

# Ethics in Research, Scholarship, and Creative Work

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**Revised:** August 29, 2012

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**A&M Commerce Rule:** 15.99.03.R1

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**Next Scheduled Review:** October 8, 2020

**Responsible University Office:**

Office of Research and Sponsored Programs

**Responsible University Administrator:**

Vice Provost for Research and Dean of Graduate Studies

One major responsibility of a university is to create and maintain an environment that promotes research, scholarship, and creative work. The credibility and long-term reputation of the university community depends on the encouragement, enforcement, and reward of superior ethical standards. The soundness of academic research, scholarship, and creative work depends on the integrity with which it is designed, conducted, documented, and communicated. Achieving high ethical standards should transcend considerations of finance, personal gain, and short-term individual and institutional recognition.

A&M-Commerce requires all members of the university community to conduct research, scholarship, and creative work under the highest standards of honesty and integrity; and that they will properly and thoroughly document all data, primary sources, procedures, and findings. This is true for both non-sponsored and sponsored activities, regardless of funding source.

Any allegations of misconduct in research, scholarship, or creative work should be reported in writing to the vice provost for research and dean of graduate studies. Reasonable steps will be taken to protect complainants who make allegations of misconduct in good faith.

Upon receipt of a written allegation of misconduct in research, scholarship, or creative work, the vice provost for research and dean of graduate studies may initiate an informal fact finding inquiry into the alleged misconduct. If the inquiry provides sufficient basis for conducting an investigation, he or she will appoint a committee that will conduct the formal investigation. If the conclusion of an investigation is that the respondent did commit misconduct, and the sanction(s) is less than termination or expulsion, the decision of the CEO or designee is final. If the CEO or designee chooses to terminate the employment of the respondent, the respondent may appeal through the university's grievance and appeal process. If the conclusion is that the respondent did not commit misconduct, the university will develop a reasonable plan to restore the respondent's reputation and research capabilities.

See System Regulation [15.99.03](#) for more information on evaluating allegations of misconduct; and procedures and timeline for inquiry, investigation, and adjudication.

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## **Authorship Guidelines**

Engaging in collaborative research, scholarship, and creative work with colleagues; mentoring student scholars and researchers; and directing dissertations and theses are important activities in academic life. However, making equitable and ethical decisions about order of authorship can be a recurring challenge.

Authorship is an explicit way of assigning responsibility in a project and giving credit for intellectual work. Authorship practices should be judged by how honestly they reflect actual contribution to the final project. Authorship is important to the reputation, academic promotion, and grant support of the individuals involved as well as to the strength and reputation of their institution(s). Professional organizations, peer-reviewed journals, and universities have established standards and guidelines for determining order of authorship.