



📷 Soldiers train tactical decision skills on computers. Photo: Lance Cpl. Angel Travis/US Marine Corps

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TECHNOLOGY

Pentagon Orders 30 Universities to Cut Suspicious Foreign Tie-Ups



ROJOEF MANUEL AUGUST 19, 2026 📖 1 MINUTE READ





The US Department of Defense has directed 30 in-country universities to audit their financial and research links to high-risk foreign entities in response to adversarial nations [actively targeting](#) US academic institutions.

Targeted institutions, [including](#) Harvard University, MIT, and Johns Hopkins University, must assess ties with 130 organizations in China, Russia, and Iran listed under federal national security guidelines, as well as rebranded Confucius Institutes backed by Beijing.

Schools must identify any exposure of export-controlled data, implement security protocols, and terminate questionable collaborations.

Universities must report their findings to federal officials before the end of August.

Failure to comply would risk an institute losing its federal research funding.

Retaining ‘Highest Standards’

According to the Pentagon, the measure aims to prevent intellectual property theft, unauthorized technology transfers, and foreign exploitation of taxpayer-funded innovation.

“The Department of War has zero tolerance for academic partnerships that compromise our national security,” US Undersecretary of Defense for Research and Engineering **Emil Michael** [explained](#).

“Institutions that receive funding from American taxpayers must uphold the highest standards of research security, and these mandated audits will ensure accountability across the board.”

Higher education groups [expressed concern](#) over the order’s short compliance window and implied offenses, noting that academic institutions previously assisted the government in identifying problematic entities.

“We don’t appreciate the implication that we are not good partners on research security, given that we helped create this list, and given that we’ve always partnered with the federal government when there has been national security concerns,” said **Sarah Spreitzer**, assistant vice president and chief of staff of Government Relations at the American Council on Education, as [reported](#) by *ABC News*.

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