



**Australian
National
University**

Collaboration with Iran, Russia, North Korea and Belarus

The Australian Government has recently written to the Australian National University in relation to collaboration between our researchers and entities in Iran, Russia, Belarus and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. This letter to our Interim Vice-Chancellor outlines the Government's expectations for research collaboration with foreign partners. It follows media reporting of cooperation between Australian universities, including the ANU, and entities from Iran, the Russia, and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. This recent request is consistent with Foreign Minister Penny Wong's earlier letters to Vice-Chancellors regarding Iran in 2023, and guidance from her Department regarding Russia most recently in November 2024.

The Government has sought confirmation and assurances that there is no current collaboration between ANU researchers and entities in Iran, Russia, Belarus, or DPRK. Additionally, government advice is that engaging in researcher-to-researcher collaboration or receiving visiting scholars from these countries is strongly discouraged owing to inconsistency with Australia's foreign policy settings. Admission to the University of students with citizenship from the listed countries is not prohibited by our sanctions, but risks must be continuously managed.

All research and research collaboration within the University must be consistent with the ANU's obligations under Australia's sanctions framework, export control legislation and the expectations communicated by the Australian Government to universities regarding research collaboration with listed countries. It must also be consistent with the ARC Research Security Framework, the Universities Foreign Interference Taskforce (UFIT) Guidelines to Counter Foreign Interference in the Australian University Sector, and the University's obligations to appropriately manage risks associated with Commonwealth research funding.

In responding to these requirements:

ANU staff and students should pause or discontinue existing research projects, publications and other scholarly activities, and should not enter new engagements or collaborations involving institutions, organisations or researchers based in the listed countries.

Exceptions to the above may occasionally be considered where there is a clear national interest, or where there is another compelling justification. In such cases the collaboration must be consistent with Australian law and applicable Government requirements and have appropriate due diligence and risk assessment undertaken through the University's Foreign Interference Advisory Committee and related assurance processes. Such cases should be endorsed by the relevant Dean and Director prior to assessment through FIAC and any other required legal, sanctions, export control or research security assurance processes. Approved collaborations must implement all required risk mitigations.

This position applies to institutional collaboration with researchers based in or affiliated with entities in the listed countries. It is not directed towards individuals on the basis of nationality, citizenship or ethnicity. ANU remains committed to supporting a respectful, inclusive and welcoming environment for all members of its community while meeting its legal, regulatory, research security and funding obligations. In discussing these issues, and in all communication, we must continue to emphasise the contribution of valued colleagues from a wide range of international backgrounds, including many from the listed countries, who are members of the ANU community.

Engagement with the listed countries raises questions that extend beyond legal compliance, including academic freedom, the University's mission, and community cohesion. ANU's response

to Government advice has been informed by consultation at Academic Board and University Research Committee.

Additional points for clarification:

- The directive applies irrespective of field, including STEM, humanities, social sciences and creative disciplines.
- Constraints on collaboration do not apply to researchers based in Australia or at the ANU so long as they do not hold ongoing affiliations or enduring connections to institutions or entities in the listed countries.
- ANU researchers should not continue work on existing collaborations. They should contact the FIAC team for advice on next steps.
- Where there are papers that are already submitted or accepted, ANU researchers should contact FIAC for guidance on next steps.
- ANU staff and students should not travel to these countries for research collaboration.
- Collaboration includes (but is not limited to) co-authored publications, grant applications, data sharing or research partnerships, supervising or co-supervising students, visiting appointments or advisory roles, receiving funding, accessing materials or information, attending events hosted by a person or entity (including online). Staff and students who are unsure whether an activity constitutes collaboration, should contact FIAC via the declaration form.
- The involvement of a national (including dual nationals) of a listed country does not, of itself, constitute a collaboration with that country. The scope of the government directive concerns collaboration with researchers based in, or affiliated with entities based in, the listed countries.
- ANU can still accept new graduate researchers from these countries, subject to appropriate due diligence and the usual processes for the student or graduate researcher to receive a visa and pass sanction checks. Other considerations include risk assessment, dual-use technologies and export controls.
- If an incoming graduate researcher from a listed country publishes their past research while at the ANU it should not be published with an ANU affiliation.
- ANU staff should not publish with graduates who move to an affiliation within a listed country once they have left ANU, and the student should not publish with an ANU affiliation after leaving in this case. This applies even if the work was conducted while the candidate was enrolled at ANU.