International Collaborations at Iowa: What Researchers Need to Know and Do

SESSION 1

Research security, practical decision-making, and where to go for help

October 29, 2026

THE SERIES

A three-part series on international research

International collaboration is encouraged at Iowa. Across three sessions, the series moves from recognizing research security issues to navigating the specific requirements that can affect people, data, research, and international activities.

SESSION 1

International Collaborations at Iowa

Recognize when an international activity may require you to protect, disclose, obtain approval, or ask for help.

SESSION 2

Data, information & research assets

Go deeper into data ownership, classification, storage, sharing, cybersecurity, and what happens when researchers leave Iowa.

SESSION 3

Relationships & international research activities

Go deeper into appointments, affiliations, outside relationships, disclosure, foreign components, and sponsor-specific requirements.

Today: build the framework you can use before you say yes.

SESSION 1

The goal is practical: know when to pause and ask

International collaboration is encouraged at Iowa.

Researchers do not need to become experts in every requirement. They do need to recognize when an activity may require them to…

PROTECT

data

data, IP, technology, or other research assets

DISCLOSE

appointments

appointments, affiliations, support, or activities

APPROVE

when institutional or sponsor review is required

DSP, IRB, RISO assessment, Federal sponsor approval

ASK FOR HELP

before a commitment

before a commitment, transfer, travel, or change

WHY NOW

Why this matters at Iowa

- International collaboration is an important part of Iowa's research mission.
- Research security is not intended to discourage international engagement.
- Federal expectations increasingly require universities and researchers to understand and manage risk in certain research activities and relationships.
- Transparency, planning, and early consultation can help collaborations move forward successfully.
- Iowa has policies, processes, and people to help researchers navigate requirements.

Before you say yes… know the questions to ask and where at Iowa to go for help.

This series complements the required federal research security training by focusing on what researchers need to know and do at Iowa.

WHAT IT IS

Research security protects the research enterprise

Protect research data, intellectual property, technology, resources, and integrity — while supporting open and responsible collaboration.

What are we protecting?

- Research data
- Unpublished research
- Research materials
- Federal research investments
- Intellectual property
- Technology
- Confidential / proprietary information
- Integrity of the research enterprise

WHAT RESEARCH SECURITY IS NOT

Research Security is not a blanket restriction – it is a risk based approach

NOT A BAN

Research security ≠

Prohibition of international collaboration.

NOT A PRESUMPTION

Research security ≠

Presumption that foreign researchers or international collaborations are risky.

NOT A REPLACEMENT

Research security ≠

Replacement of required UI compliance and administrative office process or procedures.

Research Security = Protecting research while preserving the openness and collaboration essential to discovery.

WHY NOW

The federal landscape is evolving

Researchers receive the broader federal context through required UI Research Security training. This session keeps the focus on recognition and action.

Training	**Transparency & disclosure**	Cybersecurity
International activities & travel	Risk management	Malign foreign talent recruitment program restrictions

NSPM-33 and the CHIPS and Science Act established and expanded federal research security expectations; agencies implement those expectations in different ways, and sponsor-specific requirements continue to evolve.

HOW IOWA SUPPORTS RESEARCH SECURITY

Iowa's Research Security Program connects the pieces

EDUCATION & GUIDANCE

Training, resources, evolving federal/sponsor guidance, and assistance with research activities and international engagement.

TRANSPARENCY & DISCLOSURE

Processes for appointments, affiliations, outside activities, support, and resources — plus help understanding what may need to be reported.

PROTECTION & RISK MANAGEMENT

Policies and processes for protecting data, IP, technology, and other research assets; addressing risks in sharing, travel, technology, and collaborations.

REVIEW & APPROVAL

Institutional review when required, sponsor-specific coordination, and help when several university requirements intersect.

You do not need to determine which office applies before raising a question. Recognize the issue and ask early.

Where can research security considerations can appear?

Look across five dimensions: the people, relationships, research, resources, and places involved.

1 PEOPLE

International collaborators; visiting researchers; students/postdocs; former researchers

2 RELATIONSHIPS

Collaborations; appointments; affiliations; consulting/outside activities; consortia; advisory roles

3 RESEARCH

Data; IP; technology; materials; software/code; unpublished results; confidential information

4 RESOURCES

Funding; equipment/facilities; lab space; personnel/student support; travel support; in-kind resources

5 PLACE

Research outside the U.S.; international travel; remote work abroad; foreign sites; foreign institutions/facilities

International ≠ inappropriate. It means understanding who, what, where, and the relevant requirements.

THE FRAMEWORK

Five questions to ask before engaging in an international research collaboration

WHO?	WHAT?	WHERE?	WHAT ACTION?
With whom am I working?	What am committing to, sharing, or receiving?	Where will the research or activity occur?	Do I need to protect, disclose, obtain approval, or ask for help?

AND WHEN? Some actions need to happen before a commitment, data/material share, activity, travel, or change to an existing federally funded project.

Early consultation is more efficient than fixing an issue after the activity has begun.

APPLY THE FRAMEWORK

Scenario 1: “Can I share the data?”

A long-time international collaborator asks for access to your unpublished research dataset so that they can perform additional analysis.

Before you see the questions, what would you want to know?

When these situations arise, take a moment to think about the people, information, location, and possible next steps.

Scenario 1: Think it through

WHO? Who will receive the data? What is their institutional affiliation? Will anyone else have access?

WHAT? What data are being shared? Are the data sensitive, restricted, proprietary, or related to human subject research? Are there sponsor or provider restrictions on sharing the data?

WHERE? Where are the data stored? How/where will the data be accessed? Will the data be shared with someone outside the United States?

WHAT ACTION? Does this require a Data Use Agreement, HSO/IRB, sponsor, cybersecurity, export control, or other review?

Questions? Contact the Division of Sponsored Programs (DSP).

APPLY THE FRAMEWORK

Scenario 2: “They offered me an unpaid appointment.”

An overseas university offers you an unpaid research appointment connected to an ongoing collaboration.

Does “unpaid” change how you would evaluate the opportunity?

Take a moment to think about the relationship, the commitments, resources, and where the work occurs.

Scenario 2: Think it through

WHO?	**What institution is offering the appointment? Are other organizations involved?**
WHAT?	**What does the appointment require you to do? Will you receive lab access, students, travel, equipment, funding, or other resources? What commitments are you making?**
WHERE?	**Will activities occur overseas? Will you perform work remotely from Iowa? Will Iowa research facilities, data, personnel, or funds be involved?**
WHAT ACTION?	**Could the relationship require Iowa disclosure, sponsor disclosure, review or approval, or reporting of support or in-kind resources?**

Questions? Contact Research Integrity and Security Office (RISO).

APPLY THE FRAMEWORK

Scenario 3: “Can my collaborator conduct research overseas?”

An international collaborator proposes performing part of your federally funded research at their institution outside the United States.

What do you need to check before agreeing?

Take a moment to think about who performs the work, what research moves, and where the activity occurs.

Scenario 3: Think it through

WHO?	**Who will perform the work? What institution is involved?**
WHAT?	**What part of the research will be performed? Is human subject research involved? Will data, materials, funding, or other resources be shared?**
WHERE?	**Where will the scientific activity occur?**
WHAT ACTION?	**Does the sponsor allow this type of proposed international collaboration? Would this constitute a foreign component? Does it need to be included in the proposal? If the award is already funded, is sponsor prior approval required? Are there other sponsor-specific requirements?**

Questions? Contact the Division of Sponsored Programs (DSP).

WHO CAN HELP AT IOWA

Start the conversation. Iowa can help connect you to the appropriate resources.

You don’t need to know which office to contact before asking for help

Research security or international collaboration concerns, and international travel briefing	RISO
Sponsored research, sponsor requirements, data sharing and use agreements (DUA)	DSP
Sharing human subjects research data	HSO
Cybersecurity, systems, devices, or technology security	ISPO
Conflict of interest, conflict of commitment, or outside activities	COIR
Export-controlled technology or information; taking items to a foreign country	Export Control

Some questions involve more than one office.

Contact Information

UI Compliance and Administrative Partners

Office and Contact Information

- Division of Sponsored Programs
  dsp@uiowa.edu
- Research Integrity & Security Office
  ovpr-rio@uiowa.edu
- Information Security Policy Office
  it-security@uiowa.edu
- Export Control Office
  export-control@uiowa.edu
- Conflict Of Interest In Research
  coi-research@uiowa.edu
- Human Subjects Office
  irb@uiowa.edu

CLOSE

Three things to remember

1. **International collaboration is encouraged by The University of Iowa.**

   Research security supports responsible collaboration; it is not intended to prevent it.

2. **Use WHO / WHAT / WHERE / WHAT ACTION.**

   And remember WHEN — some steps need to occur before you commit, share, travel, or begin.

3. **When unsure, ask early.**

   It is easier to address a question before an agreement is made or research activity begins.

IOWA

Before you say, “Yes” Infographic.
Before you say, “Yes” Checklist.

End of presentation and recording.
Unrecorded Q&A session to follow.

Q&A

Questions & discussion

Ask questions today – or anytime!

- New or existing international collaborations
- Appointments and affiliations
- Sponsor requirements
- Changes to existing collaborations or awards
- Data sharing
- Research activity outside the United States
- International travel
- Where to start when you are not sure what requirement applies

Researchers are not expected to solve every research security question themselves. The important thing is to recognize when a question needs to be asked — and ask it early.

Thank you.

research.uiowa.edu

Questions about an international research opportunity?
Start early. Ask Iowa.