

OGRD Memorandum 5

Policy on Classified Research at Washington State University

WASHINGTON STATE UNIVERSITY

The Office of Research
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As part of Washington State University's commitment to public service, WSU supports faculty participation in research in the national interest. However, WSU is also fully committed to the engagement of our research enterprise to contribute to the public good in an open manner through publication and dissemination of research results. Thus, no classified information can be used to satisfy the criteria for degree requirements, faculty appointments, or faculty promotions. WSU also will normally not accept other restrictions on research or research information related to non-statutory classifications. Exceptions to these polices include units at WSU that are not academic units (and thus includes the Nuclear Reactor Center and the Applied Science Laboratory).

Introduction: The mission statement of WSU states: "Washington State University is a public research university committed to its land-grant heritage and tradition of service to society. Our mission is threefold:

1. To **advance** knowledge through creative research and scholarship across a wide range of academic disciplines.
2. To **extend** knowledge through innovative educational programs in which emerging scholars are mentored to realize their highest potential and assume roles of leadership, responsibility, and service to society.
3. To **apply** knowledge through local and global engagement that will improve quality of life and enhance the economy of the state, nation, and world.

In this context, The University's endeavors in educating students and advancing knowledge are fundamental to the well-being of the nation, and to the security of our people. WSU is dedicated to academic freedom and to the public documentation and dissemination of the knowledge that it creates. A free and open academic environment is an essential element in fulfilling the WSU research and educational missions, and in achieving the University's ultimate objective of contributing to the benefit of the public.

Conversely, policies or practices that inhibit the free exchange of ideas, by limiting scholarly interchange, can markedly restrain both the advancement of knowledge and its productive use. In pursuing its public service mission the University and its faculty may find it important to engage in research in the national interest where restrictions may be

imposed on access to and documentation and dissemination of information. In these cases, the specific research may be characterized as “classified” or “sensitive.” Restrictions on these projects create potential conflicts with the academic values of this institution. A university policy on research under these conditions must be in accord with the basic academic principles of WSU while, at the same time, providing the opportunity to engage in research in the national interest that the University, its faculty and staff deem important.

Policy: This policy on classified research applies to all academic units of WSU. The Nuclear Reactor Center and the Applied Sciences Laboratory are not academic units and, as such, these policies do not directly apply to them.

WSU is committed to its public service mission, and as part of that commitment we support faculty participation in research in the national interest that on occasion may involve classified information related to national security. However, the fundamental values of the University make it imperative that the University’s academic campuses provide an environment where free inquiry and documentation and dissemination of information are rigorously maintained. Effective documentation and dissemination of research results is one of the most important contributions that WSU can make to the nation. Research programs using classified materials cannot be used to satisfy the criteria for completion of academic degree requirements, faculty or scholarly appointments, or promotions.

Any member of the research community at WSU who is planning to participate in a project conducted under the auspices of the University that may involve classified research must first obtain approval from the Vice President for Research on behalf of the University before submitting a proposal for the project. This approval must include a plan for how and where the expected research will be conducted, who will be involved with the research, and how the project technical and administrative requirements will be met.

Definitions and Terms

A. Classified Information

The government may classify information that is deemed to be important to the national security interests of the United States. Classification is the means by which information is restricted. The standard categories of classification include confidential, secret, and top secret. Successive levels of classification imply a greater level of importance to national security interests, and more stringent requirements for access or use of the information.

Several more restrictive levels of information have been added to this set of classifications, but are only available under very special conditions. The categories successively impose greater restrictions on the documentation and dissemination and use of the information, as well as imposing more stringent requirements on persons who wish to be authorized access to information in the respective categories. The process by which individuals are granted access to the various categories of classified information is deemed to be security clearance, and is conducted by the Defense Security Service.

In its non-academic units, Washington State University may from time to time receive

information that is classified or sensitive or perform activities which are sensitive or classified. As a result of their governance responsibilities with respect to the University's security program, the Vice President for Research is required to have security clearances. Faculty engaged in national security research are also required to obtain the appropriate level of security clearance.

B. Classified Materials

Classified materials can be any resources, equipment, or supplies utilized in a project that contains classified research. These materials are most often (but not limited to) computer disks used to compile information about the project as well as hardcopy documents, forms, drawings, notebooks, cameras, tapes, chemicals, substances, or any other resources related to a classified research project. All classified materials are kept in containers that meet the specifications set forth in the National Industrial Security Program Operating Manual as they apply.

C. Classified Research

Classified research is defined as research that has a security classification established by an authorized agency of the federal government. An entire sponsored research project or a specific section of a research project may be categorized as classified. Classification requirements typically emerge due to certain contractual conditions, but may, in some cases, arise after the research has been conducted as a result of the extreme importance of the research results to national security. Classification is not normally applied to basic research projects. It is more typically used to limit use and dissemination of information about applied research or development efforts.