

Submission | Australian Sanctions Office

The Queensland University of Technology (QUT) welcomes the opportunity to submit feedback in response to the Australian Sanctions' Office (ASO) *Issues Paper: Review of Australia's Autonomous Sanctions Framework*.

International engagements and partnerships are an integral part of QUT's research and education activities. We acknowledge the importance of Sanctions laws in protecting Australia's national interests, and welcome ongoing consultation in developing sanctions measures that are proportionate, practical, and applicable in a university context.

Sanctions laws affect QUT in a number of ways including (but not limited to):

- Applications by Higher Degree Research (HDR) students
- Staff recruitment
- Foreign agreements and collaborations
- Permits and/or requests for indicative assessments.

This submission addresses those issues identified in the Issues Paper that are most relevant to QUT and the broader higher education sector.

Complying with Australia's sanctions laws can be challenging for universities, since they are sometimes ambiguous and subject to interpretation. This is particularly the case when:

- determining whether an activity constitutes technical advice, assistance or training and would thereby be deemed a 'sanctioned service';
- assessing the risk of connectivity between a person/entity and a designated entity under the consolidated list. This can require interpretation of a numerical score on the LinkMatchLite software application; and
- determining whether an activity constitutes an 'export sanctioned' activity.

QUT recommends the development of university-specific guidelines to help navigate the Autonomous Sanctions Framework. These guidelines would be mutually beneficial, since they would help universities navigate a complex framework, and also help promote compliance and consistency in applying sanctions laws across the sector.

QUT notes the proposal to consider introducing a system of civil pecuniary penalties that could be imposed through a court where the circumstances do not warrant a criminal conviction. It is difficult to determine whether such civil penalties would be a suitable enforcement tool in the sanctions context without understanding further details about how these civil penalties would be applied. As a regulated entity to which such civil pecuniary penalties may be applied, QUT would welcome the opportunity for ongoing consultation about this proposal. In particular, QUT would like further detail regarding (i) the nature of the proposed civil pecuniary penalties; and (ii) the circumstances under which such civil pecuniary penalties would be applied as an alternative to education or criminal

prosecution.

QUT encourages ASO (DFAT) to work closely with the higher education sector to further develop careful and balanced legislation, policy, and guidelines in areas relevant to universities, such as financial assistance provided to support students who are citizens of sanctioned countries, or permits for researchers from sanctioned countries to accommodate joint research collaborations and/or access to DSSL listed material. With appropriate safeguards, these initiatives could foster innovation and maximise the benefits of research in Australia.

Thank you for the opportunity to make this submission. If you would like to discuss any of the matters we have raised, please contact: [REDACTED]