



NASA Policy Directive

NPD 1920.1Effective Date: December 12, 2017
Expiration Date: December 12, 2022**COMPLIANCE IS MANDATORY FOR NASA EMPLOYEES**[Printable Format \(PDF\)](#)

Subject: Scientific Integrity

Responsible Office: Office of the Chief Scientist

1. POLICY

- a. Public confidence and trust in NASA's work of exploring and expanding human knowledge of the Earth, solar system, and universe and of enabling the development of aeronautical and space exploration systems depends on the integrity of the research and development activities the Agency conducts and supports.
- b. It is NASA's policy that NASA's workforce, as well as external entities who review proposals for or receive NASA funding to support research and development projects or who advise the Agency, maintain the highest standards of scientific and technical integrity in compliance with applicable Federal laws, Agency directives, and regulations. These standards include selecting the most meritorious NASA research and development activities through open and fair competition, peer review and other appropriate merit review processes, and avoidance of actual and perceived conflicts of interest; avoiding fabrication, falsification, or plagiarism in proposing, performing, or reviewing research, or in reporting research results; openly sharing results and methods not subject to classification or privacy standards; disclosing assumptions and biases in sharing and applying scientific information and data; and acting honestly and transparently in using and serving on advisory committees and in engaging in professional development activities.

2. APPLICABILITY

- a. Scientific and technical integrity standards will apply to basic research, applied research, and technology development projects, including space flight projects, carried out internally or via grants, contracts, cooperative agreements, or other mechanisms, such as partnership agreements.
- b. This directive is applicable to NASA Headquarters and NASA Centers, including Component Facilities and Technical and Service Support Centers. This language applies to the Jet Propulsion Laboratory (JPL), a Federally Funded Research and Development Center (FFRDC), other contractors, grant recipients, or parties to agreements only to the extent specified or referenced in the appropriate contracts, grants, or agreements. This language also applies to intermittent and temporary employees, including Special Government Employees; detailees under the Intergovernmental Personnel Act and other agreements; and volunteers.
- c. This directive, together with relevant Federal and Agency laws, regulations, and directives, sets a minimum standard expected for scientific and technical integrity by external entities who review proposals for or receive NASA funding to support research and development projects or who advise the Agency. It does not negate any standards to which external entities are held by their home institutions and which may be more stringent.
- d. In this directive, all mandatory actions (i.e., requirements) are denoted by statements containing the term "shall." The terms: "may" or "can" denote discretionary privilege or permission, "should" denotes good practice and is recommended, but not required, "will" denotes expected outcome, and "are/is" denotes descriptive material.
- e. In this directive, all document citations are assumed to be the latest version unless otherwise noted.

3. AUTHORITY

The National Aeronautics and Space Act, 51 U.S.C. § 20113.

4. APPLICABLE DOCUMENTS

NASA Guidelines for Promoting Scientific and Research Integrity.

5. RESPONSIBILITY

a. The NASA Chief Scientist shall:

- (1) Lead a triennial internal review to ensure NASA has appropriate scientific and technical integrity standards in place.
- (2) Develop, maintain, and ensure public access to a reference handbook (available through the NASA Technical Reports Server, NTRS), issued with the concurrence of the Office of the General Counsel, outlining NASA's scientific and technical integrity policies, protocols, and resources. The handbook includes pertinent information on applicable administrative requirements in areas such as Government ethics, employment, and procurement.
- (3) Work with NASA's Mission Directorate Associate Administrators, NASA Center Directors, the JPL director, and the heads of other NASA offices to ensure that NASA's workforce and external entities affiliated with NASA research and development are informed of NASA's scientific and technical integrity policies and protocols.
- (4) Consult with the Office of the General Counsel about any potential conflicts raised between applicable Federal and Agency laws, regulations, and policies (including NASA directives and procedural requirements) and the scientific and technical integrity policies of the home institutions of external entities serving as NASA proposal reviewers or research and development funding recipients.

b. Mission Directorate Associate Administrators, Center Directors, and the JPL director shall:

- (1) Designate a point of contact for first-order handling of scientific and technical integrity issues within the Mission Directorate or Center.
- (2) Develop and maintain processes to ensure that NASA's workforce as well as external entities who review proposals for or receive NASA funding to support research and development projects are informed of and agree to comply with NASA's scientific and technical integrity policies and protocols.
- (3) Inform the Chief Scientist of and consult with the Office of the General Counsel regarding any potential conflicts raised between applicable Federal laws, regulations, and policies (including NASA directives and procedural requirements) and the scientific and technical integrity policies of the home institutions of external entities serving as NASA proposal reviewers or research and development funding recipients.

c. Heads of all NASA offices shall:

- (1) Fulfill the responsibilities for scientific and technical integrity ascribed to them by applicable Federal laws, regulations, and policies (including NASA directives and procedural requirements), per the NASA handbook, "NASA Guidelines for Promoting Scientific and Research Integrity."
- (2) Provide support as requested for the Chief Scientist-led triennial internal review to ensure NASA has appropriate scientific and technical integrity standards in place.
- (3) Actively address any situation that would otherwise result in deviations from the highest standard of scientific and technical integrity.

d. NASA employees conducting scientific research shall:

- (1) Become informed about and comply with NASA's scientific and technical integrity policies and protocols, per the NASA handbook "NASA Guidelines for Promoting Scientific and Research Integrity," available through NTRS.
- (2) Actively address any situation that would otherwise result in deviations from the highest standard of scientific and technical integrity.

6. DELEGATION OF AUTHORITY

The NASA Administrator may delegate the responsibilities listed in paragraph 5a if no Chief Scientist or acting Chief Scientist is in place.

7. MEASUREMENTS

The triennial review of NASA's scientific integrity policy (NPD, NPR) and

any new requirements from internal or external stakeholders, conducted by the Office of the Chief Scientist shall determine compliance with this policy.

8. CANCELLATION

None.

/s/

Robert Lightfoot
Acting Administrator

ATTACHMENT A: REFERENCES

- A.1 American Innovation and Competitiveness Act, Pub. L. 114-329.
- A.2 Release of Information to News and Information Media, 14 CFR pt. 1213.
- A.3 Research Misconduct, 14 CFR pt. 1275.
- A.4 Federal Advisory Committee Management, 41 CFR pts. 101-6.10.
- A.5 Federal Policy on Research Misconduct, 65 Fed. Reg. 76260.
- A.6 NPD 1080.1, Policy for the Conduct of NASA Research and Technology.
- A.7 NPD 1150.11, Federal Advisory Committee Act (FACA) Committees.
- A.8 NPD 2200.1, Management of NASA Scientific and Technical Information.
- A.9 NPR 1080.1, Requirements for the Conduct of NASA Research and Technology Development.
- A.10 NPR 2200.2, Requirements for Documentation, Approval, and Dissemination of Scientific and Technical Information.
- A.11 NPR 7120.8, NASA Research and Technology Program and Project Management Requirements.
- A.12 NASA Guidebook for Proposers Responding to a NASA Research Funding Announcement.

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None.

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