5. Scholarship and Research

The following is information regarding authorship and data that graduate students may collect during their research. (For Responsible Conduct of Research training, visit http://myresearch.wsu.edu).

a. Authorship

The Office of Research Guidelines for Authorship Determination can be found at https://research.wsu.edu/office-research/policies/authorship/.

b. Data Ownership

In general, all data collected at WSU is the property of WSU. It is useful to distinguish between grants and contracts. Data collected with grant funds remains under the control of WSU. Contracts typically require the researcher to deliver a product or service to the government or industry sponsor, and the product or service is then owned and controlled by the sponsor (government or industry). WSU and principal investigators have responsibilities and obligations regarding research funds and data collection.

i. Before data is collected, the principal investigator (PI) and project personnel must clearly understand who owns the data, who has the right to publish, and what requirements or obligations are imposed on the researcher or WSU.

ii. Whenever a graduate student or postdoc leaves the lab, a similar agreement will be negotiated between the PI and the graduate student or postdoc.

iii. Collaborative research agreements regarding data ownership and use must be agreed to in writing prior to the collection of the data. In general, each member of the team should have continued access to the data/materials (unless a prior agreement was negotiated).

c. Data Collection

Data collection must be well-organized and detailed. The laboratory notebook (bound sequentially numbered pages, with signatures and dates) is often key to keeping daily records. Detailed records help establish good work practices, provide a history of students’ ideas, avoid fraud or misconduct charges, defend patents, and provide a valuable resource for a student’s own work.

d. Data Storage and Protection

Once data has been collected it must be stored and protected to be of future use. Data storage must be done in such a way that results and conclusions can be clearly discerned from the data and materials that have been archived. The data and materials must be protected so that research findings can be confirmed or reanalyzed by others. If data and materials are not properly stored and protected, it could significantly reduce the value of the research (or even render the research worthless).