (ORSPA)

Policy Statement on Classified and Proprietary Research, prepared by the Ad Hoc Academic Senate Committee on Classified and Proprietary Research, December, 1984

Policy Statement on Classified and Proprietary Research, prepared by the Ad Hoc Academic Report of the Task Force on Classified Research, put forth by the University Senate at Arizona State University, 2006

University Senate Motion 75-0910, 2016-29, and 2017-39

Policy

General

The faculty of Arizona State University (ASU) is committed to a large and varied agenda of research. The research agenda assumes that the university's role in society is not fulfilled unless research and teaching are vigorously pursued and fully integrated at all levels. Thus, faculty research advances knowledge, enriches teaching, and serves the community.

The principle of the indivisibility of teaching and research requires the university to carry out research in an open and unrestricted manner, with complete freedom to publish or otherwise disseminate the results of the search for knowledge. This special mission of a university makes it necessary for students and faculty to have access to university facilities with minimal restrictions. While society can benefit from classified research, the requirements of secrecy and restrictions on freedom to publish, which are inherent in governmental security classification, can be in opposition to the special mission stated above. This makes it necessary to specifically address classified research conducted by the university.

The research policies are intended to prevent the restrictions associated with classified research from interfering with the educational and open research activities of the university. These policies do not, however, prohibit self-imposed restrictions based upon the professional ethics of a particular discipline. This policy does not apply to off-campus research and activities relating to non-ASU consulting, leaves of absence, or work conducted by an individual employee outside of usual ASU responsibilities.

Classified Research Policies

The university shall not undertake, on-campus, any classified research that introduces limits on the access to a facility unless the proposed research has been reviewed by the Classified Research Committee and accepted by the Classified Materials Management Group as meeting each of the following criteria:

1. The project requires the use of unique specialized facilities or the participation of personnel unique to this university.
2. The project clearly represents a critical public service at a time of local, state, or national emergency.
3. Research does not involve participation by students for work related to fulfillment of degree requirements. Sponsoring faculty are obligated to explain and document this requirement to any students working on a classified project and discuss the fact that classified research would not be publishable.
4. Classified research or materials shall not be considered with regard to appointments, reappointments, tenure, promotions, or merit pay raises.
5. Adequate access to research facilities or instrumentation on-campus used by faculty or students for nonclassified research must be maintained. The sponsoring agency must finance any instrumentation, equipment, or space renovations on-campus designated solely for classified research.

The term "on-campus" designates those areas and physical facilities that are dedicated to education and research involving undergraduate and graduate students.

The Classified Research Committee

There shall be a standing faculty Classified Research Committee broadly representative of the university's disciplines, composed of five faculty members, with the executive vice president of Knowledge Enterprise (or designee) serving as an *ex officio* nonvoting member. Committee members will be appointed annually, to staggered three year terms, by the president of the University Senate in consultation with the executive vice president (or designee) of Knowledge Enterprise. Up to two additional non-voting members, who have relevant technical expertise, may be appointed to advise the Classified Research Committee during its review of classified research proposals.

Authority and Responsibilities of the Committee

The Classified Research Committee will be responsible for reviewing proposed research awards that will involve classified research or information occurring on-campus, and shall make a determination that the proposed contract does or does not satisfy the criteria stated in this policy. The committee shall be informed of the details of the proposed research project, exclusive of classified information. The committee shall submit its recommendation to the executive vice president of the Office of Knowledge Enterprise.

The Classified Research Committee, with assistance from Knowledge Enterprise (KE) operations, shall transmit a written report of its deliberations, recommendations, updates from KE, and university actions annually through the Research and Creative Activities Committee to the University Senate.

If the university decides not to follow a recommendation of the Classified Research Committee, the executive vice president of Knowledge Enterprise shall provide a written explanation to the Committee, with a copy to the University Senate, of the reasons for the university's actions.

The Classified Materials Management Group

Under ABOR policy 3–202, ABOR and ASU have established a Classified Materials Management Group (MG), with responsibility for negotiating, executing, and administering research projects involving classified information. The MG includes a regent, the university president, the executive vice president of Knowledge Enterprise(or designee), and the facility security officer. Under no circumstances will the university enter into a classified research agreement without a quorum of the Management Group certifying that the contemplated project satisfies the stated criteria.

For more information, see the [Office of Research Integrity and Assurance](#) website.

Cross-References

For additional information, see:

1. [RSP 101](#), “General Research Policy”

and

2. the *Academic Affairs Policies and Procedures Manual (ACD)*, [ACD 510–01](#): “Notification of Consulting or Other Remunerative Arrangements for Faculty and Academic Professionals.”