

Research Policies

Classified Research

Following is the text of Cornell University Guidelines on Sensitive and Proprietary Research, adopted by the Cornell Research Council on May 20, 1985 and subsequently updated by the Office of the Vice Provost for Research.

Guidelines on Sensitive and Proprietary Research

Given the open nature of Cornell University, research projects which do not permit the free and open publication, presentation, or discussion of results are not acceptable. Nor will the university enter into any agreements unless the principal and co-principal investigators have the final authority on what is to be published or presented. In particular, research which is confidential to the sponsor or which is classified for security purposes is not permitted at Cornell University.

The university will accept only sponsored research projects which are expected to further the research and educational mission of the institution. While a sponsor may delineate the areas of research to be supported, the principal and co-principal investigators must have final authority for decisions on the course of the research program within these limits. The principal and co-principal investigators must also have final authority regarding employment of personnel for the project. In particular, research that is subject to a sponsor's approval of personnel is not permitted at the university.

Recognizing the equity due the sponsor in the support of the research, the university will permit the principal and co-principal investigators to agree to present manuscripts to the sponsor for advice and comment thirty days prior to submission for publication. Beyond the thirty days, delays of up to three months are acceptable on the basis of a formal request from the sponsor. The university will put forth its best efforts to abide by agreements involving delays in publication or presentation.

While the results of all university research are open, principal and coprincipal investigators may be given classified or proprietary information by a sponsor when such information would be useful background material to the research effort. Such information must be identified as such in writing when transmitted and the condition of its acceptance specified. The university will use its best efforts to prevent inadvertent disclosure of such information, but cannot accept a legal responsibility for such disclosure.

This policy does not imply restrictions on a Cornell faculty member's doing work individually as a consultant to government agencies and other sponsors on classified matters. Such consulting arrangements will necessarily be developed on an individual basis and should, of course, be in accord with general Cornell policies on consulting (explained in this section). They cannot involve receipt and storage of classified documents on the university campus.