

Restricted Research

Carnegie Mellon University Policy on Restricted Research (<https://www.cmu.edu/policies/research/restricted-research.html>)

Statement

Universities have two primary purposes: to create knowledge and to disseminate knowledge. Carnegie Mellon University recognizes the importance of open intellectual communication within a research group, within the university, and within the larger community outside. Ideally, all units of the university would disseminate the results of research as quickly and as widely as possible. Some members or units of the university, however, desire to do research that may be difficult or impossible without restrictions or without access to classified or proprietary materials.

There exists, therefore, a tension between the university's goal of disseminating knowledge freely and the desire on the part of some of its members to conduct restricted research on important problems. The university intends to guarantee the academic freedom of all faculty members to do research in their own manner on topics of their own choosing, provided that such research is consistent with the overall purposes of the university.

This policy seeks to resolve the tension between the desire to participate in restricted research and the desire to maintain the open atmosphere of the university by confining restricted research to semi-autonomous units, which are not associated with any academic departments. It thereby establishes the principle that restricted research is inappropriate at Carnegie Mellon University except in the semi-autonomous units.

This policy does not attempt to anticipate all possible concerns about restricted research. In some cases, decisions will need to be made about particular research projects to which the application of particular policy guidelines are not clear. In choosing to accept or decline such projects, the university will weigh the potential of a project for generating and disseminating new knowledge, for the benefit of society, against the project's potential for adversely affecting the climate for research conducted in a free and open environment. While this policy sets no explicit limits on the extent of classified research permitted in the semi-autonomous units, it is not the intent of the policy to encourage any unit of the university to engage in classified research as a primary ongoing activity. Indeed, it is expected that classified projects will never represent more than a small fraction of the total research effort in any unit.

Definitions

Research: all projects and investigations involving the creation of new knowledge of a theoretical or practical nature. The term "research" as used here encompasses both "research" and "development" as they are commonly defined.

Classified research: research, the free dissemination of the results of which is deemed to jeopardize national security. The federal government controls access to the environment in which such research is performed, restricts discussions about the work in progress to individuals with clearance and a "need to know," and limits publication of research, results or access to data needed to verify results, for a specified period of time.

Proprietary research: research that results in intellectual property that is owned by entities other than Carnegie Mellon University. Such entities may wish to market products derived from inventions or ideas that are developed at the university. They might, therefore, desire to fund projects which restrict access to data and to discussions about work in progress to individuals with a "need to know," and to seek, for a specified period of time, a delay in publication of research results or data needed to verify results. Such entities may also provide access to proprietary material, which researchers must agree not to include in publications.

Publication: oral or written dissemination.

Restricted research: includes all classified research, and any proprietary or other research that requires more than a six month delay in publication of the research results.

Semi-autonomous units: units of the university specifically so designated by the president, after consultation with the URC and the Faculty Senate, currently the Mellon Institute and the Software Engineering Institute.

Non-autonomous units: all university entities other than semi-autonomous units.

Restricted Research in Non-Autonomous Units

It is the policy of Carnegie Mellon that restricted research is inappropriate and, therefore, not permitted within its non-autonomous units.

It is also the policy of Carnegie Mellon not to permit involvement of students in projects which carry restrictions that may impede their progress toward a degree. Therefore, students should not be involved in contracts that require the delay of a student's publication of research results when such results are intended for use in obtaining academic credit, except that a sponsor may require a delay of thirty days for review of publications for removal of proprietary information that was provided by the sponsor for the conduct of the research.

Proprietary research is allowed within non-autonomous units provided it is subject to limitations (excluding students' publications as noted above) no more stringent than the following:

- A sponsor may request a delay of up to six months in publication so that steps may be taken to secure intellectual property rights to inventions or ideas developed under the contract.
- A sponsor may require a delay of thirty days for review of publications for removal of proprietary information which was provided for the conduct of the research.

Considerations for Faculty/Researchers

The university recognizes that problems arise in both restricted research and research that is not itself restricted but that involves access to classified or propriety information or materials (hereinafter, restricted materials). Researchers may also have access to restricted materials when serving as consultants. Access to restricted materials gives rise to concerns about limitations on researchers' freedom to communicate. In such instances, researchers must exercise considerable judgment to conduct their research in an open environment while protecting the restricted materials to which they have access. Researchers must also be aware that the university will judge their performance as researchers through their publications or through other scholarly products that arise from their research. Research that is restricted in dissemination, or not available for public review, cannot be considered in promotion or reappointment decisions or in evaluations of academic performance of any kind.

Considerations for Students

There are important concerns about the involvement of students in restricted research. It is necessary for students to publish their work in order to obtain degrees, course credit and professional recognition. Students rely to a large degree on their faculty advisor's judgment for guidance and advice. Research that is restricted in dissemination, or not available for public review, cannot be used for academic credit. Thus, before working on such research, a student must be notified in writing that work on this research may not be used for academic credit.

Restricted Research in Semi-Autonomous Units

The semi-autonomous units associated with Carnegie Mellon may conduct restricted research.

Faculty members may conduct restricted research in or in cooperation with semi-autonomous units only on a consulting basis or by means of a formal, internal leave of absence from their non-autonomous units.

Work that is restricted in any way may not be used for academic evaluations until it is released for publication, and then only with respect to future academic actions.

Students may occasionally be employed by the semi-autonomous units, provided that such employment does not interfere substantially with progress toward a degree. However, they must be made aware that work that is restricted cannot be used for academic credit. Work that was restricted and is later released for dissemination and review can be applied toward future academic credit. Students should be discouraged from working on restricted research in which dissemination may be delayed indefinitely.

Guidelines for all Units

Work by students on restricted research projects shall not be made a condition for admission or financial aid.

The principal investigator is responsible for informing all members of a project (faculty, staff and students) of any restrictions imposed on the dissemination of information related to the research. This must be done prior to the start of the project or prior to an individual joining an existing project.

Restrictions on access to university facilities due to the conduct of restricted research must be kept to a minimum. Access to and movement through the facilities in which restricted research is conducted must be consistent with standard university procedures.

The Provost's Office is responsible for obtaining signed documents from principal investigators on restricted research projects attesting that they are aware of all restrictions imposed on the research and that they have informed all participants of these restrictions.

The Office of Sponsored Research shall review all proposals and contracts prior to approval for conformity with these guidelines. Any that do not meet these guidelines will be referred to the University Research Council (URC) for review and recommendation of appropriate action to the provost.

To maintain a balance with the university's goals of broad dissemination of knowledge, the URC will conduct an annual review of all restricted research being conducted at the university. This review will be made based on a listing of all contracts that involve restricted research. This listing shall include the title and sponsor(s) of the research, name(s) of principal investigator(s), and the amount of funding of each contract.

The university community will be informed annually, through the URC's written report to the Faculty Senate and Student Senate, of the nature and overall impact of restricted research at Carnegie Mellon.

Existing sponsored research projects shall be allowed to continue under the terms of their present contract. However, renewal contracts must conform with this policy.