

Membership Updates – April 2025

HEECA Annual Conference – 4th & 5th June: Still Time to Register!

With just 5 weeks to go we're gearing up for an incredible programme at the **HEECA 2025 Annual Conference!** Join us at [Unity Place, Milton Keynes](#) across 4th & 5th June, for a packed agenda with sessions including:

- **National Security & Investment (NSI) Act in Action:** Insights from the [University of Liverpool](#)
- **Tackling Security and Trade Compliance Challenges in Industry-Academic Collaboration** with [Export Group for Aerospace, Defence & Dual-Use \(EGADD\)](#)
- **Demystifying Working with UK Government** with the HEECA Security subgroup
- **International Perspectives in Today's Shifting Geopolitical Landscape**
- **UK Government Interactive Panel** (featuring [National Protective Security Authority \(NPSA\)](#), [Export Control Joint Unit \(ECJU\)](#), [Research Collaboration Advice Team \(RCAT\)](#), [Office of Trade Sanctions Implementation \(OTSI\)](#) and [Investment Security Unit \(ISU\)](#))

...and more to be announced!

Don't miss your chance to connect, learn, and engage with key experts. [Register now](#) and **secure your place!**

HEECA Export Controls and ECJU Policy Engagement

Further to the 2nd August 2024 update to the ECJU [GOV.UK - Guidance Export Controls Applying to Academic Research](#) we have been approached by a number of members, including Funding Bodies (FB's) and Research Organisations (RO's) raising significant concerns about the clarification.

In light of the above we have engaged with ECJU (in collaboration with various funding bodies and sector associations) highlighting our concerns which has resulted in a positive and collaborative response with a desire to better understand the challenges faced by the UK HE sector in light of the current guidance and wider export controls legislative landscape.

We intend to meet with ECJU and the policy team in May 2025, and if members have any specific comments or supporting materials you would want to contribute to these initial conversations around the challenges and sector operational realities/architectures that would benefit being elaborated on, [please get in touch](#).

Foreign Influence Registration Scheme: Go-Live Date Announced!

The **UK Home Office** has confirmed the highly anticipated launch of the [Foreign Influence Registration Scheme \(FIRS\)](#), set to roll out on 1st July 2025.

This **two-tier scheme** aims to enhance transparency of foreign influence in UK politics and provides greater assurance concerning the activities of foreign powers that present the highest risks to the UK.

The scheme will require organisations to register their arrangements with **foreign powers** and **certain foreign power-controlled entities** where they are directed to carry out certain activities in the UK.

Under the scheme, two types of activity may need to be registered:

Political influence tier – activities carried out at the instruction of a foreign state to influence political decisions, elections or referendums, or registered political parties in the UK.

Enhanced tier – activities carried out at the instruction of a foreign state or foreign state-controlled organisation which has been specified under FIRS. Russia and Iran will be specified in the enhanced tier.

Access the full [GOV.UK Guidance](#), or visit the following resources:

- [GOV.UK – FIRS Introduction](#)
- [GOV.UK – FIRS Factsheet](#)
- [GOV.UK – FAQs](#)

HEECA Trusted Research eLearning – Recommend an Academic Colleague!

Thank you to everyone who took part in our initial community consultation workshops for the new [Trusted Research eLearning](#) package we are developing in collaboration with the [NPSA](#) and [NCSC](#). Your insights have been invaluable in shaping the early direction of this resource!

As we continue the **scoping phase**, we are now moving into the next stage of focused engagement – gathering input from the academic community. In addition to the group of individuals we have established so far, if you would like to recommend or refer an academic colleague, [please get in touch](#) by Thursday 8th May!

Anywhere from early career researchers through to senior professors are welcome.

Participants will join a virtual consultation workshop to share their perspectives and help shape the content, structure and supporting materials for the course:

Date: Tuesday 13th May 2025

Time: 2.00-3.30pm (90 mins)

Location: Online, via MS Teams

OFSI Releases Financial Services Threat Assessment Report

The **Office of Financial Sanctions Implementation (OFSI)** has recently released its **Financial Services Threat Assessment Report**, providing key insights into the risks and challenges surrounding financial sanctions compliance.

Amongst other highlights, the report features two critical areas of concern:

Use of Enablers to Circumvent Sanctions: The report outlines an increasing trend of sanctioned individuals employing intermediaries or enablers to bypass sanctions. Financial institutions should enhance their due diligence procedures to detect and prevent such activities.

Sector-Specific Threats: While the report primarily targets the financial sector, the threats identified are equally relevant to other sectors, including higher education institutions (HEIs). Any HEI engaged in international collaborations or financial transactions must be aware of these risks and ensure full compliance with UK financial sanctions.

The report stresses the importance of maintaining strong compliance frameworks to mitigate the growing risks associated with sanctions breaches.

Read the full report [here](#).

UEFISCDI New Policy Recommendation on Research Security in Romania

A **new policy recommendation** from the [UEFISCDI](#) – Executive Agency for Higher Education, Research, Development and Innovation Funding (Romania) – has been released, outlining essential measures to strengthen research security in Romania.

The recommendation emphasises the importance of mitigating risks through the establishment of frameworks to assess and manage potential threats related to international collaborations and sensitive research areas, as well as highlighting ongoing EU and international policy efforts, which focus on balancing research openness with robust security measures.

Additionally, the report calls for significant capacity building at both the national and institutional levels, recommending the development of policies, protocols and training programmes to enhance research security.

Check out the full report [here](#).

New U.S. National Labs Report on Mitigating China-Related Risks in Academic Collaborations in Latvia and Estonia

Last month, a new report **Enhancing Research Security in Latvia and Estonia: Potentials for Mitigating China-Related Risks in Academic Collaboration**, led by **U.S. Sandia National Laboratories** was published, offering valuable insights into strengthening research security in both countries.

The report focuses on the increasing importance of safeguarding academic collaborations with China, which, while beneficial, also present emerging risks like espionage and intellectual property concerns.

The publication also highlights the need for Latvia and Estonia to adopt proactive strategies in protecting their academic ecosystems – by improving awareness and establishing robust security frameworks, institutions can mitigate potential vulnerabilities linked to international partnerships.

With a focus on practical recommendations, the report encourages academic institutions to enhance their research security practices, build stronger networks for sharing best practices, and remain agile in addressing new security challenges.

To dive deeper into the findings and recommendations, access the full report [here](#).

U.S. BIS Export Controls and Policy Update Conference Post-Event Insights

Following the annual Update Conference on Export Controls and Policy, the **U.S. Bureau of Industry and Security (U.S. BIS)** has focused on two main updates, as outlined in a recent release by Gibson Dunn:

Increased Enforcement – U.S. BIS is significantly intensifying its enforcement of export controls, particularly targeting U.S. adversaries. This includes more stringent scrutiny of transactions and a stronger commitment to preventing the diversion of sensitive technologies.

Heightened Focus on China – the agency is placing greater emphasis on curbing China's access to critical technologies, particularly in areas like AI, quantum computing and semiconductors. This includes the expansion of the Entity List (reported in the HEECA March 2025 update) and stricter licensing requirements for exports to China.

These updates reflect BIS's renewed approach to safeguard U.S. national security and ensure compliance with export control regulations.

Read the release [here](#).

NEW Vacancies

No current vacancies listed

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