

Policy for Minors and Volunteers in Laboratories

Overview

Over the past several years, the university has initiated a number of scholarly programs that invite high school students to work in laboratories to stimulate their interest in science. However, there currently is no University Policy to address minors and volunteers that work in laboratories, the application and approval process, the work activity review, as well as the information collected from these individuals, which vary by department and principal investigator. The objective of this policy is to provide uniform guidance to support the university's commitment to scholarly programs in research laboratories while also protecting the participants and the principal investigators that sponsor these programs.

Definitions

Minor – any individual under 18 years of age. This applies whether or not the individuals are paid for their work.

Volunteer – any individual that does not receive payment for work activities performed in a laboratory.

Process

Under this policy, faculty and their designated staff members shall follow this process for minors and volunteers that work in their labs.

1. The principal investigator must notify the department chair of the program utilizing minors or volunteers that will be working in their lab.
2. Prospective minors and volunteers must complete an application that provides appropriate individual information (address, phone, etc), emergency contact information, as well as any medical concerns.
3. All applicants must complete the Risk Management waiver forms and provide proof of medical coverage.
4. Departments must ensure compliance with applicable labor laws for all minors.
5. The minor or volunteer must attend training appropriate for the work activities they perform or that may be performed by others in their assigned laboratory.
6. Personal protective equipment shall be provided by the department and worn by the minor or volunteer as directed by the laboratory principal investigator and requirements specified in the chemical hygiene plan for the work activities performed by that individual.
7. Minors shall not be permitted to work unsupervised in the lab.
8. Minors shall be prohibited from the following work activities:
 - a. Handle or manipulate organisms at Biological Safety Level 2 or higher
 - b. Operate or work in laboratories with hazard class 3b or 4 open beam lasers
 - c. Handle or manipulate Select Agents
 - d. Handle or manipulate radioactive materials or ionizing radiation sources
 - e. Handle or manipulate Particularly Hazardous Substance (PHS) without prior approval from the department chair and REHS.
 - f. Perform research activities with laboratory animals

Responsibilities

An effective policy identifies the individuals and units that participate in the process and highlights their respective responsibilities. The following individuals and administrative units share responsibility for the participation in and implementation of this policy for minors and volunteers that work in laboratories.

1. Minors and Volunteers

Observe all safety requirements for the work activity you are performing. This includes, but is not limited to:

- Attending required safety training [Right-to-Know, Chemical Hygiene, etc] for the work activities you perform, as well as others in your work area(s).
- Review and know the hazards associated with the substances and equipment you use to conduct your work activities, as well as others in your work area(s).
- Perform your work according to manufacturer instructions, material safety data sheets (MSDS), training, and the Chemical Hygiene Plan.
- Wear personal protective equipment as provided by the department.
- Immediately report all spills, concerns, or exposures to your supervisor, the principal investigator, and REHS.

2. Principal Investigators and Supervisors

- Ensure employees know and follow the manufacturer instructions, material safety data sheets (MSDS), training, and the Chemical Hygiene Plan requirements for their work activities.
- Ensure employees attend the required safety training and wear appropriate personal protective equipment for their work activities.

3. REHS

- Provide training appropriate for the work activities performed in the lab.
- Upon request, assess the control measures and personal protective equipment used for the work activities performed

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