

## STANDARD ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURE

### 15.99.03.M1.06 Guidelines for Gathering, Storage, and Retention of Data and Results

*Approved June 14, 1999*

*Supplements [System Regulation 15.99.03](#)  
and [University Rule 15.99.03.M1](#)*

#### 1. GATHERING, STORAGE, AND RETENTION OF DATA AND RESULTS

A common denominator in most cases of alleged misconduct in research or scholarship has been the absence of a complete set of verifiable data. The retention of accurately recorded and retrievable results is of utmost importance for the progress of inquiry. A principal investigator must have access to his/her original results in order to respond to questions including, but not limited to, those that may arise without any implication of impropriety. Moreover, errors may be mistaken for misconduct when the primary experimental results are unavailable.

#### 2. CUSTODY OF PRIMARY DATA

Custody of all original primary research data must be retained by the department or laboratory in which they are generated.

#### 3. RECORD OF RESULTS

Original experimental results should be recorded, when possible, in bound books with numbered pages. An index shall be maintained to facilitate access to data.

3.1 An index of electronic data files should be maintained with the record of results. A reserve copy of electronic data files should be maintained in a secure location.

3.2 Primary data should remain in the department or laboratory at all times and should be preserved as long as there is any reasonable need to refer to them. The principal investigator for the project must decide whether to preserve such primary data for longer than the prescribed minimum of three years (refer to [Texas A&M University System Regulation 61.99.01](#), the Records Retention Schedule). In no instance, however, shall primary data be destroyed while investigators, colleagues, or readers of published results may raise questions answerable only by reference to such data.

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