



## **Security-sensitive Research Policy**

### **Section A: Introduction**

The College may play a vital role in carrying out research using security-sensitive material which comes under the various legal provisions regarding prevention of terrorism. This policy governs the storage and circulation of security-sensitive research material. Such material is sometimes open to misinterpretation by the authorities if circulated carelessly and can put authors in danger of arrest and prosecution under, for example, counter-terrorism legislation. This is especially true as some materials can be highly relevant to many kinds of legitimate academic research (e.g. studies of documents linked to potentially radicalised and violent forms of Christianity) but an accumulation of material on personal computers may sometimes lead to prosecution. It is not always possible for the Police to distinguish immediately between the accumulation of such material for legitimate research purposes and the accumulation of material for terrorist purposes. This means that researchers carrying out security-sensitive studies in a higher education environment need relevant oversight processes for legitimate research.

Further information on security-sensitive research can be found at:

<http://www.universitiesuk.ac.uk/highereducation/Documents/2012/OversightOfSecuritySensitiveResearchMaterial.pdf>

### **Section B: Forms of security-sensitive research at Spurgeon's College**

The following forms of research will be considered as potentially security-sensitive at Spurgeon's College:

- Research about radicalized and violent forms of Christianity
- Research about Jihadist groups and the treatment of Christians
- Research into the persecution of Christians and of other faith groups
- Research into the theology of martyrdom
- Any research into known terrorist groups or sympathizers

If there is any doubt whether research comes under the scope of this policy then it should be referred to the Research Ethics Committee for consideration.

### **Section C: Undertaking security-sensitive research at Spurgeon's College**

1. Any forms of research coming under the scope of Section B in this policy will need to be submitted to the Research Ethics Committee for approval.
2. Security-sensitive research may only be undertaken with the approval of the Research Ethics Committee.
3. A record of approved security-sensitive research and any conditions

imposed will be kept by chair of the Research Ethics Committee.

4. The College Principal will be notified of any security-sensitive research which is being undertaken within the College, but in respect of academic freedom will not normally have access to the content of this research without the consent of the researcher.
5. An approved researcher will be provided by the Director of Operations with a secure (password protected) storage location on the College server on which to store security-sensitive documents. Security-sensitive documents should not be stored on College or personal computers.
6. Other conditions at the discretion of the Research Ethics Committee may be imposed on the approved researcher regarding the storage and use of security-sensitive material. The Research Ethics Committee may take external or legal advice before imposing these conditions.
7. Only the approved researcher may have access to files stored in the secure storage location. The use of the secure storage location will be overseen by the chair of the Research Ethics Committee.
8. In the spirit of transparency and openness, the approved researcher will keep a file which includes a running list of document titles and filenames which are stored in the secure storage location. This file will be kept in an agreed location and be accessible to the chair of the Research Ethics Committee. The chair of the Research Ethics Committee at any time may have access to the file containing the list of document titles on the server and the name of the researcher these documents are associated with, but not the contents of the files.
9. An approved researcher will not exchange in any way copies of the files contained in this secure store with others.
10. The store would not typically function as a repository for an individual researcher's writing about security-sensitive material, unless that, too, was considered best kept out of circulation and was therefore deposited by the researcher.
11. Even when it is a condition of getting ethics approval for research that applicants agree to use a secure, central research store for security-sensitive documents, there will always be researchers who ignore or break this policy and, perhaps for principled reasons, refuse to be open about the material they are using. These people opt out of the mechanism and do so at their own risk and the College will accept no liability those who work outside of this policy.

#### **Section D: Responding to security enquiries**

1. All enquiries regarding the use of security-sensitive material (either internal or external) will in the first place be directed to the chair of the Research Ethics Committee.
2. The chair of the Research Ethics Committee would know who was carrying out declared security-sensitive research in the College and so would be in the position to confirm whether or not an individual found to possess such material was an approved researcher with a good reason for using it. The chair of the Research Ethics Committee would not know what the content of the research was in any detail and would not communicate about even titles of stored documents unless required to do so by law officers.
3. In the case of research students the chair of the Research Ethics Committee may approach their supervisor to gain reassurance that the material is being used for research purposes.

4. The chair of the Research Ethics Committee will provide law enforcement officers with a copy of the College's policies and procedures regarding research and security-sensitive material.

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Title	<b>Security-sensitive Research Policy</b>		
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Approving body	Governors		
Quality Code consulted			
Member of staff responsible	Director of Research		

## Appendix: Application to undertake security-sensitive research at Spurgeon's College

Does your research concern terrorist or extreme groups or concern one of the following categories?

- Research about radicalized and violent forms of Christianity
- Research about Jihadist groups and the treatment of Christians
- Research into the persecution of Christians and of other faith groups
- Research into the theology of martyrdom
- Any research into known terrorist groups or sympathisers

Yes  No  Uncertain

If your answer to this question is yes, you must submit your proposed research to the Research Ethics Committee for approval. Please fill out the rest of this application form and forward to the College's chair of the Research Ethics Committee.

If you are uncertain as to whether your proposed research comes under the College's security-sensitive research policy, please fill out the rest of this application form and submit to the Research Ethics Committee for consideration.

Researcher Name:	Date:
Nature of proposed research:	
Potentially security-sensitive material which may need to be consulted:	

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

Yes

No

2. Might your research involve the electronic transmission (eg as an email attachment) of such records or statements?

Yes

No

3. If you answered 'Yes' to questions 1 or 2, you are advised to store the relevant records or statements electronically on a secure 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. You agree to store all documents relevant to questions 1 and 2 on that file store:

Yes

- 3a. You agree not to transmit electronically to any third party documents in the document store:

Yes

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

Yes

No

5. If you answer 'Yes' to question 4, you are advised that such sites may be subject to surveillance by the Police. Accessing those sites from college IP addresses might lead to Police enquiries. Please acknowledge that you understand this risk by putting an 'X' in the 'Yes' box.

Yes