HOWARD UNIVERSITY

STUDENTS' RESEARCH GUIDE

The Office of Regulatory Research Compliance (ORRC) and The Graduate School

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Ownership: Jointly owned and issued by Howard University (HU), the Office of Regulatory Research Compliance, and the Graduate School.

Applicability: The Policy applies to Howard University Graduate Students Approaching Candidacy and submitting research applications **IRB** (human subjects), **IBC** (biosafety/biological hazards), and **IACUC** (animal research) - Regulated Research, as well as related **MTA** (material transfer agreement).

What is excluded: Scenarios where a student acts as a Research Support Staff (e.g., research assistant/study coordinator) are excluded from the dissertation requirement.

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Review Cycle: Every 3 Years

1.0 Purpose

This Guide provides structured guidance for graduate students preparing for candidacy, with particular emphasis on the ethical, regulatory, and intellectual property responsibilities associated with research in human subjects (IRB), biosafety (IBC), animal studies (IACUC), export control in research, and material transfer agreement (MTA) of research material across institutions, organizations, or internationally. This document underscores the landscape of student research, articulates the essential roles and responsibilities of mentors, and outlines key guidelines within academic settings. It clarifies roles, ownership of work, and conditions for research independence within a mentored environment. This Guide is subordinate to any existing or future university-wide policy, as well as to the ORRC and/or Graduate School policies.

2.0 Scope

This Guide applies to all doctoral students conducting or planning to conduct research that requires oversight from any of the following compliance bodies:

2.1 Institutional Review Board (IRB) for human subjects.

2.2 Institutional Biosafety Committee (IBC) research involving biological hazards or recombinant DNA.

2.3 Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC) for research involving animals.

2.4 Material Transfer Agreement (MTA) is a critical legal document used in academic research settings to govern the transfer of tangible research materials such as cell lines, plasmids, compounds, or biological samples between institutions.

2.5 Export Control in Research is a set of Federal laws and regulations that govern how certain information, technologies, and commodities are shared, especially with foreign nationals or entities outside the U.S.

2.6 Definitions for Study Personnel

2.6.1 Principal Investigator: Is the personnel responsible for the management and oversight of the study and science, and therefore, is held accountable to the study sponsor, and collaborating institutions for reporting progress, personnel training, and maintaining regulatory compliance.

2.6.2 Study Contact: This is typically the study's PI and primary Study Coordinator or research Associate. A Study Contact will be the recipient of all iRIS and ORRC communications. More than one study personnel may be selected as the Study Contact if necessary.

2.6.3 Co-Investigator: A Co-Principal Investigator (Co-PI) is a senior member of the research team who shares administrative, fiscal, and scientific responsibilities with the Principal Investigator (PI) on research projects. This person can also be a study contact on the Electronic Compliance Platform (e.g., iRIS).

2.6.4 Senior Research Associate: Any personnel tasked with the management of the collection, processing, analysis, and interpretation of data collected for this study. This may also include designing methodology and training research staff.

2.6.5 Research Associate: Any personnel involved in the collection, processing, analysis, and interpretation of data collected for this study. This also includes performing experiments, conducting a literature review, and reporting results. Traditionally, this role is reserved for personnel in research training, such as students and postgraduates.

2.6.6 Study Coordinator: Any personnel who is responsible for overseeing the daily operations of a study and ensuring maintenance of compliance with protocols and regulatory requirements. For example, daily operations on a

clinical trial include ensuring the study is conducted in compliance with Good Clinical Practice Standards, recruiting and consenting study participants, managing regulatory documents and data, working with the PI to respond to the sponsor's queries, and communicating with relevant study stakeholders.

2.6.7 Research Assistant: Any personnel that is part of the study group and work with the research group to assist investigators with the daily research tasks. This person may also assist with data collection, processing, analysis, and interpretation for this study.

2.6.8 Laboratory Technician: A professional role for any personnel who is involved in performing sample collection and preparation, analysis of samples, recording data, and maintaining laboratory records and equipment.

2.6.9 Student Investigator: This role is reserved for students pursuing their thesis/dissertation. If this is selected, the ORRC and applicable regulatory committee will consider that the protocol being reviewed is for thesis/dissertation purposes.

2.6.10 Faculty Advisor: The faculty member who is directly supervising a Student Investigator's thesis/dissertation. This must be a Howard University Faculty member for a Howard University student's thesis/dissertation.

2.6.11 Department Administrator: The Chair/Dean/other applicable person of authority that directly supervises the activities of the PI of the study.

It applies specifically to students nearing or entering candidacy status, regardless of whether their work is conducted on-site, off-site, externally funded, or as part of a research assistantship.

3.0 Joint Oversight & Governance

This Guide is governed by:

3.1 The Office of Research Compliance, which ensures regulatory adherence to federal, state, and institutional research policies (IRB, IBC, IACUC), Federal, State/Local Regulations, and applicable Tribal Laws.

3.2 The Graduate School, which oversees the spectrum of academic progress and dissertation milestones.

Students must comply with the rules and policies of both offices to remain in good standing.

4.0 Students' Research

Student research is a cornerstone of academic life, embodying both the spirit of inquiry and the commitment to intellectual advancement that distinguish higher education. Research initiatives empower students to explore new ideas, tackle complex problems, and advance knowledge in their chosen fields. It spans an array of disciplines (e.g., natural sciences, engineering, and technology, to the humanities and social sciences). HU undergraduate and graduate students are encouraged to participate in research, not only to deepen their understanding of academic material but also as a vehicle for personal growth, career development, and societal contribution.

4.1 Research conducted by HU students can take various forms:

4.1. **Original research projects**: Students design and execute studies aimed at discovering new information or testing hypotheses.

4.2. **Collaborative research:** Students contribute to larger research teams, often led by faculty or external partners.

4.3. **Literature reviews and meta-analyses**: The Students synthesize existing research to identify trends, gaps, and future directions.

4.4. **Applied research and creative endeavors:** In fields such as art, design, and creative writing, students produce original works that extend the boundaries of their disciplines.

By supporting student research, HU fosters a dynamic environment where curiosity is encouraged, expertise is developed, and lifelong learning is sustained. To maximize the value and integrity of student research, the University set forth guidelines to ensure ethical conduct, transparency, and academic rigor. These principles protect the interests of all parties involved and safeguard the quality of intellectual activity on campus.

4.2 Ethical Conduct and Integrity

Students must adhere to ethical standards throughout the research process. This includes:

- Obtaining appropriate ORRC committee approval, e.g., informed consent from participants, when applicable, respecting privacy and confidentiality.
- Avoiding plagiarism and ensuring proper citation of sources
- Reporting data honestly, whether results are positive, negative, or inconclusive.
- Following protocols for the humane treatment of animals and the responsible use of sensitive materials.

For this reason, the University/ORRC provides training in research ethics (RCR and CITI). It requires students to seek approval from IRB/IBC/IACUC/Exclusion before commencing studies involving human subjects, animals, potentially hazardous procedures, and other intellectual/research endeavors.

4.3 Planning, Documentation, and Transparency

Thorough planning and documentation are vital. Students should:

- Define clear research objectives and hypotheses.
- Maintain organized records of data collection and analysis.
- Share methodologies and results openly with mentors and research teams.
- Disclose any conflicts of interest that may affect the research process (research proposals, progress reports, and final presentations) should be prepared in accordance with campus guidelines and departmental requirements.

4.4 Collaboration and Communication

Successful student research often relies on effective collaboration, both within and outside the academic community. Students should:

- Engage regularly with mentors and team members, seeking feedback and guidance.
- Attribute contributions appropriately in publications and presentations
- Foster an inclusive atmosphere that welcomes diverse perspectives and approaches.

4.5 Dissemination and Impact

HU Students are encouraged to share their research findings through conferences, journals, campus symposia, and community outreach. Dissemination not only advances the field but also fulfills the university's educational mission.

5.0 Mentors as Enablers of Intellectual Growth:

Mentorship is a fundamental element of student research that shapes their academic and personal trajectories. Research mentors are typically faculty members or researchers who guide, support, and evaluate student work while fostering their independent thinking. Notwithstanding this, on occasion the ORRC receives inadequately prepared student submissions, indicating a lack of, or suboptimal, mentor input, resulting in multiple resubmissions and delays in approval. Thus, we recommend that students not wait until their dissertation is fully developed before sharing it with their mentors. Instead, their

mentors should be involved and read each section of the dissertation as it is developed, beginning with the conception of the study idea and specific aims, and continuing through the conclusions and future directions. It should be noted that the mentor's role goes beyond enabling the submission of the dissertation documents, but often includes:

5.1 Providing guidance and expertise by helping students articulate research questions, refine methodologies, and troubleshoot obstacles. They offer discipline-specific expertise, directing students to relevant literature, resources, and techniques.

5.2 Fostering intellectual growth and independence, not by dictating every step, but by encouraging students to be intellectually immersed in their projects, make informed decisions, and develop critical thinking skills. This approach cultivates resilience, creativity, and self-confidence.

5.3 Ensuring ethical and professional standards, bearing responsibility for ensuring that student work adheres to ethical guidelines and professional codes of conduct. They model integrity and advocate for the best practices in data management, analysis, and publication.

5.4 Supporting career development by actively assisting students in setting and achieving career goals, providing advice on graduate studies, internships, job searches, and networking opportunities. Often, they write letters of recommendation, connect students with professional organizations, and facilitate publication or presentation of research.

5.5 Advocating and empowering by defending the interests of their mentees, especially in matters of intellectual property, authorship, and recognition. They are encouraged to empower students to negotiate roles and responsibilities within larger research teams, ensuring that individual contributions are valued.

6.0 Dissertation

A dissertation is an original, substantial piece of scholarly research that contributes new knowledge, insight, or understanding to a specific academic field. It is the central requirement for receiving a doctoral degree. Key characteristics of a dissertation include originality, but more specifically, often include:

- Identifying a gap in current knowledge and filling it with new findings.
- Demonstrating ability to conduct independent research.
- Comprehensive literature review and critical analysis.
- Scholarly rigor predicated on a strict methodology.

- Public contribution through publication and/or made available through the university's repository or ProQuest.
- Reproducibility and transparency.
- Culmination of the student's academic training and demonstrates mastery over the applicable discipline.
- **Importantly**, ***as delineated by the HU Graduate School***

7.0 Candidacy & Registration Requirements

Candidacy connotes completion of the Graduate School-defined milestones, indicating that the student is ready to begin the final phase of their degree: conducting original research and writing a dissertation or thesis. Thus, the student must adhere optimally to the HU Graduate School Handbook/University Policy. For example:

7.1 Students must be:

7.1.1 Registered during the semester in which they:

- Enter **candidacy**
- Seek **dissertation research approval**

7.1.2 Must have completed the mandatory face-to-face Responsible Conduct of Research (RCR) Workshop

7.1.3 Must have completed the applicable CITI training (depending on the type of research) and must remain valid.

7.1.4 Suggested timelines for IRB/IBC/IACUC submissions depending on Candidacy Term:

- **Summer Term:**
  - Submit IRB/IBC/IACUC application: 2nd week in April
  - Submit Candidacy App: 2nd Monday in July
- **Fall Term:**
  - Submit IRB/IBC/IACUC application: last Monday in August
  - Submit Candidacy App: Last Monday in November
- **Spring Term:**
  - Submit IRB/IBC/IACUC application: last Monday in January
  - Submit Candidacy App: Last Monday in April

7.1.5 Work completed outside of registered semesters may count only as preparatory work (e.g., literature review, protocol development), not as part of the official dissertation.

7.1.6 Work performed as a Research Assistant (RA) supports the mentor's laboratory research, not the student's dissertation, unless formally approved and aligned with dissertation aims.

8.0 Application Submission and Routing:

At this moment and for the foreseeable future, the ORRC utilizes an Electronic Compliance Platform (iRIS) to process, track, and communicate on protocols submitted to the ORRC for review. Furthermore, the committee members review the applications in iRIS. Therefore,

8.1 Once enrolled at the University, all graduate students must apply for an iRIS (Electronic Compliance Platform) account by completing the form on the ORRC website.

8.2 All applications, revisions, attachments, and protocol-related communications must occur through iRIS.

8.3 Student initiating dissertation-related protocols should select the "Student Investigator" option in iRIS.

8.4 Then, the student routes the submission for sign-off, first to the mentor (as PI), the Department Chair, Associate Dean for Research/Dean/Graduate School Dean, as applicable.

9.0 Role of the Student

The student must understand and adhere to the University, ORRC, and, most importantly, **the Graduate School's** policies to expedite the routing, signing, reviewing, and approval of submitted protocols to the ORRC. To this end,

9.1 The student is an Investigator, but not the Principal Investigator (PI) on regulatory protocols.

9.2 The faculty mentor (or another qualified faculty member) must serve as PI for IRB, IBC, and IACUC submissions or other research/intellectual endeavors.

9.3 Ideally, the dissertation aim(s) is:

- Scientifically distinct (the aims and hypothesis) from the mentor's core project.
- Premised on the broader work of the laboratory
- Designed to promote scientific independence and satisfy dissertation requirements

10.0 Compliance Requirements by Research Type

10.1 Human Subjects (IRB)

10.1.1 Human Subject Research: Is any systematic investigation that involves living individuals from whom a researcher obtains data through intervention or interaction, or collects identifiable private information, to generate generalizable knowledge.

10.1.2 Human Subject: Is a living individual about whom information is collected

- **Research:** A systematic investigation, including research development, testing, and evaluation.
- **Intervention:** Physical procedures (e.g., blood drawings) or environmental manipulations.
- **Interaction**: Communication between researcher and subject (e.g., surveys, interviews).
- **Identifiable Private Information:** Personal data that can be linked to the individual (e.g. medical records).

10.1.3 All dissertation projects involving human subjects must:

- Be submitted to the IRB with the faculty mentor as Principal Investigator (PI).
- List the student as an "**Investigator**".
- Include clearly defined student aims.
- Be approved before recruitment or data collection begins.
- Complete the applicable CITI training.

10.2 Biosafety (IBC)

Institutional biosafety-related research refers to scientific studies or experiments involving biological materials, particularly those that could pose a risk to human health, animals, or the environment, and that are overseen by an Institutional Biosafety Committee (IBC) to ensure safety and regulatory compliance. This type of research includes work with:

10.2.1 Recombinant or synthetic nucleic acid molecules (e.g., gene editing like CRISPR).

10.2.2 Genetically modified organisms (GMOs).

10.2.3 Pathogenic microorganisms (bacteria, viruses, fungi).

10.2.4 Biological toxins.

10.2.5 Human or animal tissues, fluids, or cells that may contain infectious agents.

10.2.6 Any use of recombinant DNA, biohazardous agents, or other IBC-regulated materials must:

- Be described in an IBC-approved protocol under the PI's name
- Include a student-specific description of materials and procedures
- Follow all lab safety training and institutional biosafety procedures
- Complete the applicable CITI training

10.3 Animal Research (IACUC)

10.3.1 IACUC-related research refers to **scientific studies involving vertebrate animals** that are reviewed and overseen by an **Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC)** to ensure ethical and humane treatment of animals in accordance with federal laws and guidelines. It is a federally mandated oversight body in the United States (under the **Animal Welfare Act** and **Public Health Service Policy**) that:

- Review all research involving **live vertebrate animals.**
- Ensure compliance with ethical standards and animal welfare regulations.
- Evaluate research protocols for humane treatment, appropriate use, and minimization of pain or distress.
- Inspect animal research facilities.
- Monitors ongoing animal studies.

10.3.2 Dissertation projects involving animals must:

- Be part of an IACUC-approved protocol under the mentor or the applicable laboratory's PI.
- Clearly indicate whether:
  - The student's use of animals is within the scope of the existing protocol, though with distinctively different aims/hypotheses, or
  - The student's work requires an amendment or new protocol due to:
    1. Different species
    2. Different procedures
    3. Differences in the number of animals
- The **number of animals** used by the student may or may not be the same as that of the parent protocol, but must be explicitly approved by the IACUC.
- Complete the applicable CITI training.

10.4 Material Transfer Agreement (MTA)

A Material Transfer Agreement (MTA) is a critical legal document used at Howard University, as in many academic medical centers, to govern the transfer of tangible research materials, such as cell lines, plasmids, compounds, or biological samples,

between institutions. The MTA serves to protect the intellectual property and proprietary rights of the providing institution while ensuring that the materials are used solely for non-commercial, scholarly research. It establishes clear terms regarding the scope of use, publication rights, confidentiality, and ownership of any discoveries or data arising from the research. By formalizing these conditions, the MTA promotes responsible collaboration between academic institutions, facilitates compliance with funding agency and institutional policies, and safeguards both scientific integrity and legal interests.

- Applications to receive or transfer materials across institutions, organizations, or internationally must be submitted through iRIS and then SCOUT (after ORRC review).
- Reviewed by the Office of General Counsel (OGC) for legal sufficiency
- Signed off by the University's designated signatory authority before initiating or receiving the materials.

Transfer of the materials must not occur until this approval is obtained.
This approval does NOT mean the applicable research can begin. Rather, related research can only start after separate approval from the appropriate ORRC committee is obtained.

10.5 Export Control

Whereas most student research may fall under the "Fundamental Research Exemption", students should be aware of export control requirements.

Export control refers to federal laws and regulations that govern how certain information, technologies, and commodities are shared, especially with foreign nationals or entities outside the U.S. These laws are primarily enforced through:

- International Traffic in Arms Regulations (ITAR)
- Export Administration Regulations (EAR)
- Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) regulations

The law aims to protect national security and economic interests, and to prevent the spread of dual-use technologies (with both civilian and military applications). Being aware of export control is not just a bureaucratic step. It's part of being a responsible scholar and citizen. Because a dissertation is both a personal milestone and a public contribution to global knowledge, navigating these responsibilities thoughtfully will help avoid legal pitfalls and uphold the integrity of academic work. Thus, if a dissertation contains export-controlled information, the student may need to**:**

- Withhold public access temporarily.

- Remove sensitive sections.
- Submit a redacted version for archiving.
    - Work with the Office of Regulatory Research Compliance.

For example, research involving advanced technologies (such as aerospace, encryption, nuclear engineering, and artificial intelligence) might be subject to export control regulations, even when conducted in a civilian academic setting. Sharing controlled information, even via email, Zoom, or discussions, could be considered a "deemed export" (as if it had physically left the U.S.). Therefore, if the research involves international activities, such as transporting, receiving, or sharing materials that constitute a "deemed export" with a foreign person, the student investigator must **complete the CITI export control training**, provide the **required disclosures, and consult with** the HU ORRC for additional guidance.

11.0 Funding, Supervision, and External Research

11.1 Student Funded Research:

In certain situations, students may seek external or institutional awards to help offset the costs of their dissertations. This is highly encouraged as it initiates the process of training in seeking external funding. However, it should be noted that these awards are often predicated on supervision by a more experienced faculty member, given that they are training-related.

- Externally funded student research (e.g., NIH/NSF fellowships) must still be supervised by a faculty mentor as PI.
- Follow all sponsors and HU-mandated ethical, legal, and institutional standards.

11.2 Students' Conducting Dissertation-Related Research Off-Site:

Howard University graduate students conducting dissertation research off-site must follow compliance protocols to meet ethical, legal, and HU standards. Below, we outline key areas of responsibility:

11.2.1 Obtain Compliance Approval from The Off-site Institution and HU: Including IRB, IACUC, and IBC.

11.2.2 Site Authorization and Agreements: A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), Letter of Authorization, or Site Agreement may be required from the off-site organization detailing permitted activities, access to resources, liability, and IP rights.

11.2.3 MTA: If tangible research materials or data are exchanged, a Material Transfer Agreement (MTA) or Data Use Agreement (DUA) may also be needed.

11.2.4 Training and Certifications: Regardless of the site of research, HU Graduate Students conducting research for their dissertation must complete the

required compliance training through CITI (Responsible Conduct of Research (RCR), Human Subjects Protection, HIPAA (if working with identifiable health data), Biosafety or lab safety training, Animal Research, COI, and Data Security and Confidentiality.

11.2.5 Data Storage: Students must follow the HU and off-site policies regarding data storage, encryption, and transmission, especially for sensitive or identifiable data. Secure storage of notebooks, files, and devices must be maintained at the off-site location, and follow the parent study data sharing policy.

11.2.6 Intellectual Property (IP) and Publications: Clarify IP rights in advance, particularly if the off-site organization has a commercial interest or provides proprietary resources. The students' HU mentor may consult with the HU Office of Technology Transfer to determine whether the study's findings can be commercialized.

11.2.7 Authorship: Consider that joint publication or authorship agreements may need to be negotiated between institutions.

11.2.8 Reporting and Oversight: The student should maintain regular communication with their dissertation advisor and graduate program to report progress and compliance.

11.2.9 Travel and Insurance: Ensure proper registration with the HU travel office (if applicable), especially if out of town or international, and confirm liability, health, or travel insurance coverage while off-site.

11.2.10 For International Sites: HU students conducting research internationally must comply with export control laws, visa requirements, and foreign engagement disclosures may also apply.

Summary*: HU Graduate students conducting off-site research must proactively engage with the ORRC, Office of Research (OoR) (as needed), and OGC as necessary. Early planning, documentation, and clear communication with all parties (students, advisors, host sites, ORRC, OGC, and OoR (if funded) are essential to ensure ethical and compliant research practices*.

12.0 Intellectual Property and Lab Protocol Ownership

One of the most important areas of contention in science is ownership of intellectual property. Thus, each laboratory must discuss this with the student once engaged to ensure understanding and ownership of the work that occurs in the laboratory. A one-page signed document detailing understanding is recommended.

12.1 Intellectual property (IP) created as part of the student's research is owned by the institution and/or the laboratory.

12.2 Students may not claim ownership of:

- General work/protocols in the laboratory

- PI/entire laboratory team-generated datasets or proprietary tools
- PI laboratory-derived intellectual property

12.3 Labs must develop a clear, written policy, communicated before candidacy, stating:

- What materials, data, or figures a student may take upon graduation
- Whether and how any derivative works may be used in future research

12.4 Students must obtain written authorization from the PI for any use of unpublished data or internal protocols.

The above guidance may not supersede other related University-wide policies on intellectual property/ownership.

13.0 Publication and Authorship Requirements

Another frequent source of disagreement in a lab is the ranking of publications and authorship. Note that the ORRC often receives related complaints that, in some cases, may meet the threshold for academic integrity. However, this may not be specifically covered under the University's Research Misconduct policy. Therefore, to avoid misunderstanding and prevent problems and accusations down the road, it is recommended that each laboratory develop a written document on publication and authorship ranking, to ensure:

13.1 **Clarity and transparency –** Avoid misunderstandings about who qualifies for authorship and in what order.

13.2 **Fair recognition**: Ensures that contributors are credited appropriately for their work.

13.3 **Ethical compliance:** Aligns with academic and journal standards for responsible authorship.

13.4 **Conflict prevention:** Reduces disputes and tensions among lab members.

13.5 **Mentorship and training**: Educates junior researchers on proper publication practices.

13.6 **Institutional accountability:** Demonstrates adherence to research integrity guidelines.

Having a clear policy protects both the lab's reputation and its members' professional development. A simple form predicated on the professional journal requirement and the lab's specific circumstance will suffice.

14.0 Dissertation Submission and Public Access

14.1 Submitting a dissertation to ProQuest is a common academic requirement and serves several important purposes. It ensures that the dissertation is preserved, accessible, and professionally archived, helping fulfill institutional requirements and enhancing the reach of the student's scholarly work. Specifically, it enables:

- Long-Term Archiving
- Ensure the student's work is permanently preserved in a trusted digital archive.
- Ensure wider Accessibility & Dissemination
- Make the research discoverable worldwide through ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global, used by libraries, scholars, and institutions.
- Indexing in Major Databases
- Enables the dissertation to be indexed by services like Google Scholar, increasing visibility and citations.
- Create an official, citable record of the student's doctoral work.
- HU requires submission to ProQuest as part of the doctoral degree conferral process.
- Copyright & Publishing Options: Offers copyright registration and embargo options (to delay public access if needed for future publication or patenting).

14.2 Students must:

- Inform the laboratory PI and mentor before submission
- Remove or embargo any proprietary or unpublished materials
- Work with the HU Office of Technology Transfer if there are pending patents or IP filings

14.3 **Faculty**:

- Should consider discussing the issue with students in their lab early on in the process.

15.0 Research Integrity and Misconduct

15.1 Students must:

- Adhere to institutional standards of the Responsible Conduct of Research (RCR), as well as applicable Federal, State/Local regulations, and Tribal laws.

- Not initiate any research of their own without the appropriate IRB/IBC/IACUC's approval.
- Operate within the confines of approved research and must not initiate or change their research aims or procedures without the ORRC committee's approval.

15.2 Misuse of data, unauthorized use of lab materials, or failure to obtain proper compliance approvals may constitute research misconduct and could result in:

- Delayed graduation
- Revocation of IRB/IACUC/IBC approval
- Disciplinary action by the Graduate School

16.0 Laboratory Exit and Transition Guidance

Students and faculty at HU should recognize that discussion and an item checklist are critical before students depart their laboratories. This helps clarify students' experiences, assess whether expectations are met, and use the material as a quality control measure to inform future student-mentor interactions, safety, and overall quality improvement in the laboratory. It reinforces the idea that once a mentor, always a mentor. The mentee-mentor relationship does not end when the student leaves a laboratory; rather, it is a lifelong endeavor. It opens the door to continuous collaboration and dialogues, including life issues that may not be strictly academic.

- Before graduation or departure, students must:
  - Conduct a formal exit meeting with their laboratory PI
  - Return all PI data, materials, and laboratory equipment
  - Confirm in writing what (if any) data, protocols, or materials they are authorized to retain and exit with
- Students leaving without following the lab/IP policy may lose the right to publish or use lab-related content

17.0 Supports and Points of Contact

Area	Contact
IRB / IBC / IACUC Questions	Office of Regulatory Research Compliance
Candidacy & Academic Policies	Howard University Graduate School
IP, Embargoes, Publication Rights	Office of Technology Transfer

Funding Requirements	Graduate Program or Sponsored Research Office

18.0 References

- Graduate School Handbook
- Institutional-wide research policy
- IRB, IBC, IACUC Submission Guidelines/Policies/SOPs
- NIH/NSF Graduate Research Fellowship Program Policies
- ProQuest Dissertation Submission and Embargo Policy

Institutional IP and Data Ownership Policy