

Trusted Research

Industry guide checklist

Answering the following questions may help you evaluate new research proposals.

Research portfolio review

- What is the Technology Readiness Level (TRL) of the research that you are conducting? Applied research is likely to be closer to commercial exploitation.
- What data or background intellectual property (IP) are you sharing as part of the work and how sensitive or important is this to your business?
- What level of access to your company and IP is required for the research to be a success?
- What proportion of the project's funding are you providing? This may influence your commercial arrangements with your partner or affect how any output from the research is disseminated.
- Do you have clear and agreed expectations with your academic partners which reflect the needs of both parties?

Institution considerations

- What network separation is there between projects? Consider how sensitive your project is and what constitutes a proportionate and realistic requirement.
- How are your data, background IP and proprietary information held and protected?
- Do you have an agreed model for IP ownership?
- Who else is the university working with and does this raise potential questions around conflicts of interest?
- Does the university have policies or a code of conduct for researchers in order to protect competitors' research in the same field?
- What contractual undertakings does the university have in place to protect your research from potential conflicts of interest?
- If a member of staff involved in the research leaves part way through the project, what processes are in place for your research to be protected?
- Are employees of the university involved in the research able to take on other paid work which might conflict with it? Do you need a process that encourages and supports them to discuss potential conflicts?
- What network separation is there between projects? Consider how sensitive your project is and what constitutes a proportionate and realistic requirement.
- Do you have an approach to categorising different sensitivity levels for the information that you are sharing and providing access to? Do you have agreements in place over how different categories of your information should be protected?
- Does the university have Cyber Essentials or an equivalent cyber security industry standard?
- What virus protection or intrusion detection does the university have in place to protect your research?
- Are there any obligations on the part of the institution to notify you of potential conflicts of interests with your company business interests?

Trusted Research

Project review checklist

- What is the ownership agreement for your data, IP and proprietary information?
- Are you sharing commercially sensitive information?
- What data are you sharing and what are your expectations regarding its protection?
- How will the data and background IP that your company shares as part of the research be protected?
- Where is the research data held and what protections are in place when transferring data and information?
- What expectations do you have around the protections in place for foreground research generated by the project?
- Is there any network segregation between research projects? If not, is this required?
- Where are the servers that data for the project will be held on located? Are there any risks around offshoring of data?
- Are there any controls in place to monitor or restrict physical and network access to the research or research facility?
- Who will be involved in the research?
- Do you expect individual researchers to sign up to similar undertakings to the main framework agreement with the university?
- Are researchers able to undertake other work and could this conflict with the interests of your organisation?
- Are there obligations for individual researchers to seek agreement from you or notify you of activities that may put them in conflict with your business interests?
- Do you know who will be working on your research project or who will have access to your data?

Based on the answers to the above questions, are you happy to proceed with this research collaboration or do you need to escalate this within your institution or department for a decision?