

New contact point for export control in the Vice-Rectorate for Research

Are you researching semiconductors in a consortium with American partners? Do you sometimes travel abroad to present your research on sensors that can be used in space at conferences? Do you exchange knowledge about the Nipah virus by email with colleagues in India? Were you unable to pay your local Syrian assistants who helped you with your field research because Swiss banks are no longer allowed to transfer money to Syria? Have you ever wanted to employ an Iranian person in your project? Do you have research partnerships with China, Turkey or Ukraine? Then you are affected by export controls!

Since Russia's invasion of Ukraine and the Russian sanctions, as well as the escalating trade relations between the USA and China, export controls have become a familiar concept to almost everyone. It is about striving to avoid the proliferation of goods that can be used for military purposes, for human rights violations or for the surveillance of people – and thus ultimately about ensuring peace.

Universities and their staff must also comply with the laws and regulations of export control regimes. At the University of Bern, a great deal of research relevant to export control law is carried out; possibly also by you! According to export control laws, this knowledge (or concretely developed goods or software) must not fall into the hands of the wrong people. There are a number of rules for this, concerning the export of physical goods, but also the export of knowledge. In the research context, this can easily happen, for example, by taking work laptops or USB sticks on trips abroad or presenting research results to a foreign audience or even publishing in journals available outside Switzerland. The same applies to employing foreign staff or teaching foreign students in certain subject areas. If these rules are not adhered to, the researchers in question face heavy fines or even imprisonment and the university faces enormous reputational damages.

That is why we have set up the Export Control Contact Point at the Vice-Rectorate for Research. The contact point is intended to answer your questions and support you in complying with the legal requirements and obtaining licences from the state authorities for any exports of goods or knowledge.

Access the services of the contact point export control [here](#).

Full access to all services is via [UnilIntern](#).

The contact point export control:

- evaluates together with you whether your activities could be affected by export controls;

- advises you on how to conduct research or implement transactions in order to avoid falling under export controls;
- informs you about applicable export control regulations and how to comply with them;
- helps you obtain any necessary licences.

Would you like to find out whether you could be affected by export controls?

Then come to one of our next 30min-online information events!

The following questions will give you a first clue. If you answer 'yes' to any of the questions, you are probably affected by export controls.

- Does your research involve goods, technologies or software that could be used for military purposes, for the development or transport of nuclear weapons or for the surveillance of persons? Or are you working on the development of such goods, technologies or software? (*It is sufficient that you are researching elements that could be incorporated into military equipment*).
- Does your research involve goods, technologies or software that could be used for both military and civilian purposes? Or are you working on the development of such goods, technologies or software? (*It is sufficient that you are researching elements that could be incorporated into potentially military-use equipment*).
- Do you have research contacts outside Europe? If so, to which country/countries?
- Do you use goods, technologies or software originating from the USA in your research? (*Note on software: The question does not refer to generally available software such as MS Office, but to software that is unusual for the average consumer or software that requires special knowledge to install or use*).
- Is your research funded by US institutions?
- Do you impart knowledge in your teaching that could be used for military purposes and that is not already generally available (e.g. in textbooks or on the internet)?
- Do you employ people of non-European origin in your institute/research group? If yes, from which country/countries?

Typically (but not exclusively!), at least one of the questions is answered with 'Yes' for the following subject areas:

- Biology, chemistry, biochemistry, microbiology: e.g. research on pathogenic microorganisms and toxins for the development of new bioweapons; analyses in molecular plant genetics for bio-attacks on seeds;
- Pharmacy, medicine, veterinary medicine: e.g. experiments to elucidate the transmissibility of highly pathogenic influenza viruses ("bird flu viruses");

- Psychology: e.g. research on post-traumatic stress disorder in soldiers after war missions, the results of which can in turn be used in psychological warfare;
- Mathematics and computer science: e.g. dual-use AI tools (as software for facial recognition - or for equipping armed drones to recognise specific people);
- Earth sciences: e.g. research into devices supplied to NASA;
- Physical, aerospace engineering: e.g. research into lasers; materials research and nano-technology for the development of offensive weapons;
- Information and Communication Technology: work on virus and computer virus protection not to prevent but to spread cyberwar.

Should you have any questions, do not hesitate to contact us!

The contact point export control is headed by Dr. Hannah Brodersen.

Availability: exportcontrol@unibe.ch.