

Mass General Brigham Research Code of Conduct and Ethical Standards

Mass General Brigham is committed to advancing a culture of compliance and scientific integrity in research conducted at Mass General Brigham affiliated institutions¹. While there may be differences in how research is organized, conducted and reported across fields and disciplines, all individuals engaged in research activity in any capacity at a Mass General Brigham hospital, institute or program are expected to conduct their affairs in accordance with the highest ethical and legal standards. This document summarizes the responsibilities, expectations, and standards applicable to researchers regardless of their field or discipline. Adherence to these requirements and the associated research policies, procedures and guidelines is a requirement for the continued participation of all individuals in a Mass General Brigham research project. For employees and individuals with a medical/professional staff appointment, it is also a condition of employment and appointment.

1. **Scientific Integrity and Accountability:** Researchers are responsible for conducting their research in accordance with institutional, sponsor and federal **research integrity policies**. Falsifying or manipulating data or claiming the ideas of others as your own destroys the integrity of both the research and the researcher. Results must be reported accurately regardless of whether findings support the hypothesis. Researchers must report and account for financial interests that could impair or appear to impair judgment and impartiality.

2. **Financial Stewardship:** Research grants and contracts require the hospital or institute and all researchers participating in the project to account for and use the funds in accordance with the research plan, approved budget, and sponsor and institutional policies.

3. **Commitment to Transparency: Research Support & Faculty Appointments:** Institutional and federal policies require PIs and Key Personnel to disclose or update all current and pending domestic and foreign Other Support of their research endeavors as part of the federal grant application and annual progress report processes. This includes disclosing financial and non-financial (e.g., in-kind) resources managed through the researcher's home institution and other domestic or foreign institutions, in addition to including on the biographical sketch all appointments – honorary, salaried or non-salaried – through their home institution and non-Mass General Brigham domestic and foreign institutions. Researchers are expected to be fully

transparent in meeting these reporting and disclosure obligations.

4. **Commitment to Transparency in Data and Resource Sharing:** Researchers are responsible for sharing data or resources (e.g., cell lines) openly and promptly, consistent with publication, intellectual property, sponsor, and/or federal data or resource sharing requirements.

5. **Research Regulations and Policies:** Researchers are responsible for being aware of and for adhering to applicable laws, regulations, policies, and procedures governing research.

6. **Supervision and Mentoring:** Researchers are responsible for supervising the researchers, staff, and students they direct or oversee. Mentoring is one expression of the supervisory responsibility assumed by researchers who direct or oversee other researchers. Principal Investigators (PI) have the added responsibility of reviewing this document with all members of their lab/research group upon hire and annually thereafter and retaining documentation of these discussions.

7. **Research Methods:** The design, conduct, and reporting of research must be scientifically sound and in accordance with the standards of the field in question.

¹ Brigham and Women's Hospital, Massachusetts General Hospital, McLean Hospital, Newton-Wellesley Hospital, North Shore Medical Center, the Spaulding Rehabilitation Hospital, the MGH Institute of Health Professions, and Massachusetts Eye and Ear.

8. **Research Records and Data:** Researchers must keep clear and accurate records of all research and retain these records in accordance with sponsor, federal and institutional policies and guidelines.

9. **Laboratory Safety:** Researchers must be aware of institutional and regulatory requirements associated with bench research, secure the necessary approvals, and foster a culture of lab safety within their groups so that all participants fully understand the hazards and risks of laboratory research.

10. **Respectful Treatment of Subjects:** Research involving animals or human subjects must be carried out in accordance with institutional policies and federal and state requirements. Clinical research is based on the ethical principles of respect for persons, beneficence and justice. It should carefully balance the risks of potential harm and benefits. Research involving animals should similarly conform to applicable ethical and legal standards.

11. **Diversity & Inclusion:** As set forth in the Mass General Brigham's *United Against Racism* initiative, research, clinical, and administrative leadership is committed to building an inclusive and diverse community. It is essential that all members of the community feel secure and welcome; that the contributions of all individuals are respected; and that all voices are heard. Mass General Brigham staff, including research employees and non-employees have a

responsibility to uphold the values of diversity and inclusion and foster full participation of staff, patients, and research participants in MGB research projects.

12. **Safe Work Environment:** Mass General Brigham is committed to providing a safe and respectful work environment and does not tolerate harassment of any kind, including sexual harassment. Principal Investigators are responsible for setting a tone of safety and respect within their labs/research groups. Inappropriate behavior on the part of any member of the research community will not be tolerated.

13. **Promoting Standards of Good Conduct:** Researchers have the responsibility to foster an environment that promotes intellectual honesty and integrity, to encourage and protect those who in good faith bring forward questions or concerns about research integrity, and not to tolerate research misconduct in any aspect of Mass General Brigham research.

14. **Duty to Report:** All researchers, whether employees or non-employees, are expected to report any internal problem that violates these standards. With the exception of research misconduct allegations, researchers may report to their supervisor, Chief, Sr. Vice President for Research or CAO, institutional Research Compliance or Corporate Compliance Officer, or Mass General Brigham Research Compliance Officer. Allegations of research misconduct must be reported to your institutional **Research Integrity Officer (RIO)**.