

Membership Updates – June 2024

Thank You! HEECA Conference 2024

A huge thank you to all the delegates, speakers and sponsors who contributed to making this year's conference a successful and impactful event. Across the two days we hosted 70 institutions and 130 delegates discussing all things Economic and Research Security.

This year marked a significant step forward as our 3rd Annual Conference expanded to a two-day event, responding to the overwhelming demand expressed by our community for more time to explore a greater number of topics, and increased opportunity to collaboratively engage with peers from across the UK HE sector, government and our international allies.

The post-conference delegate portal is now live, and attendees will have received an email directly with your log-in details. Please take the time to access the materials and provide us with feedback to inform future HEECA priorities and events.

As ever, there is a great amount of learning to take away and we are already reflecting on how we can take this forward into HEECA 2025.

Latest 'Notice of Final Order' Decision made by Secretary of State to UK University

Last week saw the release of the latest Final Order to be made by the Secretary of State under the National Security & Investment (NSI) Act, involving a UK university.

The order relates to a joint venture between the University of Liverpool and Pinggao Group Ltd (a Chinese entity), in the establishment of a new 'Institute for Advanced Energy Technology'.

The establishment has been approved by the Secretary of State subject to the following conditions:

- The University of Liverpool must establish an Insider Threat Stakeholder Group (ITSG) responsible for ensuring any wider research and intellectual property held by the university is sufficiently protected, as well as other responsibilities relating to the new Institute's policies and procedures
- The University-appointed Chair of the ITSG is to hold UK Security Vetting clearance
- The ITSG Terms of Reference are to be approved by the Secretary of State before the Institute is established

Access the notice release [here](#).

Upcoming Event – Virtual Government Panel Live Q&A Session (~Autumn 2024)

As those who attended this year's conference will be aware, due to the recent General Election announcement and subsequent restrictions imposed by the Pre-Election Period (PEP), we were unable to proceed with the Government Panel Q&A session as part of the original agenda.

Fortunately, we are pleased to announce that commitment has been received by the existing Government departments to hold this session later in 2024 and we will offer the opportunity for all members to engage once a date for this virtual session has been confirmed.

National Security & Investment (NSI) Act – Updated Guidance for HE

The Cabinet Office has recently updated the guidance for higher education and research-intensive sectors engaging with the National Security & Investment (NSI) Act following the [Call for Evidence Response](#) previously published in April 2024.

The update includes:

- Further guidance on deciding whether to notify the government of certain academic collaborations – alongside new and adapted examples of how the NSI Act can apply in these circumstances
- Additional detail regarding what qualifies as an acquisition (that may be subject to the NSI Act), including details about the NSI Act mandatory notification requirements
- New information on the interaction between the NSI Act and UK Strategic Export Controls and the circumstances in which you may need to consider contacting both the [Investment Security Unit \(ISU\)](#) and the [Export Controls Joint Unit \(ECJU\)](#)

Read the full update release [here](#).

NPSA Trusted Research Evaluation Framework (TREF) – Have You Assessed Your Institution's Research Security Maturity?

Earlier this year, the [National Protective Security Authority \(NPSA\)](#) released the Trusted Research Evaluation Framework (TREF) as part of a suite of materials that form the [Trusted Research Campaign](#) in collaboration with the [National Cyber Security Centre \(NCSC\)](#).

The TREF serves as a tool for institutions in evaluating organisational maturity in the context of research security (via a self-assessment matrix) and provides practical steps that can be followed to advance an organisation's maturity development in the TR agenda. The framework is designed for those responsible for the ownership and/or implementation of research security policies and procedures at an institutional level, and compliments existing Trusted Research guidance available by the NPSA.

In engaging with HEECA activities and events just like our recent Annual Conference, this is considered – under the Evaluation Framework – a demonstrable example of an institution’s positive security practices under the ‘Wider Trusted Research links’ sub-category!

Access the full Trusted Research [Evaluation Framework](#) and accompanying [User Guide](#).

Transition to Customs Declaration Service (CDS) and Declaring Exports Under the Retained General Export Authorisations (GEA)

The Custom Declaration Service (CDS) is the UK government’s new electronic system for handling customs declaration processes and has now formally replaced HMRC’s Customs Handling of Import and Export Freight (CHIEF) system.

If your institution is exporting and declaring dual-use export-controlled goods under retained general export authorisations (GEA) issued pre-Brexit, you will now need to enter the document code X002 and specify the retained GEA reference number in data element 2/3 of the CDS export declaration.

It is recommended to check with your freight forwarder that they are aware of this declaration requirement and to check the HMRC entries to ensure compliance.

For more guidance on submitting export declarations on the CDS and further advice on declaring exports under the retained GEA, access the full notice [here](#).

EU Research Ministers Adopt EU Recommendations on Research Security

On 23rd May, the Council of the European Union adopted recommendations to enhance research security across Europe, following the European Commission [proposal](#) in January this year.

The approach aims to be both open and safe while preserving academic freedom, with Member States committing to work together on this issue, developing coordinated policies and support structures to enable consistency and alignment across the EU.

Access the full release [here](#).

U.S. Enhancing National Frameworks for Overseas Restriction of Critical Exports Act (ENFORCE Act/HR 8315)

The U.S. House Committee on Foreign Affairs is currently undergoing deliberation of a forthcoming legislative bill to amend the U.S. Export Control Reform Act 2018 preventing exploitation of U.S. Artificial Intelligence (AI) and other related enabling technology. If passed, the new bill will be called ‘Enhancing National Frameworks for Overseas Restriction of Critical Exports Act’ or ‘ENFORCE’.

The key points are enhanced clarification of definitions of AI and AI systems and their high-level capabilities to pose a risk to U.S. national security and foreign policy.

Access the full details [here](#).

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