

Integrity in Research Policy

A program of active scientific research is essential to the functioning of an academic institution. Ideally, such research should be carried out at all levels and include faculty from all disciplines. Guidelines, which govern the conduct of scientific research, may be considered from several points of view. Of basic importance is the question of responsibility for research conduct. Although each investigator bears individual responsibility for his/her research conduct, it is essential to identify individuals within the institution with primary responsibility for the integrity of scientific research. A second major area of concern is the establishment of a research environment, which encourages scientific interchange.

The Provost/Vice President for Academic Affairs currently serves as the University's Scientific Integrity Officer. In this role, he assumes responsibility for the overall conduct of scientific research within the university.

The Dean of the School of College shall be responsible for the overall conduct of scientific research carried out in their respective area. It shall be the responsibility of the Dean to address the concept of each research responsibility in each new appointment of an individual to a faculty position within their school or college.

The Department Chair shall assess annually the total commitment of time and resources to research, training, and/or contractual obligations by the department's faculty. The Chair shall assure that this commitment by the individual faculty is appropriate. The Chair shall also be responsible for keeping a file of publications by individual department faculty.

The faculty member (PI; Principle/Primary Investigator) shall have primary responsibility for the conduct of scientific research within his/her laboratory or project. This responsibility shall include the research technicians. The faculty member shall be responsible for the maintenance and storage of all primary research data accumulated under his/her direction.

The PI bears responsibility for instructing all members of his/her research team in the maintenance of appropriate records of research data. Each PI may have a somewhat different system for gathering and storing primary data.

The PI bears the final responsibility for the integrity of the primary record, and it is generally inappropriate for this record to be removed from the research area. While co-PIs and/or trainees may be allowed to make a copy of the record before leaving the research project, the original should remain in the possession of the PI. In investigations concerning human subjects, the PI is responsible for implementing a system of privacy in identification of research subjects that is allowable and approved under the direction of the Institutional Review Board (IRB).

Research in an academic environment benefits from the input of colleagues who are not directly involved in the research effort. Research seminars provide a format for the researcher to present his or her work to interested but impartial critics. Regularly scheduled opportunities for presentation of research projects at various stages – from conception, through work in progress, to completion – are recommended.