

Report on Research Compliance Volume 21, Number 5. April 25, 2024 JASON to NSF: 'Proceed With Caution,' Obtain PI Buy-in When Addressing Research Security

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Later this month, the National Science Foundation (NSF) expects to “develop and implement new policy review processes for national security concerns,” as required under the CHIPS and Science Act of August 2022 and recent appropriations legislation.^[1] In announcing its plans March 21, NSF said these “will be made effective in time” for a May 24 deadline imposed by the CHIPS Act.

In preparation, NSF commissioned an update of *Fundamental Research Security*, a 2019 report by JASON, an independent science advisory group. The new report, *Safeguarding the Research Enterprise*, noted that “the discussion of how best to address issues of research security has evolved [and] legislation...has further defined NSF’s obligations to identify and protect certain types of research—in particular, those involving Controlled Unclassified Information (CUI).”^[2]

As the report explained, “NSF asked JASON to comment further on specific steps it might take to identify sensitive areas of research and describe processes NSF might use to address security in those research areas of concern.”

JASON stood by its earlier themes and findings, which stressed the value of foreign scientific talent in the United States and the importance of striking a balance between research controls and maintaining openness among the global research community. The new report urged NSF to “proceed with caution,” particularly when pondering access or dissemination restrictions on research, and recommended a fluid approach, rather than employing a static list to identify risk areas.

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