

Where Can I Find out More Information?

Information about dual use research in the life sciences can be obtained from several sources. NIH OBA maintains a website on dual use research, including the findings and recommendations of the NSABB, as well as summaries and videocasts of NSABB meetings and other dual use-related videocasts at: www.biosecurityboard.gov

On this site, users can download an informative video describing the dual use issue from the perspective of leaders in science, research administration, and publishing as well as the public. In addition, your professional society, Institutional Biosafety Committee, or biological safety officer may also be a useful resource for questions pertaining to dual use life sciences research.

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*DOES YOUR
RESEARCH
HAVE DUAL USE
POTENTIAL?*



AN OVERVIEW FOR INVESTIGATORS

What Is *Dual Use Research*?

Life sciences research is vital to improving public health, agriculture, and the environment, and to strengthening our national security and economy. Yet the very research designed to find ways to better the health, welfare, and safety of humankind can also yield information or technologies that could potentially be misused for harmful purposes. For instance, information from certain life sciences research could be misapplied to weaponize dangerous pathogens, to bypass or diminish the effectiveness of medical countermeasures, or to threaten in other ways the health and safety of humans, animals, plants and the environment. Research yielding new technologies or information with the potential for both benevolent and malevolent applications is referred to as “dual use research.”

What Is *Dual Use Research of Concern*?

Some degree of dual use potential may be inherent in a significant portion of life sciences research. However, the small subset of life sciences research with the highest potential for yielding knowledge, products, or technology that could be misapplied to threaten public health or national security is referred to as “dual use research of concern.”

Dual Use Research of Concern is research that, based on current understanding, can be reasonably anticipated to provide knowledge, products, or technologies that could be directly misapplied by others to pose a threat to public health and safety, agricultural crops and other plants, animals, the environment, or materiel.

What Are the Responsibilities of the Scientific Community?

Scientists have a professional responsibility to:

- » Understand dual use research issues and concerns,
- » Be aware of the implications of their work and the various ways in which information and products from their work could be misused, and
- » Take steps to minimize misuse of their work.

What Is the National Science Advisory Board for Biosecurity (NSABB)?

The US Government established the NSABB to advise all Federal departments and agencies with an interest in life sciences research. The Board recommends specific strategies for the efficient and effective oversight of dual use life sciences research, as well as ways to raise awareness about the issue within the scientific community. The Board considers both national security concerns and the needs of the research community when providing guidance and recommendations to the Federal government.

The NSABB members include experts in science, medicine, law, security and public perspectives. The NSABB also includes nonvoting *ex officio* members from Federal agencies and departments with an interest in life sciences research.

The National Institutes of Health (NIH) Office of Biotechnology Activities (OBA) staffs the NSABB.

