

Australia Urges Universities to Diversify Research Away From US

By Ben Westcott | April 1, 2025 7:12PM ET

Australian Foreign Minister Penny Wong urged universities to seek greater research cooperation with partners outside the US following the Trump administration's threat of funding cuts to the sector.

At least seven Australian universities are facing a potential reduction in funding after they received lengthy questionnaires from the US government asking how their projects aligned with President Donald Trump's domestic and foreign policy priorities. Industry group Universities Australia said the change could affect as much as A\$600 million (\$377 million) in research funding.

Photographer: Lukas Coch/AFP/Getty Images
Penny Wong

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Wong said that just as the Australian government was encouraging businesses to broaden their trade markets in response to global disruptions, the education industry needed to follow suit.

"We have to recognize that we live in a different world," she told Australian Broadcasting Corp. radio on Wednesday. "We will continue to make the case to the US that collaborative research benefits both countries, but I would say making sure we diversify our engagement matters across all our economic sectors."

Australia, one of Washington's oldest allies which also runs a trade deficit with the US, is bracing for the next round of tariffs due to be unveiled by the Trump administration within 24 hours. Prime Minister Anthony Albanese has said he will not negotiate on a range of concerns raised by the US Trade Representative in a report released this week.

Universities Australia Chief Executive Officer Luke Sheehy told the ABC last week that Monash University and the University of Technology Sydney were among those exposed to potential US funding cuts.

"This is really alarming that Australia's closest ally, someone who funds more than half a billion dollars of research in the Australian system seeking Australian expertise to benefit both countries, is putting all of that at risk," he said.