



Writtle  
University  
College

## Policy for Handling Security Sensitive Research Material

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<b>Policy Owner</b>	<b>Department</b>
Head of Research	Research
<b>Version Number</b>	<b>Date drafted/Date of review</b>
1	Dec 2016
<b>Date Equality Impact Assessed</b>	<b>Has Prevent been considered (see Policies Guidance if unsure)</b>
Jan 2017	Yes
<b>Reviewed and Approved by (see Policies Guidance for approval process)</b>	<b>Date</b>
SMT	10 <sup>th</sup> Jan 2017
Research Committee	8 <sup>th</sup> March 2017
Academic Board	5 <sup>th</sup> April 2017
Governors	14 <sup>th</sup> July 2017
<b>Access (tick as appropriate)</b>	
Public access (website) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> And/Or Internal access (MyWi) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Staff and Student access <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Or Staff access only <input type="checkbox"/>

## Policy Overview and Scope

Writtle University College (WUC) is required to comply with the duty to prevent people being drawn into terrorism (“the Prevent duty”). Section 26 (1) of the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 imposes a duty on ‘specified authorities’ to have due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism. Government guidance for Higher Education Institutions on the implementation of this duty includes the statement that:

*“We [the UK government] would expect to see clear policies and procedures for students and staff working on sensitive or extremism-related research.” (para 28)*

The University College has developed a policy and procedures for managing and storing security-sensitive research material based on the guidance document published by Universities UK, Oversight of security-sensitive research material in UK universities: guidance, which involves the registration of research that involves access to and/or storage of security-sensitive research material.

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## Policy and Procedure

### What is ‘security-sensitive’ research material?

Security-sensitive research materials cover:

- a) Materials that are covered by the Official Secrets Act (1989) and the Terrorism Act 2006
- b) Materials that could be considered ‘extremist’ which is defined in the (Prevent) Statutory Guidance to HEIs under Section 29 of the Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015 as, ‘vocal or active opposition to fundamental British values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of different faiths and beliefs’
- c) Materials used for research projects commissioned by the military or under an EU security call.
- d) Research projects that involve the acquisition of security clearances to undertake the research.

‘Materials’ include online, electronic and hardcopy sources, audio and video recordings.

It is recognised that other research material, not mentioned above, could also be regarded as security sensitive. If in any doubt, a researcher should contact the University College’s Secretary for further advice.

### Purpose of the Registration Process

The University College supports its researchers in undertaking research using security sensitive material, but takes seriously the need to protect them from the misinterpretation of intent by authorities, which can result in legal sanction. It is therefore important that the University College is aware of the research before it begins and can ensure proper data management and oversight.

The registration process described below is a mechanism for allowing researchers to register their use of security sensitive materials as part of legitimate research projects and thereby enabling the University College to demonstrate to authorities that it is aware the research being carried out. It is not a mechanism for reviewing this research or regulating it.

### **To whom does this guidance apply?**

The guidance applies to all staff and students, both postgraduate and undergraduate.

### **What do researchers using security sensitive research material need to do?**

- (i) Register all research that involve the use of security sensitive research material. Individuals whose research falls within the definition of using security-sensitive research material must register their research project(s) with the University College prior to commencement by completing the Registration Form (Appendix A) and submitting it to the Chair of the Research Committee (Head of Research). The registration form must be approved by the Pro-Vice Chancellor (Academic) (for staff research) or the Research Ethics Committee Chair (for student research). This provides evidence that the University College is aware of the research, and its legitimacy.
- (ii) Use a University College profile when visiting security sensitive websites. Researchers should be aware that visits to security sensitive websites (even from open access sites) may be subject to monitoring by the police and, if discovered, can prompt a police investigation. Therefore, it is recommended that, when undertaking research, university college IP addresses are used to access these sites, thus ensuring that any enquiries about such activities come to the institution in the first instance.
- (iii) Use the University College-provided and individually allocated secure storage to store security-sensitive research material. Research material that is security-sensitive must not be stored on the researcher's personal computer, university computer or on their standard university college drives. Individuals indicating on the registration form that their research involves the storage of security-sensitive research materials will be allocated a secure space by the Head of IT Department for the storage of this material.
- (iv) Physical data e.g. reports/manuals must be scanned and a copy uploaded to the secure storage site. Hardcopies must subsequently be securely destroyed.
- (v) Documents stored on the secure site will only be accessible by the named research personnel and files from this store must not be exchanged. This will ensure that security-sensitive material is kept away from personal and University College computers.
- (vi) The University College Secretary will have oversight of the declared use of security-sensitive research material through the registration process. The purpose of this oversight is to allow a prompt response to any enquiries, internal and external, relating to declared use of security-sensitive material. The University College Secretary will be aware of the names of the researchers who are able to access each secure site and will be aware of the metadata for documents (e.g. the titles) that are stored, but will not know the content of the document themselves. For those who declare the use of security-sensitive research material, this oversight will offer protection for researchers as it ensures that the research material is kept secure and at arm's length from external intrusion (unless access is required for legal reasons).

### **Enquiries regarding the use of security sensitive research material**

If it is identified that material is being accessed or used within the University College that appears to be security sensitive, in particular, material that might be connected with terrorism and extremism this should be reported to the University College's Secretary using the appropriate form (Appendix B).

Material of this kind can be connected with legitimate research and on receipt of an enquiry form checks will be made to establish whether the discovery of such material is linked to a registered research project.

If the identified material is not connected with legitimate research, the matter will be immediately reported to the University College's University College's Secretary and the Pro-Vice Chancellor (Academic).

**Reference**

*This policy and procedures is based on the guidance provided in the Universities UK published document, Oversight of security-sensitive research material in UK universities: guidance.*

## APPENDIX A: Security-Sensitive Research Material Registration Form

### Registration Form (Section 1)

<b>Name:</b>	
<b>Research Project Title:</b>	
<b>School / Department:</b>	

Does your research fit into any of the following security-sensitive categories? If so, indicate which:

1. Commissioned by the military:

Yes	No
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2. Commissioned under an EU security call:

Yes	No
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3. Involve the acquisition of security clearances:

Yes	No
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4. Concerns terrorist or extreme groups

Yes	No
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If your answer to question 4 is yes, continue to the questions in section 2.

## Registration Form (Section 2)

The Terrorism Act (2006) outlaws the dissemination of records, statements and other documents that can be interpreted as promoting or endorsing terrorist acts.

1. Does any of your research involve the storage on a computer of any such records, statements or other documents?

Yes	No
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2. Might your research involve the electronic transmission (e.g. as an email attachment) of such records or statements?

Yes	No
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3. If you answered 'Yes' to questions 1 or 2, you are advised to store the relevant records or statements electronically on the secure University College file store. The same applies to paper documents with the same sort of content. These should be scanned and uploaded. Access to this file store will be protected by a password unique to you. Please initial the box to indicate that you agree to store all documents relevant to questions 1 and 2 on that file store:

Yes
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4. Please initial the box to indicate that you agree not to transmit electronically to any third party documents in the document store:

Yes
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5. Will your research involve visits to websites that might be associated with extreme, or terrorist, organisations?

Yes	No
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6. If you answer 'Yes' to question 5, you are advised that such sites may be subject to surveillance by the police. Accessing those sites from university IP addresses might lead to police enquiries. Please acknowledge that you understand this risk by initialing the 'Yes' box below.

Yes
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7. By submitting to the registration process, you accept that the University College Secretary will have access to a list of titles of documents (but not the contents of documents) in your document store. These titles will only be available to the University College Secretary. Please acknowledge that you accept this by initialing the 'Yes' box below.

Yes
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Signature of Researcher:.....

Signature of Supervisor (for students):.....

Signature of Pro-Vice Chancellor (Academic) (for staff):.....

Signature of Chair of the Research Committee:.....

Date: .....



## **AAPENDIX B: Report Form for enquiries relating to security-sensitive research material**

This form is to be used to report the discovery within the Writtle University College of unsupervised material that appears to be security sensitive-in particular, material that might be connected with terrorism and extremism. Material of this kind is sometimes connected with legitimate research, and the University College Secretary carries out checks relevant to establishing whether or not items reported on have that status.

<b>Your name:</b>
<b>Your e-address</b>
<b>Your contact telephone number:</b>
<b>Your enquiry or report:</b>
Thank you. The University College Secretary will contact you and undertake an investigation if necessary.

This policy supersedes any other policy and procedural guidelines, which may be in other existing University College documents. Writtle University College may amend this policy from time to time and any such amendments will be notified via the website, through Writtle Weekly or by email.

If this information is difficult to access, read or understand, it can be provided in another format, for example in Braille, in large print, on audiotape, in another language or by someone talking it through with you.

## Version Control

Version Number	Purpose/Amendment	Date
1	New policy – WUC template	Dec 2016