

Insider Risk Management Program Reference Manual for Higher Education

What is the Reference Manual?

The MITRE Insider Risk Management Program Reference Manual is a no-cost resource to help U.S. universities build, grow, and mature their insider risk management capabilities. The Reference Manual outlines pros, cons, and key considerations of different options that universities can select and tailor to deter, identify, and mitigate insider risks in their university community. It provides detailed, actionable guidance – and was designed to help universities make informed, evidence-based choices while maintaining their essential culture of openness, collaboration, and research excellence.

What topics does the Reference Manual include?



Program Structure and Governance



Program Staffing



Combatting Insider Risk Misconceptions



Analyzing Insider Risks



Program Policies and Procedures



Training and Awareness Principles



Software Tools



Mitigating Insider Risks



Managing Key Stakeholders



Leveraging External Relationships



Program Assessment



Potential Threat Scenarios

Who is the Reference Manual Intended for?

The primary audience of the Reference Manual is the current or incoming operational leader of insider risk management capabilities at a U.S. university. The leader is (or will be) the day-to-day manager, “point person”, or “face” of the insider risk management program for executive leadership, stakeholders, any staff assigned to the program, and the broader university community.

We ask that the operational leader keeps the Reference Manual on a need-to-know, “close-hold” basis to allow them to select and propose the options which fit best their university, and to maintain effectiveness of sensitive operations.

How do I get the Reference Manual?

The Reference Manual is available through a no-cost licensing agreement. The agreement is used to restrict access to only individuals and groups who are working on insider risk management at a U.S. university. The agreement also prevents the Reference Manual from being posted publicly, which could harm universities and their insider risk efforts. Please contact MITRE to get a copy (details below).

Point of Contact: *Dr. James Doodson, Principal Behavioral Psychologist for Insider Risk*
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What is Insider Risk?

Insider risk in higher education refers to the potential that a faculty, staff, student, or approved visitor who has, or once had, authorized access to research, data, facilities, equipment, people, or resources may wittingly, or unwittingly, commit acts that resulted in, or might result in, harm through:



Loss, theft, or misuse of ideas (methods, analysis, results)



Damage or destruction of equipment, facilities, and resources



Delay of innovative research and appropriate scientific recognition

For universities, insider risk also includes faculty, staff, students, and approved visitors being inadvertently influenced by domestic and foreign campaigns attempting to steal, influence, and/or damage/sabotage research or assets.

Why is Insider Risk Management important?

Insider risks in higher education cause significant harm to the researchers themselves, people that they work with (e.g., co-investigators, junior researchers on their projects, research groups), the international scientific community, the university, and end-users of research (i.e., the public). These harms include:



Reputational damage



Slowed or halted career progression



Impaired research integrity



Loss of current and future research funding



Delayed or loss of research outputs (e.g., unable to publish, or retracting publications)



Loss of trust, which can damage transparent and open scientific collaboration



Declining physical and mental health

Who developed the Reference Manual?

The Reference Manual was researched and developed by MITRE's Insider Threat Research & Solutions team. MITRE is a not-for-profit organization with mission-driven teams dedicated to solving problems for a safer world. Through our public-private partnerships and federally funded research and development (R&D) centers, we work across the government and in partnership with industry to tackle challenges to the safety, stability, and well-being of our Nation.

MITRE's Insider Threat Research & Solutions team is a capability team consisting of insider risk and threat practitioners and researchers. The team has education and subject matter expertise in behavioral sciences, insider risk management, and cybersecurity. Our solutions are based on 15 years of scientific research and standing up insider threat programs with government and critical infrastructure sectors.

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