



Common Misconceptions about Export Controls

“It’s commercial off-the-shelf, so it’s not controlled.”

Wrong! The following are just a few examples of commercial off-the-shelf items that are highly controlled for export:

- CubeSat kits (available on the Internet)
- Precision gyroscopes
- Thermal Imaging Cameras

Another reason this is wrong: Everything in the U.S. (other than published information) is subject-to U.S. export controls. For example, the following are all subject to U.S. controls:

- Laptops, cell phones, smart phones, personal GPS
- Network routers, modems
- Software – Microsoft Office, iWork, etc.
- Oscilloscopes, microscopes, telescopes
- Field survey instruments

“It’s a fundamental research project, so export controls don’t apply.”

Export controls don’t apply to the research, but do apply to equipment and software being used.

- If foreign travel or travel into International Waters is involved, then the equipment and software needs to be assessed prior to export.
- If a piece of hardware is created during the fundamental research, then that piece of hardware is subject-to export controls.
- If software is created, unless it is made publicly available (available for download by anyone without charge) then it is subject to export controls.

“If I carry it with me in my carry-on luggage, I don’t have to worry about export controls.”

Wrong! Anything that leaves the U.S. is being exported. There are some export license exemptions for commercial items (not applicable to military or space related items) taken out of the country for use as “tools of trade.”

- The use of these exemptions require documentation
- Check with the Export Control Officer BEFORE traveling

The bottom line: Don’t assume. Ask the Export Control Officer:
704-687-1877 or exportcontrols@uncc.edu