

Science Policies

Guidelines for Scientific Research (SC-100)

Policy

Purpose

These guidelines describe general standards for conduct in research and scholarship. They are intended to establish a common understanding of expectations and responsibilities relating to research in the Institute's laboratories, thereby promoting the quality and integrity of the work and interactions in the laboratories and helping to prevent scientific misconduct.

Responsibilities of Heads of Laboratories

Although everyone involved in science must take personal responsibility for maintaining the highest standards of integrity, the head of a laboratory, who is necessarily a mentor or supervisor of research, has special responsibilities. In the Institute, the laboratory head will generally be an Investigator, Group Leader, or Fellow.

The laboratory head should ensure that personnel for whom he or she has responsibility, including associates, students, and technical staff, receive appropriate supervision and instruction. In particular, the laboratory head should teach and encourage careful scrutiny and interpretation of results, emphasizing the importance of and reliance on sound primary data.

Careful review and evaluation of all primary data by the laboratory head is necessary and cannot be delegated to others unless it is clearly understood that the individuals concerned are conducting research in a largely independent manner, for example in the case of certain senior visiting scientists or other senior research staff. It is inadvisable for the investigator to delegate these important functions.

The laboratory head must assume absolute responsibility for the validity of all communicated and published information from his or her laboratory and for the publication of the data that may ensue from work in the laboratory.

Maintenance of Professional Interpersonal Relations

Laboratory heads should encourage their personnel to work with other colleagues, to share data, and to discuss results freely. Although some confidentiality about methods and data before publication may sometimes be prudent, laboratory heads should promote a collegial, open, and professional interaction among scientists and between staff and students.

Documentation and Management of Data

Well-designed and clearly written protocols, careful recording of data as they are gathered, and reliable data storage are essential. Detailed notebooks should be kept in a manner such that data can be properly reviewed.

Research should be done with care and with appropriate controls. All experiments should be verified by repetition or subsequent further experimentation prior to publication, and should be reproducible in the same or a different laboratory.

At host-based sites, any policies of the host institution regarding the retention of primary data should be followed. If there are no applicable host institution policies at a host-based site, and at Janelia Farm Research Campus, the original records of primary data should normally be stored by the laboratory of origin for at least seven years after generation, although depending on the types of data a longer retention period may be appropriate (for example, if there is a patent filing). At Janelia Farm Research Campus, HHMI reserves the right to retain original records of primary data of departing scientists, including laboratory notebooks. In all cases, however, scientists leaving Janelia Farm Research Campus

will be able to retain either the original or a copy of records of their data, including their laboratory notebooks.

Appropriate Assignment of Credit and Responsibility

Institute personnel should be scrupulous about crediting the accomplishments of others, especially persons from other laboratories. Publications describing original research should list as authors all those, but only those, who contributed significantly to that research. All authors whose names appear on a paper should have reviewed the manuscript carefully before its submission for publication and should be prepared to stand behind the conclusions.

See also Science policy [SC-200 – Scientific Misconduct](#)

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