



## Position statement on research involving security-sensitive material

February 2016

Research involving security-sensitive research material raises a number of issues for researchers and research organisations. These include legal matters, questions about IT specifications related to the storage of such material, and issues of research ethics and research integrity.

UKRIO has no remit or ability to give any advice or opinion on legal matters. Similarly, questions concerning IT fall clearly outside of UKRIO's [remit](#)<sup>1</sup>.

An important ethics issue for any research is the need to ensure the safety of researchers and others involved in the research, including any legal risks. Another issue is to address risks accruing to institutions under whose auspices the research is carried out. We note that [guidance from Universities UK](#) on the oversight of security-sensitive research material was published a number of years ago, while legislation on security issues is an on-going and changing process.

We would therefore strongly recommend that the ethical review process of any research involving security-sensitive research material should check for evidence of independent legal assurance that the research carried out is within the provisions of the current law and that the research would not put researchers, other employees, students, participants or the institution itself in legal jeopardy.

---

<sup>1</sup> Those needing advice on IT specifications may wish to consult their organisation's IT department; universities may wish to seek external advice from [JISC](#).

