



HARVARD UNIVERSITY
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TO: Harvard University Faculty and Staff
FROM: John H. Shaw, Vice Provost for Research
DATE: May 6, 2024
RE: **ByteDance, TikTok and Other Entities Presenting Elevated Risks**

Recently, my office has received several inquiries regarding various potential collaboration opportunities between Harvard University researchers and students and ByteDance and TikTok. These opportunities have included potential research funding, gifts, internships, joint research projects, and potential visitors from the respective entities to Harvard laboratories.

As you may know, the Federal Government has prohibited the use of the social networking service TikTok and other applications from parent company ByteDance Limited on any devices used for federal contract work, including personally owned devices. This, along with warnings from federal security agencies about the IT security risks associated with connecting to these companies' services has elevated potential risks for researchers, particularly those with federal funding.

This memo addresses the steps that must be taken in advance of initiating a research collaboration, industrial affiliate relationship, or other institutional research relationship with an entity that the Office of the Vice Provost for Research ("OVPR") has determined presents an elevated intellectual property, IT security, and/or export control/sanctions risk. OVPR and your School Export Control Administrator will assist Faculty in identifying such Entities. The determination of risk will be based on US Government Restricted Party List screening, information provided to the University by a federal agency, and/or information in the public domain.

The acceptance of gifts or grants from ByteDance or TikTok, as Corporate Entities, are prohibited, due to the risk to research security and institutional federal funding.

This does not include personal philanthropy from individuals who may have an affiliation with ByteDance or TikTok. Such gifts would be reviewed and considered through a normal gift process (e.g., GPC).

Other research activities or collaborations with ByteDance or TikTok must be escalated to OVPR for review on a case-by-case basis. In some cases, the finding may be that it is unlawful to engage in an activity. If it is not unlawful, but risks are identified, the faculty member who is responsible for the research-related activities with the Entity, either as a PI, industrial affiliate

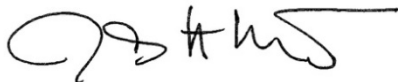
program director, or in another role under the terms of the University's agreement with the Entity must:

1. Inform the School Dean and the School's Export Control Administrator in advance and in writing of on-site activities proposed for visitors from the Entity. In some cases, a plan may be required to supervise those visitors working with Harvard research groups, and/or to restrict their access to certain labs, technology, and equipment when they are on campus.
2. Meet with your School's Export Control Administrator and OVPR to discuss potential export control risks, and the process for review by the Export Control Administrator and OVPR of visitors from the Entity who will be working on campus.
3. Obtain approval from OVPR before allowing representatives of the Entity to transport, install or otherwise implement hardware or software on campus.
4. Ensure that the representatives of the Entity are not issued an HUID.
5. Inform the School's Export Control Administrator if Harvard personnel travel to TikTok/ByteDance facilities. At a minimum, such travelers must:
 - Follow Harvard's guidance regarding keeping data safe while travelling abroad: <https://www.globalsupport.harvard.edu/travel/advice/keeping-your-data-safe-abroad>,
 - Not establish remote connections between ByteDance or TikTok systems and Harvard University systems, and
 - Obtain approval from OVPR before integrating any hardware or initiating system changes that includes products from ByteDance or TikTok on campus.

General questions regarding this guidance should be directed to:

Ara Tahmassian, University Chief Research Compliance Officer (Ara_tahmassian@harvard.edu) or
Melissa J. Lopes, Senior Research Compliance Officer (Melissa_Lopes@harvard.edu)

Regards,



John Shaw

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