



MEMORANDUM

To: All Research Investigators

From: Ahmad M. Itani, Vice President for Research & Innovation 9/4/2025 | 10:32 AM MDT

CC: John S. Wiebe, Vice President for Academic Affairs & Provost

CC: College Deans

Subject: Increased Monitoring of International Shipping and Receiving

Date: September 4, 2025

The University of Texas at El Paso (UTEP) and universities across the country are seeing an increase in monitoring, and at times confiscation, of international research-related shipments by federal agencies, such as U.S. Customs and Border Protection and Homeland Security Investigations. You may have read about two recent cases of researchers at [Harvard](#) and the [University of Michigan](#) who were apprehended and criminally charged with undeclared research materials by U.S. Customs and Border Protection. These cases have also led to federal investigations of the university's role and opened broader inquiries into potential vulnerabilities at each university.

Given the heightened law enforcement environment, we want to remind researchers to follow UTEP's processes when shipping and receiving materials, data, software, and equipment. As a reminder, it is strongly recommended to use a Material Transfer Agreements or Data Use Agreement to transfer materials and data to research collaborators. UTEP faculty, students, and staff should utilize the following best practices prior to importing or exporting materials, data, software, or equipment:

1. Reach out to UTEP's Export Control Office at exportcontrol@utep.edu to run restricted party screening for imports and exports, and to run export classifications of materials, data, software, and equipment, prior to shipping internationally.
2. Utilize a Material Transfer Agreement (MTA) or Data Use Agreement (DUA) to transfer materials, data, or software to or from collaborators. Contact UTEP's Office of Sponsored Projects (OSP) Contracts & Agreements team at MTA@utep.edu to put an agreement in place prior to shipping or receiving.
3. Utilize UTEP's Environmental, Health and Safety (EH & S) office at eh&s@utep.edu whenever possible for international research related [dangerous goods](#) shipments

The Office of Sponsored Project's Contracts & Agreements team is available to work with you to draft, negotiate and execute Material Transfer Agreements (MTAs), Data Use Agreements (DUAs), Non-Disclosure Agreements (NDAs), or any other type of agreement needed when transferring materials, data, software or confidential information to or from a research collaborator. To streamline the process, we offer

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UT System approved templates for these agreements. We will also review and negotiate agreements provided by external parties to ensure the terms are appropriate and protect the interest of both you and the university. These agreements outline the purpose of the transfer, and any limitations associated with the use of the transferred property or information. Most third parties will require these agreements, and the Office of Sponsored Projects manages agreements for both incoming and outgoing transfers.

By following these guidelines, you help protect yourself and your students from potential harm while supporting UTEP's efforts to maintain research compliance and safety.

The University of Texas at El Paso remains committed to supporting faculty and their research endeavors and will aid in navigating these processes. More information and resources regarding these guidelines can be obtained by contacting Dr. Victor M. Manjarrez, Jr., Director of Research Protections at (915) 747-7812 or exportcontrol@utep.edu.

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