

"It is essential that EPA's scientific and technical activities be of the highest quality and credibility if EPA is to carry out its responsibilities to protect human health and the environment. "

— Carol Browner - EPA Administrator
November 24, 1999

What Are the Agency Goals for Scientific Integrity?

The EPA Scientific Integrity Policy outlines five goals to ensure scientific integrity throughout the Agency.

- EPA environmental policies, decisions, guidance, and regulations grounded in robust, independent, and high quality science;
- Transparency within Agency scientific processes;
- Scientific research and results communicated openly and with integrity, accuracy, and timeliness;
- Appropriate use of peer review and federal advisory committees; and
- Professional development of the Agency's scientists, engineers and other technical staff.

"The work we do together to preserve the integrity of our science is as critical as ever ... With science as our North Star — EPA has steered America away from health risks, and toward healthier communities and a higher overall quality of life."

— Gina McCarthy - EPA Administrator
April 28, 2014

Scientific Integrity at U.S. EPA

Safeguarding science to protect human health and the environment

Contact Us

Scientific Integrity Official

Francesca T. Grifo, PhD
grifo.francesca@epa.gov

Scientific Integrity Program Lead

Martha Otto
otto.martha@epa.gov

Scientific Integrity Committee

The Scientific Integrity Committee provides oversight for the implementation of the Scientific Integrity Policy. Led by the Scientific Integrity Official, it is comprised of senior Agency officials from each region and office. A list of committee members and their contact information can be found on our website.

To report fraud, waste or abuse, contact the hotline (Office of Inspector General) through one of the following methods:

E-mail: oig_hotline@epa.gov

Phone: 1-888-546-8740

Fax: 202-566-2599

Online: <http://www.epa.gov/oig/hotline.htm>

Write:

EPA Inspector General Hotline
1200 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Mailcode 2431T
Washington, DC 20460

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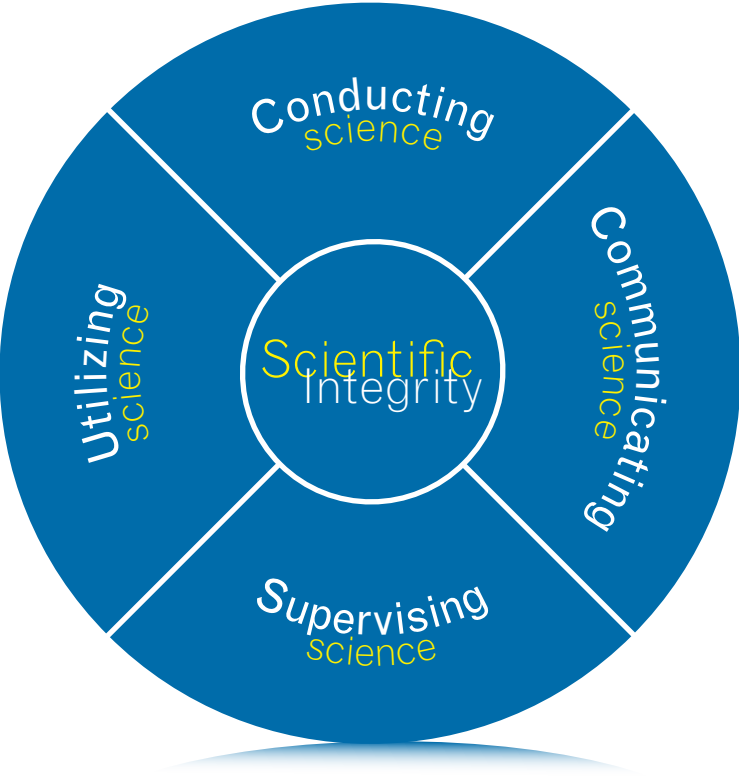
<http://www.epa.gov/scientificintegrity>

Scientific Integrity



What Is Scientific Integrity?

Scientific Integrity is the adherence to professional values and practices when conducting, supervising, communicating, and utilizing the results of science and scholarship. Scientific integrity ensures objectivity, clarity, reproducibility, and utility. It also provides insulation from bias, fabrication, falsification, plagiarism, outside interference, and censorship.



Why is Scientific Integrity Important to EPA?

EPA’s ability to protect human health and the environment depends upon the integrity of the science on which it relies. The EPA Scientific Integrity Policy provides both a vision and a roadmap for Scientific Integrity at the Agency. The Policy, released in 2012, builds upon EPA’s significant earlier scientific integrity efforts and focuses on promoting a culture of scientific integrity at EPA, ensuring the release of scientific information to the public, the consistent use of peer review, and the professional development of its scientists and engineers.

Who Does the Scientific Integrity Policy Apply to?

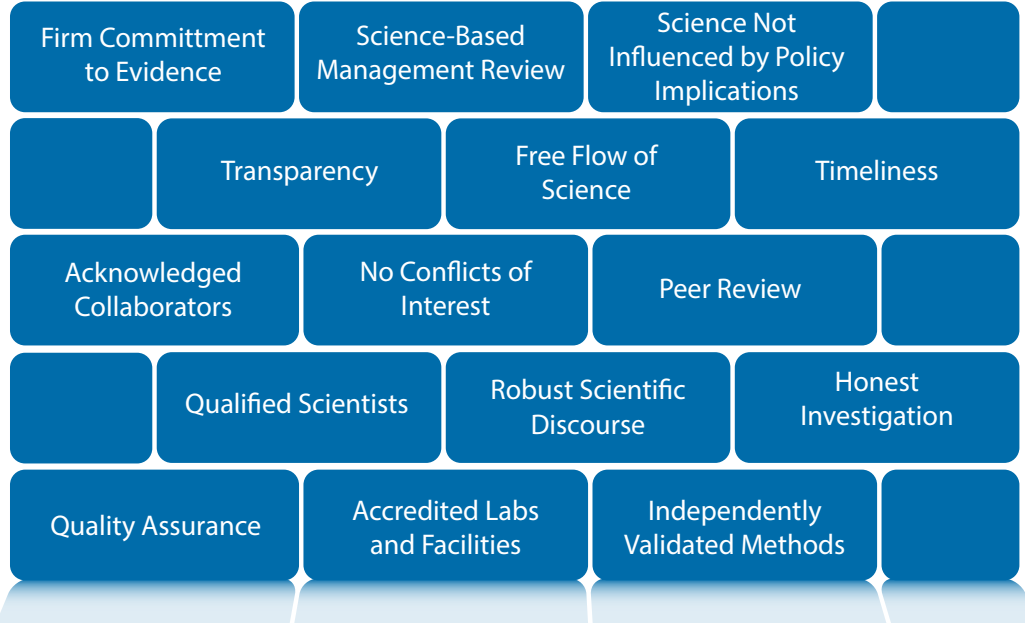
All Agency employees, including scientists, managers, and political appointees, are required to follow this policy when engaging in, supervising, managing, or influencing scientific activities; communicating information in an official capacity about Agency scientific activities; and utilizing scientific information in making Agency policy or management decisions. In addition, all contractors, grantees, collaborators, and student volunteers of the Agency who engage in scientific activities are expected to uphold the standards established by the Policy.

What Characterizes a Culture of Scientific Integrity?

- A culture of robust scientific inquiry and discussion
- Transparent scientific processes and open communication of science
- Scientific conclusions that are not influenced by their policy implications

This assures that EPA scientists can do their best work and that EPA decisions are informed by the best science the Agency, its contractors, grantees, and collaborators have to offer. A culture of scientific integrity is also one that protects employees who report allegations. Similarly, employees who express differing scientific opinions should not fear nor experience retaliation.

A Culture of Scientific Integrity



How Do I Report a Scientific Integrity Allegation?

Formal scientific integrity allegations may be reported to the Scientific Integrity Official, any Deputy Scientific Integrity Official or to the Office of Inspector General. Allegations may come from outside or inside the Agency.

- Allegations that concern waste, fraud, abuse or other criminal violations should be reported to the Office of Inspector General.
- Allegations that concern reprisal should be reported to the Office of Inspector General or the Office of Special Counsel.
- Allegations that concern a financial conflict of interest or other ethics issues involving federal employees will be referred to the appropriate Deputy Ethics Official or Office of General Counsel/Ethics, or the Human Subjects Research Review Official, as appropriate.

Allegations can also be reported to the Scientific Integrity Official without revealing the identity of the person making the allegation. While there is no formal process for resolving these anonymous allegations, the Scientific Integrity Official is still interested in obtaining information about these allegations and can take some steps to address them and the issues they raise.

When a formal allegation is resolved, the Scientific Integrity Official is responsible for preparing a summary and recommendations for corrective actions to safeguard the relevant science and will provide follow-up to ensure that the scientific recommendations are carried out appropriately. In addition, the resolved allegations are summarized in EPA’s scientific integrity annual report and on the internet in a way that protects the identity of the parties involved.

