

University Policy 4100: Research

Category: Academic Affairs

Subcategory: Research

Covered Individuals: USU Employees and Students

Responsible Executive: Vice President for Research

Policy Custodian: Office of Research; Chief Research Compliance Officer

Last Revised: 2026/01/16

Previous USU Policy Number: 583 & 4102

Note: In January 2026, Policy 4102 was reassigned to the Cost Transfers policy.

4100.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

This Policy describes the responsibilities of Utah State University (USU) and its [Researchers](#), [Principal Investigators](#), and Utah State University in carrying out [Research](#).

This Policy defines key terms associated with Research activity, addresses the broad aspects of sound Research practices at USU, and complements additional University policies that address conduct in Research, such as, but not limited to, the additional 4100-level policies found in the Research subcategory of the [USU Policy Library](#).

4100.2 POLICY

As Utah's land-grant institution, Utah State University is committed to engaging in innovative and creative Research that directly benefits the State of Utah and its citizens. To maximize such benefit and ensure that all Research at USU is conducted in a manner that is responsible, ethical, and safe, Researchers, Principal Investigators, and the University must follow the responsibilities outlined in Section 3 of this Policy.

2.1 Standardized Research Terms

[Section 5](#) of this Policy establishes standard definitions of key terms that govern the research enterprise at USU:

- [Research](#), to include the broad set of actions that constitute the pursuit of knowledge at the University;
- [Researcher](#), to include any individual at USU engaged in Research or creative endeavors;
- [Principal Investigator](#) (PI), which emphasizes the PI's status as a Researcher with heightened responsibilities; and
- [Reasonable Care](#), to describe a Researcher's baseline level of responsibility in meeting their obligations to their associates, the University, and sponsors.

4100.3 RESPONSIBILITIES

3.1 Researcher

3.1.1 Conducting Responsible Research

All USU employees and students must follow the highest standards of honesty, integrity, and ethical behavior while carrying out Research. Researchers are expected to respect the standards of evidence appropriate to their disciplines and to acknowledge the contributions and scholarship of others properly. To this end, the University expects Researchers to uphold the core values of objectivity, honesty, openness, accountability, fairness, and stewardship while carrying out their work.

Upholding the integrity of the research enterprise is the responsibility of all covered individuals. This includes maintaining the highest ethical standards, encouraging open communication within and among students, trainees, junior faculty, and other research staff, and instituting procedures for self-regulation and peer review of ongoing Research.

The University's concern over improper conduct in a research setting is not limited to actions that meet the definition for Research Misconduct as outlined in USU Policy 4110: Research Misconduct. All USU Researchers must seek the highest standards of professional responsibility in their work, and the University may seek to sanction, under the appropriate University policy, any Researcher who fails to exercise Reasonable Care in meeting their obligations to their students, colleagues, the University, and sponsors.

3.1.2 Training

Training and education support the integrity of USU's research enterprise. The Vice President for Research and other University units may require USU Researchers to complete training applicable to their work. All Researchers covered under this policy are expected to complete all required training.

3.1.3 Safety and Health in Research

Researchers conduct safe Research by becoming informed of potential hazards in their respective research environments and following all applicable Research health and safety directives issued by Principal Investigators and the University.

3.2 Principal Investigator

3.2.1 Principal Investigator Conduct in the Research Enterprise

Principal Investigators shall foster research environments that are conducive to creativity and innovation. While managing and coordinating Research at USU that involves the work of students, other faculty members, and other employees of the University, USU faculty are responsible for following the standards of conduct outlined in [USU Policy 4002](#): Academic Freedom and Professional Responsibility, [Interim USU Policy 2101](#): Discrimination based on Protected Characteristics, and [USU Policy 3002](#): Respectful Workplace, even where such policies do not explicitly link the required standards of conduct to a research setting.

3.2.2 Research Accuracy

Principal Investigators assume responsibility for the accuracy and validity of all research communications emanating from their laboratories or programs.

3.2.3 Safety and Health in Research

Principal Investigators conduct assessments to identify, evaluate, and mitigate hazards associated with their work and enforce safety procedures in their respective areas. They shall coordinate with the University's Environmental Health and Safety Office (EH&S) to be certain that all those involved in Research receive appropriate safety training.

Principal Investigators proposing Research involving hazardous materials, equipment, or environments must submit proposals for review by the appropriate University committee to ensure that all reasonable precautions have been taken to avoid potential health or safety hazards. Such University committees include University Safety, Biosafety, Chemical Hygiene, and Radiation Safety. Principal Investigators may

obtain information on these committees from the Office of the Vice President for Research or a member of the committee of interest.

3.3 The University

3.3.1 Research Integrity

Department or unit heads assume primary responsibility for the academic activities of members of their departments, including maintaining the standards of research integrity appropriate to their discipline.

3.3.2 Safety and Health in Research

Within the University, the department or unit head is responsible for ensuring, within reason, that faculty and staff members within their unit safely conduct research projects.

The University, by statutory requirement, must comply with the provisions of the Utah Occupational Safety and Health Act (UOSHA). To help comply with UOSHA Rules and Regulations, the Environmental Health and Safety Office (EH&S) provides various safety-related publications, available on the EH&S website and in its offices.

4100.4 RELATED USU POLICIES

- [Policy 4110: Research Misconduct](#)
- [Policy 4002: Academic Freedom and Professional Responsibility](#)
- [Interim Policy 2101: Discrimination based on Protected Characteristics](#)
- [Policy 3002: Respectful Workplace](#)

4100.5 DEFINITIONS

Principal Investigator. Any Researcher who has primary responsibility within the University for the design, conduct, and reporting of Research.

Reasonable Care. The level of performance required of a Researcher recognized as reasonable in light of the obligations which the individual has assumed, competing demands upon their energy and time, nature and quality of their work, and all other circumstances which the academic community would properly take into account in determining whether the Researcher was discharging their responsibilities at an acceptable level.

Research. All those activities, including instructional and other sponsored activities, carried out by Researchers within their respective role statements, employment assignments, or courses of study, which are designed to increase knowledge or improve upon human inventions.

Researcher. Any person affiliated with USU whose role statement, job description, employment assignment, area of study, or function within the University, either in whole or in part, includes conducting research/creative endeavors or other activities overseen by the Office of Research. This includes faculty, professional research staff, research assistants, laboratory and clinical personnel, and others as may be designated by the Vice President for Research. Indicators that an individual qualifies as a Researcher include, but are not limited to, serving as an investigator or key personnel on proposals submitted to external sponsors (which can include instructional or other sponsored activities), submitting protocol applications to research oversight committees (e.g., Institutional Review Board, Institutional Biosafety Committee), and applying for or mentoring internally funded research/creative endeavors.

Information below is not included as part of the contents of the official policy. It is provided only as a convenience for readers/users and may be changed at any time by persons authorized by the president.

RESOURCES

Procedures

- [USU Sponsored Programs Research Guide](#)
- [Standard Operating Procedures for the Human Research Protections Office and the Institutional Review Board, Series 300: Researcher Responsibilities](#)

Guidance

- [USU Graduate Faculty Handbook](#)

Contacts

- Chief Research Compliance Officer
Research Integrity & Compliance
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POLICY HISTORY

Original issue date: 2004/09/24

Last revision date: 2026/01/16

Next scheduled review date: 2029/01/01

Previous revision dates: N/A