General Principles for Scholarly Integrity and the Responsible Conduct of Research at Georgia State University

Approved by the University Senate on April 29, 2004

Scholarly Integrity (in research) is required for the establishment of professional excellence and to maintain the public’s trust. Scholarly/Scientific Integrity cannot be achieved without responsible conduct of research (RCR) at all levels of our institution. Integrity in Research extends to all faculty, staff and undergraduate and graduate students at Georgia State University, not just those in funded research projects or in the sciences. Scholarly Integrity needs to be maintained both at the level of the individual researcher and at that of our institution and should not be driven solely by federal mandates/regulatory requirements. With the establishment of Scholarly Integrity principles, responsible conduct of research will be possible with the appropriate level of peer oversight. Peer oversight is essential to ensure good communication.

At the individual researcher level, Scholarly Integrity requires intellectual honesty/responsibility and adherence to responsible conduct practices as outlined below:

1) Research-related writing: proposal preparation; correctly presenting percentage of contributions; proper reporting of results.

2) Conducting research: intellectual honesty, data management, accuracy in representing contributions, sharing of resources.

3) Regulatory issues: conflicts of interest, human subjects, animal care, safety.

4) Scientific and scholarly interactions: peer review, collegiality, conflicts of interest, P.I.-researcher/team interactions, confidentiality.

The Executive Summary included in “Integrity in Scientific Research,” National Awards Council monograph, outlines individual level responsibilities.

For the individual scientist[scholar], integrity embodies above all a commitment to intellectual honesty and personal responsibility for one’s actions and to a range of practices that characterize the responsible conduct of research including:

- intellectual honesty in proposing, performing, and reporting research;
- accuracy in representing contributions to research proposals and reports;
- fairness in peer review;
- collegiality in scientific[scholarly] interactions, including communications and sharing of resources;
- transparency in conflicts of interest or potential conflicts of interest;
- protection of human subjects in the conduct of research;
- humane care of [non-human] animals in the conduct of research; and
- adherence to the mutual responsibilities between investigators and their research teams.1
At the institutional level, an environment should be created that encourages and promotes Scholarly Integrity and Responsible Conduct of Research at the individual and institutional level. Leadership must be provided to ensure that all regulatory issues are addressed. In addition, processes, policies and procedures should be in place to: deal with conflicts of interest; offer educational opportunities related to RCR issues; promote scientific integrity (RCR); and monitor/evaluate the institutional environment.

The following quotation from the National Research Council covers the institutional obligations.

Institutions seeking to create an environment that promotes responsible conduct by individual scientists/scholars and that fosters integrity must establish and continuously monitor structures, processes, policies, and procedures that

- provide leadership in support of responsible conduct of research;
- encourage respect for everyone involved in the research enterprise;
- promote productive interactions between trainees and mentors;
- advocate adherence to the rules regarding all aspects of the conduct of research, especially research involving human participants and animals;
- anticipate, reveal, and manage individual and institutional conflicts of interest;
- arrange timely and thorough inquiries and investigations of allegations of scientific [and scholarly] misconduct and apply appropriate administrative sanctions;
- offer educational opportunities pertaining to integrity in the conduct of research; and
- monitor and evaluate the institutional environment supporting integrity in the conduct of research and use this knowledge for continuous quality improvement.1

Individual researchers/scholars and Georgia State University must acknowledge that competency in research and scholarship includes/requires RCR. An educational program for RCR that spans the ongoing, changing, and complex needs of faculty, staff, and students within our university should be in place. The objectives should be to: (1) equate good science and scholarship with RCR; (2) provide discipline specific guidelines and policies for RCR as related to the particular professions; and (3) provide the capacity for ethical decision making. The program should strive to be more than a checklist approach or to only satisfy governmental regulations.


Rationale for the Scholarly Integrity and Responsible Conduct of Research Policy:

Scholarly integrity (in research) is required for the establishment of professional excellence to maintain the public’s trust. Georgia State does not have a policy in place and one is needed.