

Census Bureau Scientific Integrity Policy

Table of Contents

BACKGROUND	2
PURPOSE	2
SCOPE	3
SCIENTIFIC INTEGRITY PRINCIPLES AND BEST PRACTICES.....	3
POLICY	5
PROCEDURES	11
ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES	12
MONITORING AND EVALUATION OF ACTIVITIES AND OUTCOMES	14
SCIENTIFIC INTEGRITY POLICY INTERSECTIONS WITH RELATED AND SUPPORTING POLICIES.....	15
LEGAL AUTHORITIES	16
DEFINITIONS	17
EFFECTIVE DATE.....	19
POLICY OWNER.....	19
SIGNATURE	19

BACKGROUND

Scientific and technological information, data, and evidence are central to the development and iterative improvement of sound policies, and to the delivery of equitable services and programs, across every area of the government. The 2022 National Science Technology Council (NSTC) Report of the Scientific Integrity Fast-Track Action Committee (SI-FTAC) (2021 Task Force), *Protecting the Integrity of Government Science*,¹ found that strong scientific integrity policies and practices bolster the ability of Federal agencies to protect government science.

The Task Force Report summarizes foundational Executive branch actions on scientific integrity, including the 2009 Presidential Memorandum,² the 2010 OSTP Memorandum,³ and the 2021 Presidential Memorandum.⁴ The requirements of this policy are derived from these foundational actions, the collective experience of Federal agencies, and the informed engagement of stakeholders both inside and outside of government.

PURPOSE

This document is the Census Bureau's scientific integrity policy. The purpose of this policy is to provide guidance to enhance and promote a continuing culture of scientific integrity. This policy aims to ensure the integrity of all aspects of scientific activities including proposing, conducting, reviewing, managing, communicating about science and scientific activities, and using the results of science. This policy establishes the expectations and procedures required to maintain scientific integrity at the U.S. Census Bureau.

This policy will:

- a. Guard against inappropriate influence in documenting or reporting scientific findings, and guard against fabrication, falsification, and plagiarism of science or in scientific activities;
- b. Establish principles and policy requirements of scientific integrity;
- c. Provide for compliance training and maintenance of a Bureau-wide, public-facing Scientific Integrity website; and
- d. Establish how procedures will be set and implemented for resolving allegations of scientific misconduct and the consequences for violations of this policy.

¹ Report by the Scientific Integrity Fast-Track Action Committee of the National Science and Technology Council. "Protecting the Integrity of Government Science." January 11, 2022. Available at <https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/01-22-Protecting-the-Integrity-of-Government-Science.pdf>.

² Presidential Memorandum for the Heads of Executive Departments and Agencies on Scientific Integrity. March 9, 2009. The White House. Available at <https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/the-press-office/memorandum-heads-executive-departments-and-agencies-3-9-09>.

³ Memorandum for the Heads of Executive Departments and Agencies on Scientific Integrity. December 17, 2010. Office of Science and Technology Policy. Available at <https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/sites/default/files/microsites/ostp/scientific-integrity-memo-12172010.pdf>.

⁴ Presidential Memorandum on Restoring Trust in Government Through Scientific Integrity and Evidence-Based Policy Making. January 27, 2021. Available at <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/presidential-actions/2021/01/27/memorandum-on-restoring-trust-in-government-through-scientific-integrity-and-evidence-based-policy-making/>.

SCOPE

Throughout this policy, the use of the terms “science” or “scientific” should be read to include “statistics” or “statistical.”

The Census Bureau adopts the official definition of scientific integrity established by the National Science and Technology Council 2022 Scientific Integrity Framework Interagency Working Group and the 2021 SI-FTAC:

Scientific integrity is the adherence to professional practices, ethical behavior, and the principles of honesty and objectivity when conducting, managing, using the results of, and communicating about science and scientific activities. Inclusivity, transparency, and protection from inappropriate influence are hallmarks of scientific integrity.⁵

The individuals covered by this policy are all Census Bureau Federal employees and associates engaged in scientific or statistical activities at or for the Census Bureau. Federal employees include political appointees and detailees from other federal agencies. Associates include contractors, individuals on Intergovernmental Personnel Agreements, research partners, and individuals with special sworn status⁶. Associates have responsibility to abide by the principles outlined in this policy and as specified in contracts, awards, or written agreements.

Scientific integrity concerns will be addressed according to this Census Bureau policy, unless the scientific integrity concern cannot be resolved at the Census Bureau level or the concern is identified as being at the Department of Commerce level in which case the concern will be referred to the Department of Commerce.

SCIENTIFIC INTEGRITY PRINCIPLES AND BEST PRACTICES

The Census Bureau’s mission is to serve as the nation’s leading provider of quality data about its people and economy. Scientific integrity is essential for the Census Bureau to achieve its mission.

The Census Bureau is committed to the overarching principles and best practices in the December 16, 2011, Department memorandum⁷ and implementing the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy Administration policy on scientific integrity.⁸ This policy furthers the Census Bureau’s commitment to scientific integrity by codifying the following principles and best practices from the December 16 memorandum and the National Science and Technology Council’s 2022

⁵ Guidance by the Scientific Integrity Framework Interagency Working Group of the National Science and Technology Council. “A Framework for Federal Scientific Integrity Policy and Practice.” January 2023. Available at <https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2023/01/01-2023-Framework-for-Federal-Scientific-Integrity-Policy-and-Practice.pdf>.

⁶Data Stewardship Policy DS006 - Controlling Non-Employee Access Policy. Available at https://www.census.gov/about/policies/privacy/data_stewardship/dsep_committee.html.

⁷ Memorandum for All Chief Counsels and General Councils. Implementation of Administrative Policy on Scientific Integrity. General Council of the US Department of Commerce. December 16, 2011. Available at https://2010-2014.commerce.gov/sites/default/files/documents/2012/april/scientific_integrity_memo_dtd_2011-12-16.pdf.

⁸ White House Office of Science and Technology Policy (OSTP) Scientific Integrity Policy. May 17, 2023. Available at <https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2023/06/OSTP-SCIENTIFIC-INTEGRITY-POLICY.pdf>.

report⁹:

1. Ensure a culture of Scientific Integrity among leadership and staff at all levels, from the Census Bureau Director to entry level employees, that includes maintaining diversity, equity, inclusion and accessibility in the execution and dissemination of research.
2. Protect scientific, statistical, and technical activities and findings from actual or attempted suppression or alteration by any employee - whether career or political - that is not scientifically-based.
3. Select candidates for scientific positions and membership on scientific or technical federal advisory committees, based on their scientific and technical expertise, credentials, experience, integrity and with consideration for ethnic, racial, and gender diversity and various abilities of the United State population, in order to bring different experiences and points of view to research. Selection for membership on scientific or technical advisory committees also must comply with the requirements of the Federal Advisory Committee Act (FACA).
4. Hold all employees and associates to relevant standards governing real and perceived conflicts of interest and ethical conduct, including financial interests, personal, and professional relationships.
5. Ensure data and research undergoes independent peer review by diverse and qualified experts who are free from real or perceived conflicts of interest.
6. Adopt and abide by appropriate whistleblower protections.
7. Facilitate the free flow of scientific, statistical, and technological data and information consistent with privacy and security classification standards and that protects confidential information, and any other information protected from disclosure by law.
8. Expand and promote access to scientific and technological information by making the information available online in open formats and, where appropriate, including data and models underlying regulatory proposals and policy decisions, consistent with the 2022 OSTP Memo¹⁰.
9. Support scientists engaging in vigorous, respectful, and objective debate that is intended to improve science. Science benefits from discussion of a diversity of opinions within the scientific community to sharpen ideas and thinking.
10. Apply scientific integrity policies not only to “science agencies,” but to all bureaus engaged in the production, analysis, communication, and use of scientific evidence, science, statistics, and technology in making policy.
11. Include scientists in policymaking when the results of their science is under consideration. For science to inform policy and management decisions, it needs to be understood and interpreted with expertise during decision-making.
12. Ensure Federal scientists can speak freely, if they wish, about their unclassified and nonconfidential research, including to members of the press.¹¹ Transparency underpins the robust generation of knowledge and promotes accountability to the American public.

⁹ Report by the Scientific Integrity Fast-Track Action Committee of the National Science and Technology Council. “Protecting the Integrity of Government Science.” January 11, 2022. Available at <https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/01-22-Protecting-the-Integrity-of-Government-Science.pdf>.

¹⁰ Memorandum for the Heads of Executive Departments and Agencies. Ensuring Free, Immediate, and Equitable Access to Federally Funded Research. Office of Science and Technology Policy. August 25, 2022. Available at <https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2022/08/08-2022-OSTP-Public-access-Memo.pdf>.

¹¹ Public communications are covered in Departmental Administrative Order (DAO) 219-1. Available at https://www.osc.doc.gov/opog/dmp/daos/dao219_1.html

13. Consider violations of scientific integrity on par with violations of government ethics, with comparable consequences.
14. Enhance the Census Bureau's culture of scientific excellence, by developing a staff comprised of scientists and researchers of all genders, races, ethnicities, and backgrounds; and striving to advance the equitable and accessible delivery of scientific information from the Census Bureau's programs.
15. Develop and use emerging technologies and methods (e.g., artificial intelligence, machine learning and person-or community-based science, a.k.a. citizen science) according to the principles and practices of scientific integrity and work to minimize bias and other important data quality issues.

POLICY

A. Designate Census Bureau Scientific Integrity Official (SIO)

The Census Bureau's Chief Scientist will designate a Census Bureau Scientific Integrity Official who will implement this policy. The Scientific Integrity Official is a senior career employee designated as the bureau's lead to oversee implementation and iterative improvement of scientific integrity policies and processes, consistent with the provisions of the 2021 Presidential Memorandum.¹² The Census Bureau Scientific Integrity Official reports to the Census Bureau's Chief Scientist on all matters involving scientific integrity policies.

B. Scientific Integrity Training

To instill and enhance a culture of scientific integrity, the Census Bureau shall post this policy prominently on its public website and take other measures (e.g., All Hands meetings, written and oral communications) to keep scientific integrity visible. Further, the Census Bureau will educate all employees and associates conducting scientific work on their rights and responsibilities related to scientific integrity. All employees and associates covered by this policy will receive scientific integrity training. The Census Bureau will also provide annual training for those who propose, review, conduct, manage, and use the results of and communicate about science and scientific activities. This training will be tracked to ensure compliance.

C. Protecting Scientific Processes

Scientific Integrity fosters honest scientific investigation, open discussion, refined understanding, and a firm commitment to evidence. Science, and public trust in science, thrives in an environment that shields scientific data and analyses and their use in policymaking from political interference or inappropriate influence. It is the policy of the Census Bureau, for its employees and/or associates, to:

1. Prohibit the intrusion of political interference or inappropriate influence into the funding, design, proposal, conduct, review, management, evaluation, or reporting of scientific research and activities.
2. Require that leadership and management ensure that those engaged in scientific activities can conduct their work free from reprisal or fear of reprisal.

¹² Presidential Memorandum on Restoring Trust in Government Through Scientific Integrity and Evidence-Based Policy Making. January 27, 2021. Available at <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/presidential-actions/2021/01/27/memorandum-on-restoring-trust-in-government-through-scientific-integrity-and-evidence-based-policymaking/>

3. Require reasonable efforts to ensure the accuracy of the scientific record and to correct identified inaccuracies that pertain to their contribution to any scientific records.
4. Require that individuals represent their contributions to scientific work fairly and accurately and neither accept nor assume unauthorized and/or unwarranted credit for another's accomplishments.
5. Ensure independent review of facilities, methodologies, and other scientific activities as appropriate to ensure scientific integrity.
6. Require appropriate diligence toward preserving and maintaining research resources, such as records of data and results that are entrusted to them, per National Archives and Records Administration recordkeeping requirements¹³.
7. Prohibit research misconduct and the use of improper or inappropriate methods or processes in conducting research as well as a lack of adherence to practices that ensure research quality, such as quality assurance systems (e.g., the Census Bureau Statistical Quality Standards¹⁴).
8. Require designing, conducting, managing, evaluating, and reporting scientific research honestly and thoroughly, and disclose any conflicts of interest to their supervisor or other appropriate Census Bureau official(s) for a determination as to whether a recusal, disclaimer, or other appropriate notification should be included.
9. Require that research involving human subjects is conducted in accordance with applicable ethical standards, regulations, and laws.
10. Ensure, when feasible and appropriate, that scientific processes, participation, and dissemination of results include underrepresented groups.

D. Ensuring the Free Flow of Scientific Information

Open and timely communication of science plays a valuable role in building public trust and understanding of the Census Bureau's work. The Census Bureau shall facilitate the free flow of scientific and technological information and support scientific integrity in the communication of scientific activities, findings, and products. Scientific and technological information will be open and timely to the extent allowed by and consistent with confidentiality, privacy, and classification standards, as well as responsible communication of scientific information. It is the policy of the Census Bureau to:

1. Ensure that scientific findings and products are not suppressed or altered for political purposes and are not subjected to inappropriate influence.
2. Ensure that mechanisms are in place to resolve disputes that arise from decisions to proceed or not to proceed with proposed interviews or other public information-related activities.
3. Ensure that the work and conclusions of Census Bureau scientists are accurately represented in Census Bureau communications. If documents significantly rely on a scientist's research, identify them as an author, or represent their scientific opinion, the scientist(s) shall be given the option to review the scientific content of proposed documents.
4. Ensure that Census Bureau scientists may communicate their scientific activities objectively without political interference or inappropriate influence, while at the same time complying with Census Bureau policies and procedures for planning and conducting scientific activities, reporting scientific findings, and reviewing and releasing scientific products. Scientific communications (e.g.,

¹³ <https://www.archives.gov/records-mgmt/policy>

¹⁴ <https://www.census.gov/about/policies/quality/standards.html>

- manuscripts for scientific journals, presentations for workshops, conferences, and symposia) should adhere to Census Bureau technical review procedures.¹⁵
5. Allow the reporting of scientific findings or communicating with the media or the public in their official capacities as employees. However, Census Bureau scientists should refrain from making or publishing statements in Official Communications, per DAO 219-1, that could be construed as being judgments of, or recommendations on the Department of Commerce or any other Federal Government policy, unless they have secured appropriate prior approval to do so. Such communications should remain within the bounds of their scientific or technological findings, unless otherwise authorized.
 6. Allow scientists to communicate with the media or the public in their personal capacities subject to limitations of government ethics rules. Census Bureau scientists may express their personal views and opinions; however, they should not claim to officially represent the Census Bureau or its policies or use Federal Government seals or logos and should use appropriate written or oral disclaimers. Personal or private activities may not violate Federal ethics rules or 5 U.S.C. § 2635.101.¹⁶
 7. Require that Census Bureau officials, including public affairs officers, shall neither ask nor direct that Census Bureau scientists and technology experts alter the presentation of their scientific findings in a manner that may compromise the objectivity or accurate representation of those findings.
 8. In response to media requests about the scientific or technological dimensions of their work, the Census Bureau will offer, to the extent possible, knowledgeable spokespersons who can, in an objective and nonpartisan fashion, describe these dimensions.
 9. Require that technical review and clearance processes include provisions for timely clearance and expressly forbid censorship, unreasonable delay, and suppression of objective communication of data and results.
 10. Ensure that Congressional inquiries, testimony, and other requests that include scientific information accurately represent the science.
 11. Ensure that the work and conclusions of Census Bureau scientists are accurately represented in social media communications and that Census Bureau scientists are appropriately guided on use of social media, which includes but is not limited to blogs, social networks, forums, and micro blogs (e.g., X formerly known as Twitter).¹⁷ This should be done consistent with communication policies.
 - a. When communicating on social media in their personal capacities, and subject to limitations of government ethics rules, Census Bureau scientists may express their personal views and opinions and may name the Census Bureau, in the context of biographical information, as long as it is clear in context that they are not speaking on behalf of, or as a representative of, the Census Bureau.
 - b. If employees choose to disclose their affiliation with the Census Bureau on their personal social media, a disclaimer clarifying that the account or communication represents personal views may be appropriate.¹⁸
 - c. Correct any errors pointed out by scientists whose work is represented in social media.

¹⁵ Public communications are covered in Departmental Administrative Order (DAO) 219-1; available at https://www.osec.doc.gov/opog/dmp/daos/dao219_1.html. The Census Bureau also has the Policy and Procedure Manual (PPM) Chapter B13: [PPM B13 – Clearance and Release of Public Information Materials](#).

¹⁶ <https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-5/chapter-XVI/subchapter-B/part-2635>

¹⁷ U.S. Department of Commerce Policy on the Approval and Use of Social Media and Web 2.0 (2010). Available at <https://www.commerce.gov/about/policies/social-media>.

¹⁸ Guidance can be found in U.S. Department of Commerce Policy on the Approval and Use of Social Media and Web 2.0 (2010) available at <https://www.commerce.gov/about/policies/social-media>. Contacts for agency ethics officials regarding any questions are available at <https://www.commerce.gov/ogc/about-ogc/offices/office-assistant-general-counsel-ethics-law-and-program-agc-elp>.

12. The Census Bureau will, consistent with law and subject to the availability of funds and resources and the feasibility of the proposed methodology, support external research designed to assess the quality of our data products and programs and recognizes the implicit value to the agency of this work. This support may come in the form of provisioned access to data through the Federal Statistical Research Data Center (FSRDC) network for related external projects, joint statistical partnerships with other agencies, internal project support from outside researchers, and peer review.¹⁹
13. The Census Bureau, to the extent permitted by law, will pursue partnerships with researchers on the cutting edge of statistical, social, demographic, and economic research. These partnerships offer the Census Bureau the opportunity to explore new methods, create new data products, and provide novel insights into the social and economic wellbeing of the Nation. The Census Bureau is committed to being transparent about these relationships and the types of work they support.²⁰

E. Supporting Decision Making Processes

The Census Bureau is mission-driven. All scientific and statistical activities are carried out in order that the Census Bureau's decisions and policies are informed by the best available data at the time, analysis, and information. Therefore, leadership, management, and staff must:

1. Ensure the quality, accuracy, and transparency of scientific information used to support policy and decision making including:
 - a. Use scientific information that is derived from well-established scientific processes.
 - b. Ensure that scientific data and research used to support policy decisions undergo review by qualified experts, where feasible and appropriate, and consistent with law.
 - c. Adhere to the Office of Management and Budget Final Information Quality Bulletin for Peer Review.²¹ When independent peer reviews of scientific products are conducted by contractors, a conflict-of-interest review shall be conducted for all reviewers.
 - d. The Census Bureau Scientific Integrity Official shall, with input from the Census Bureau Chief Scientist develop a transparent mechanism for Census Bureau employees to express differing scientific opinions. When a Census Bureau employee who is substantively engaged in the science disagrees with the scientific data, interpretations, or conclusions that are to be relied upon for a decision, the employee is encouraged to express that opinion complete with rationale and in writing.
 - e. Reflect scientific information appropriately and accurately; and make scientific findings or conclusions considered or relied on in policy decisions publicly available online and in open formats, to the extent practicable and permitted by law, consistent with the Open Government Initiative, the Freedom of Information Act, the Administrative Procedure Act, and other applicable statutes, regulations or document-handling procedures and policies. Where feasible and appropriate, the following will also be provided: information on the specific approach, data, and models used to develop such scientific conclusions, including a clear explanation of

¹⁹ Data Stewardship Policy DS027 – Transparency in Secondary Research. Available at https://www.census.gov/about/policies/privacy/data_stewardship/dsep_committee.html

²⁰ Data Stewardship Policy DS027 – Transparency in Secondary Research. Available at https://www.census.gov/about/policies/privacy/data_stewardship/dsep_committee.html

²¹ Office of Management and Budget. "Final Information Quality Bulletin for Peer Review." *Federal Register*. Doc. 05-769. Available at: <https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2005/01/14/05-769/final-information-quality-bulletin-for-peer-review>.

inferential procedures and, where appropriate, probabilities associated with a range of projections or scenarios.

F. Ensuring Accountability

The Census Bureau must ensure accountability to assure correction of the scientific record and administrative actions when allegations of a loss of scientific integrity are substantiated. It is the policy of the Census Bureau to:

1. Publish all Data Stewardship policies²², as well as information about DSEP and its composition, on the external facing Census.gov website.²³
2. Encourage and facilitate early consultation with the Census Bureau Scientific Integrity Official to seek advice on preventing a situation of concern, to determine if it is a potential violation of the Scientific Integrity Policy, and to ascertain if it should be referred elsewhere in the Census Bureau for resolution.
3. Provide clear guidance on how to formally report allegations of Scientific Integrity Policy violations. Those who report allegations need not be directly involved or witness a violation.
4. Ensure that the Census Bureau Scientific Integrity Official drafts procedures to respond to allegations of scientific misconduct in a timely, objective, and thorough manner in cases where such procedures do not already exist. These procedures shall document the necessary aspects for each step of the process including burden of proof, any necessary determination of intentionality, and reporting as well as the roles of the Census Bureau Scientific Integrity Official and Census Bureau staff in the process.

G. Protecting Scientists

To assure a culture of scientific integrity, it is critical to protect and preserve the work of the Census Bureau's science and statistics professionals. Therefore, it is the policy of the Census Bureau to:

1. Select and retain candidates for scientific and technical positions based on the candidate's scientific and technical knowledge, credentials, experience, and integrity, and hold them and their supervisors to the highest standard of professional and scientific ethics.
2. Based on our diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility policies²⁴, promote the scientific workforce and to create safe workspaces that are free from harassment. Support scientists and researchers of all genders, races, ethnicities, and backgrounds, and advance the equitable delivery of Federal programs.
3. Protect those individuals who report allegations of compromised scientific integrity in good faith, as well as those Census Bureau employees alleged to have compromised scientific integrity in the absence of a finding that the individual compromised scientific integrity, from prohibited personnel practices (as defined in 5 U.S.C. 2302(b)).
4. Prevent supervisors and managers or other Census Bureau leadership from intimidating or coercing scientists to alter scientific data, findings, or professional opinions or inappropriately influencing scientific advisory boards.

²² https://www.census.gov/about/policies/privacy/data_stewardship/dsep_committee.html

²³ Data Stewardship Policy DS027 – Transparency in Secondary Research. Available at https://www.census.gov/about/policies/privacy/data_stewardship/dsep_committee.html

²⁴ U.S. Census Bureau Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility (DEIA) Strategic Plan: FY2022-2026. Available at <https://www2.census.gov/about/careers/working/eo/diversity-inclusion/fy2022-2026-deia-strategic-plan.pdf>.

5. Comply with the Whistleblower Protection Act, as amended²⁵.
 - a. Protecting employees from prohibited personnel practices (as defined in 5 U.S.C. 2302(b)). Census Bureau employees who uncover and report allegations of loss of scientific integrity in good faith, as well as those Census Bureau employees alleged to have compromised scientific integrity in the absence of a finding that such a compromise occurred; and
 - b. Comply with the requirements of the Whistleblower Protection Act of 1989, and its expanded protections enacted by PL 103-424 and the Whistleblower Protection Enhancement Act of 2012, where not in conflict with the confidentiality provisions of Title 13, U.S.C.

H. Ensuring Professional Development for Government Scientists

The Census Bureau's scientists and technical experts should be allowed to interact with the broader scientific community. The Census Bureau should also ensure hiring and promotion of these individuals is done openly and fairly. It is the policy of the Census Bureau to:

1. Allow Census Bureau's scientists and other employees involved in scientific activities to interact with the broader scientific community, in a manner that is consistent with Federal ethics, job responsibilities, and to the extent that is practicable given the availability of funding to support such interactions and any budgetary restraints. This includes:
 - a. Allowing publication of research such as in peer-reviewed, professional, scholarly journals, Census Bureau technical reports and publications or other outlets;
 - b. Allowing the sharing of scientific activities, findings, and materials (including curated data and code) through appropriate avenues including on digital repositories;
 - c. Allowing attendance and presentation of research at professional meetings including workshops, conferences and symposia;
 - d. Allowing service on editorial boards, as peer reviewers, or as editors of professional or scholarly journals;
 - e. Allowing participation in professional societies, committees, task forces, and other specialized bodies of professional societies, including removing barriers to serving as officers or on governing boards of such societies, to the extent allowed by law;
 - f. Nominating scientists for and allowing them to receive honors and awards for contributions to scientific activities, discoveries, to accrue the professional recognition of such honors or awards; and
 - g. Allowing scientists to perform outreach and engagement activities, such as speaking to community groups and underrepresented student groups, as part of their job.
 - h. Encouraging engagement on statistical research and methodology projects with appropriate entities through interagency and other special agreements such as joint statistical projects, reimbursable projects, and cooperative agreements.

I. Protecting Federal Advisory Committees

Federal Advisory Committees are an important tool within the Census Bureau for ensuring the credibility, quality, and transparency of the Census Bureau's science. The Census Bureau shall adhere to the Federal Advisory Committee Act (FACA) and develop policies, in coordination with the General Services Administration and convene Federal advisory committees (FACs) tasked with giving scientific advice, consistent with the following:

1. The recruitment process for new FAC members should be as transparent as practicable.

²⁵PL 112-199, Whistleblower Protection Enhancement Act (WPEA) of 2012.

2. The Census Bureau should, when practicable and appropriate, announce FAC member vacancies widely in the Federal Register and on the Census Bureau website, with an invitation for the public to recommend nominees for consideration and for self-nominations to be submitted.
3. Professional biographical information (including current and past professional affiliations) for appointed committee members should be made widely available to the public (e.g., via a website) subject to Privacy Act and other statutory/regulatory considerations. Such information should clearly illustrate the individuals' qualifications for serving on the committee. Members will also be entered into the FACA database, which is used by the Congress to perform oversight of related Executive Branch programs and by the public, the media, and others, to stay abreast of important developments resulting from advisory committee activities.
4. The selection of members to serve on a scientific or technical FAC should be based on expertise, knowledge, and contribution to the accomplishments of the committee's objectives. Additional factors that may be considered are availability of the member to serve, diversity among members of the FAC, and the ability to work effectively on advisory committees. Committee membership should be fairly balanced in terms of points of view represented with respect to the functions to be performed by the FAC.
5. Except when prohibited by law, agencies shall appoint members of scientific and technical FACs as Special Government Employees (SGEs) as defined in Title 18 of U.S.C., section 202.
6. Except when explicitly stated in a prior agreement between the Census Bureau and a FAC, all reports, recommendations, and products produced by FACs should be treated as solely the findings of such committees rather than of the U.S. Government, and thus are not subject to intra- or inter-agency revision.
7. The Census Bureau shall comply with current standards governing conflict of interest as defined in statutes and implementing regulations.

PROCEDURES

The Census Bureau has several existing policies/procedures through which this Scientific Integrity Policy is implemented including the following:

- [Census Bureau Statistical Quality Standards](#)²⁶ which includes standards for addressing complaints regarding information products released by the Census Bureau for which a party outside the Census Bureau alleges that the Census Bureau has not adhered to its information quality guidelines;
- [Data Stewardship Policies](#)²⁷ (including the Personally Identifiable Information Breach Policy²⁸); and
- Field Directorate's monitoring for data irregularities, investigating possible data falsification, and addressing falsification.

The Census Bureau Scientific Integrity Official in conjunction with other relevant Census Bureau career officials shall expeditiously draft the procedures for the following:

- Reporting scientific integrity concerns;

²⁶[Standard F3 -Addressing Information Quality Guideline Complaints. Available at https://www.census.gov/about/policies/quality/standards.html.](https://www.census.gov/about/policies/quality/standards.html)

²⁷ https://www.census.gov/about/policies/privacy/data_stewardship/dsep_committee.html

²⁸ Data Stewardship Policy DS022 – Personally Identifiable Information (PII) Breach Policy. Available at https://www2.census.gov/foia/ds_policies/ds022.pdf.

- Addressing scientific integrity concerns; and
- Handling differing scientific opinions.

These procedures shall be completed no later than one year after the release of this policy. The procedures for handling allegations of scientific misconduct will be publicized throughout the Census Bureau and made available on the Census Bureau’s public-facing website.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Census Bureau Director

1. Provides leadership for the Census Bureau on scientific integrity such as leading through example, upholding scientific integrity principles, and regularly communicating the importance of scientific integrity.
2. Provides adequate resources and funding, to the extent such resources are subject to his control, to fully implement this policy, including staffing, monitoring, evaluation, reporting, and training.
3. Supports and respects the Census Bureau Scientific Integrity Official’s independence, recommendations, and designation of and the Census Bureau’s compliance with corrective scientific actions when violations of this policy are substantiated.

Census Bureau Deputy Director/Data Stewardship Executive Policy Committee Chair

1. Ensures that all Census Bureau activities associated with scientific and technological processes are conducted in accordance with this policy.
2. Ensures all supervisors and managers comply with the scientific integrity policy and ensures accountability for those who do not comply.
3. Designates a senior Census Bureau employee with appropriate qualifications and scientific credentials for the role of Census Bureau Chief Scientist (also known as Census Bureau “Chief Science Officer”) and supports their role as advisor on scientific issues.
4. Ensures that the scientific-integrity policy considers, supplements, and supports Census Bureau plans for forming evidence-based policies, including the evidence-building plans required by 5 U.S.C. 312(a) and the annual evaluation plans required by 5 U.S.C. 312(b).
5. Participates in senior level discussions and strategic planning on the recruitment, retention, development, and advancement of scientists—especially scientists from underrepresented communities—to help ensure that scientific integrity is appropriately and carefully considered.

Census Bureau Chief Scientist (also known as Census Bureau Chief Science Officer)

1. Serves as the principal advisor to the Census Bureau Director and Deputy Director on scientific issues and ensures that the agency’s research programs are scientifically and technologically well-founded and conducted with integrity.
2. Designate a Census Bureau Scientific Integrity Official; the individual must be a full-time career Census Bureau employee (i.e., non-political appointee), should have previous experience conducting scientific or statistical activities, and sufficient institutional authority, stature, and credentials to be able to fulfill the required responsibilities.
3. In cooperation with the Census Bureau Scientific Integrity Official, oversees the implementation and iterative improvement of policies and processes affecting the integrity of research funded, conducted, or overseen by the agency, as well as policies affecting the Federal and non-Federal scientists who support the research activities of the agency, including scientific integrity policies.
4. Supports the scientific integrity official’s designation of and bureau compliance with corrective

scientific actions when violations of this policy are substantiated.

5. Ensures the agency establishes clear administrative actions for substantiated violations of scientific integrity policies, designating responsibility for each aspect of accountability.

Census Bureau Scientific Integrity Official

1. Oversees implementation and iterative improvement of scientific-integrity policies and processes while providing leadership, acting to champion scientific integrity, and serving as the primary Census Bureau level contact for questions regarding scientific integrity and ensuring scientific integrity activities and outcomes are appropriately monitored and evaluated.
2. Serves as a neutral point of contact for receiving scientific integrity questions and concerns and allegations of compromised scientific integrity.
3. Refers to the Department of Commerce's Scientific Integrity Official any allegation involving the Department of Commerce's leadership or staff.
4. Bears primary responsibility for adjudicating claims of scientific misconduct for individuals in the Census Bureau where a separate policy/process specific to the type of misconduct does not exist.
5. Coordinates with the appropriate employee relations and labor management staff, and Census Bureau leaders as needed to ensure that Census Bureau policies and guidance are consistent with this policy.
6. Reports to the Office of the Inspector General (OIG) any potentially criminal behavior related to waste, fraud, or abuse that is uncovered during the course of responding to an allegation of compromised scientific integrity, and coordinates as appropriate related to the referral provided to OIG.
7. Keeps the Census Bureau Chief Scientist, Director, Deputy Director, and the Policy Coordination Office Chief informed on the status of the implementation of this policy and any compliance concerns, as warranted.
8. Ensures the coordination of training and outreach initiatives to facilitate employee and associate awareness and understanding of this policy and the procedures for reporting allegations of possible scientific misconduct.
9. Publishes an annual scientific integrity report as described below in the "Monitoring and Evaluation of Activities and Outcomes" section.
10. Leads efforts for the iterative improvement of this policy and scientific integrity initiatives overall including development and implementation of an evaluation plan to regularly monitor and evaluate ongoing scientific integrity activities and outcomes.
11. Drafts, in conjunction with other relevant Census Bureau career officials, appropriate procedures on reporting scientific integrity concerns; addressing scientific integrity concerns; and handling differing scientific opinions (See PROCEDURES, E.1.d, and F.3).
12. Develop and implement a plan to regularly monitor and evaluate ongoing scientific integrity activities and outcomes.

Policy Coordination Office (PCO)

1. Provide guidance to stakeholders by serving as the central point for the review, analysis, development, and implementation of Census Bureau-wide policies including supporting the Data Stewardship Executive Policy Committee.
2. Develop Census Bureau-specific scientific integrity guidance for including appropriate language in contracts and agreements and disseminate to Acquisitions Division and Interagency or Other Special Agreement (IOSA) Census Bureau employee stakeholders. Before including in any contracts, the Acquisition Division shall coordinate with and receive approval to use the language from the Contracts Law Division of the Office of General Counsel, Department of Commerce. Any

language drafted for inclusion in an IOSA must be cleared by the Office of Chief Counsel for Economic Affairs.

Performance and Stakeholder Integration (PPSI)

1. Implement this policy, as applicable, to Federal Advisory Committee Act requirements (see section POLICY I. Protecting Federal Advisory Committees) and report to the Census Bureau Scientific Integrity Official on implementation status and concerns, as needed.

Employees and Associates

1. Be aware of the principles contained in this policy and how the policy applies to their duties, once training has been provided and completed.
2. Comply with this policy.
3. Adhere to accepted professional values and practices of the relevant research and scientific communities to ensure scientific integrity.
4. Are encouraged to report to the Scientific Integrity Official any knowledge of compromised scientific integrity.

MONITORING AND EVALUATION OF ACTIVITIES AND OUTCOMES

The Census Bureau Scientific Integrity Official will develop and implement a plan to regularly monitor and evaluate ongoing scientific integrity activities and outcomes.

Evaluation

The Scientific Integrity Official will develop an evaluation plan that will:

1. Include a roadmap of activities and expected outcomes, the steps needed to assess the processes and outcomes, the methods and metrics used to evaluate the activities and outcomes, and how data will be analyzed on a regular basis and used for ongoing improvement of scientific integrity processes and procedures.
2. Include a timeline for implementation and frequency of data collection, analysis, review, and recommendations.
3. Make available to Census Bureau leadership, the Department of Commerce, and the public in a timely manner the evaluation results, recommendations, and policy/procedure changes based on results.

Reporting

The Scientific Integrity Official will provide an annual report that will not be edited in substance by Census Bureau or Department of Commerce leadership before release.

1. The Census Bureau will make the report available on a public-facing website and will include the status of scientific integrity within the Census Bureau per the January 27, 2021, Presidential Memorandum²⁹. The report
 - a. shall highlight scientific integrity successes and accomplishments across the Census Bureau [such as any scientific integrity appointments (e.g., Scientific Integrity Official)], training, enhancements to scientific integrity policies, etc.), identify areas

²⁹ Presidential Memorandum on Restoring Trust in Government Through Scientific Integrity and Evidence-Based Policy Making. January 27, 2021. Available at <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/presidential-actions/2021/01/27/memorandum-on-restoring-trust-in-government-through-scientific-integrity-and-evidence-based-policymaking/>.

- for improvement, and develop a plan for addressing critical weaknesses, if any;
- b. shall include the number of formal administrative inquiries, investigations and appeals involving alleged or actual deviations from the scientific integrity policy and the number of investigations and pending appeals;
- c. may include anonymized, individual, closed scientific integrity case summaries (These summaries can be posted in a timely manner after completion of inquiries. The identities of complainants, respondents, witnesses, and others involved in the investigations shall be protected).

SCIENTIFIC INTEGRITY POLICY INTERSECTIONS WITH RELATED AND SUPPORTING POLICIES

Involving Scientific Integrity Officials in the writing and updating of related policies can help provide needed perspectives before such policies are issued and better ensure they support scientific integrity. Officials should consider the scientific integrity-related components of other policies (e.g., professional development of scientists, science-related communications, etc.) and determine where those other policies should be referenced, or perhaps reinforced, within the agency scientific integrity policy to help ensure their longevity. Violations of related and supporting policies may result in a loss of scientific integrity and it is appropriate for scientific integrity officials to coordinate with their bureau counterparts in these matters.

Scientific integrity officials should have an awareness of policies and programs that intersect with the development of the culture of scientific integrity within the agency. Scientific Integrity officials, where possible, shall be involved in the development or revision of the broader set of policies and practices that affect the culture and applicability of scientific integrity within the Census Bureau.

Related and supported policies include the following:

Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility (DEIA) in Addressing and Strengthening Scientific Integrity and the Disproportional Impact of Scientific Integrity Policy Violations on Underrepresented Groups

Equally as important as a scientific integrity policy are policies, practices, and Census Bureau culture to promote diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility in the scientific workforce and Federal workforce at large and to create safe workspaces that are free from harassment.³⁰ Because racism, sexism, discrimination, and other forms of bias may occur in the workplace, scientific integrity and DEIA policies may intersect. Similarly, scientific integrity entails greater transparency into research processes and policy-making outcomes. Open science policies and practices help to ensure that publications, data, and other outputs of government-funded research are readily available to other researchers, innovators, students, and the broader public, including underserved communities. The Census Bureau will review and address potential scientific integrity policy violations that have a disproportionate impact on underrepresented groups or weaken the equitable delivery of Census Bureau programs.

Whistleblower protections

³⁰ U.S. Census Bureau Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility (DEIA) Strategic Plan: FY2022-2026. Available at <https://www2.census.gov/about/careers/working/eo/diversity-inclusion/fy2022-2026-deia-strategic-plan.pdf>.

The Whistleblower Protection Act, as amended, provides whistleblower protection for government employees and their professional partners who report wrongdoing related to the development and use of scientific information, or make whistleblower disclosures related to the integrity of scientific processes, and ensures coverage of employees of government contractors, subcontractors, grant and cooperative agreement recipients, subgrantees and personal services contractors. Contact the Whistleblower Protection Coordinator or equivalent³¹ for additional information.

Scientific Research Security

All Census Bureau Federal employees and associates engaged in scientific or statistical activities at or for the Census Bureau are encouraged to interact with the broader scientific community, engage with collaborators, and commit to transparency, honesty, equity, fair competition, objectivity, and democratic values. Unfortunately, some foreign governments and nonstate actors work through illicit means. Policies for protecting research security must harmonize with scientific integrity policies by maintaining the core values that drive American leadership in science, technology, and innovation.

LEGAL AUTHORITIES

Pursuant to the 2021 Presidential Memorandum on Restoring Trust in Government Through Scientific Integrity and Evidence-Based Policymaking, all Federal agencies must establish a scientific integrity policy. Accordingly, the Census Bureau has established this policy.

As applicable, this policy should be used in conjunction with:

1. Office of Science and Technology report Protecting the Integrity of Government Science (January 11, 2022)
2. Office of Science and Technology report OSTP Framework for Federal Scientific Integrity Policy and Practice (January 2023)
3. PL 106-554, Section 515, The Information Quality Act
4. Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Guidelines for Ensuring and Maximizing the Quality, Objectivity, Utility, and Integrity of Information Disseminated by Federal Agencies, 2002
5. OMB Final Information Quality Bulletin for Peer Review, 2004
6. 65 FR 76260-76264, Federal Policy on Research Misconduct
7. PL 101-12, Whistleblower Protection Act (WPA) of 1989
8. PL 112-199, Whistleblower Protection Enhancement Act (WPEA) of 2012
9. 5 U.S.C. Appendix, Federal Advisory Committee Act of 1972; 5 CFR Part 735, Employee Responsibilities and Conduct
10. 5 CFR Part 2635, Standards of Ethical Conduct for Employees of the Executive Branch
11. Other Statutes
 - a. Evidence Act
 - b. 5 CFR Part 724 – No FEAR Act
 - c. 15 CFR Part 27 – Common Rule for the Protection of Human Subjects
 - d. PL 115-435 -Evidence Act
 - e. 5 USC 1214 – Investigation of prohibited personnel practices; corrective action
 - f. 5 USC Chapter 75 – Adverse Actions
 - g. The Crowdsourcing and Citizen Science Act of 2016 (15 U.S.C. §§ 3724)
 - h. The America Competes Act

³¹ <https://www.oig.doc.gov/Pages/Hotline.aspx>

- i. Statistical Policy Directive No. 1: Fundamental Responsibilities of Federal Statistical Agencies and Recognized Statistical Units³²
- j. Statistical Policy Directive No. 3: Compilation, Relevance, and Evaluation of Principal Federal Economic Indicators³³
- k. Statistical Policy Directive No. 4: Release and Dissemination of Statistical Products Produced by Federal Statistical Agencies³⁴

This policy is in addition to, and does not alter the requirements of, any other applicable federal statutes, regulations, or policy directives, or Department of Commerce administrative orders.

This policy shall not be interpreted to conflict with the rights of an employee under the law, including, but not limited to, the following:

- a. The Federal Service Labor-Management Relations Statute (5 U.S.C. §§ 7101-7135), including any rights accorded a union representative when communicating in that role;
- b. The provisions within Federal Service Labor-Management Relations Statute 5 U.S. Code Chapter 75 – Adverse Actions, relating to disciplinary action of employees; and
- c. The Whistleblower Protection Act of 1989, as amended (5 U.S.C. §§ 1201 *et seq.*), Merit Systems Protection Board, Office of Special Counsel, and Employee Right of Action.

DEFINITIONS

Allegation

Any statement, claim or assertion of possible scientific misconduct made against a Census Bureau employee or associate. The assumption (or expectation) is that an allegation is made with the honest belief that a violation of scientific integrity may have occurred. An allegation is not in good faith if it is made with reckless disregard for or willful ignorance of facts that would disprove the allegation.

Interference

Interference refers to inappropriate, scientifically unjustified intervention in the conduct, management, communication, or use of science. It includes censorship, suppression, or distortion of scientific or technological findings, data, information, or conclusions; inhibiting scientific independence during clearance and review; scientifically unjustified intervention in research and data collection; and inappropriate engagement or participation in peer review processes or on Federal advisory committees.

Research

Research is creative and systemic work undertaken to increase the stock of knowledge, including knowledge of humankind, culture and society, program or project performance, and to devise new applications of available knowledge.³⁵

³² <https://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/information-regulatory-affairs/statistical-programs-standards/>

³³ <https://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/information-regulatory-affairs/statistical-programs-standards/>

³⁴ <https://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/information-regulatory-affairs/statistical-programs-standards/>

³⁵ OECD (2015), Frascati Manual 2015: Guidelines for Collecting and Reporting Data on Research and Experimental Development, The Measurement of Scientific, Technological and Innovation Activities, OECD Publishing, Paris. DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264239012-en>.

Alternatively, research refers to systematic investigation, including research development, testing, and evaluation, designed to develop or contribute to generalizable knowledge. Activities can meet this definition whether or not they are conducted or supported under a program that is considered research.

Research Integrity

Research integrity refers to the use of honest and verifiable methods in proposing, performing, and evaluating research; reporting research results with particular attention to adherence to rules, regulations, and guidelines; and following commonly accepted professional codes or norms.

Science

Science refers to the full spectrum of scientific endeavors, including basic science, applied science, evaluation science, engineering, technology, economics, social sciences, and statistics, as well as the scientific and technical information derived from these endeavors.

Scientific and Statistical Activities

Activities that involve inventorying, monitoring, observations, experimentation, study, research, integration, modeling, and reporting on statistics, and scientific assessment. Scientific activities are conducted in a manner specified by standard protocols and procedures and include any of the physical, biological, or social sciences, as well as engineering and mathematics, or any combination of these. Scientific activities include engaging in, supervising, or managing scientific work; analyzing data and producing scientific results; publicly communicating results of scientific work; or using results of scientific work or analyses to make policy, management, or regulatory decisions. Statistical activities include (A) the collection, compilation, processing, or analysis of data for the purpose of describing or making estimates concerning the whole, or relevant groups or components within, the economy, society, or the natural environment; and (B) the development of methods or resources that support those activities, such as measurement methods, models, statistical classifications, or sampling frames.³⁶ Evolving methods (e.g. statistical record linkage, artificial intelligence, machine learning, Bayesian methods, and other computationally intensive methods) are also included.

Scientific Misconduct

Scientific misconduct is an intentional, knowing, or negligent (i.e., should have known) and significant departure from the Principles of Scientific Integrity. Research misconduct is fabrication, falsification, or plagiarism in proposing, performing, or reviewing research, or in reporting research results. Research misconduct does not include honest error or differences of opinion,³⁷ and may be committed intentionally, knowingly, or recklessly.

Scientific or Statistical Product

The results of scientific activities including the analysis, synthesis, compilation, or translation of scientific information and data into formats for use by the Census Bureau or others. These products include, but are not limited to, experimental and operational models, forecasts, graphics, tables and verbal and written communications of all kinds relating to scientific activities, including social media accounts.

Suppression of Science

Suppression of science includes deliberate:

³⁶ 44 U.S.C. § 3561 Definitions

³⁷ Federal Policy on Research Misconduct, 65 F.R. 76262 (2000)

- a. Withholding, delaying publication, or postponing dissemination of scientific or research work in the absence of a clear and compelling reason to do so,³⁸
- b. Distorting or selective releasing of scientific analysis, assessment, research, product, or data for public communication;
- c. Discrediting of scientific analysis, assessment, research, product, or data for public communication;³⁹ or
- d. Attempting to impede a scientist's activities or undermine or penalize the scientist for making adverse findings or discovering unfavorable data.

Transparency

Transparency refers to ensuring all relevant data and information used to inform a decision made or action taken is visible, accessible, and consumable by affected or interested parties, to the extent allowable by law.


EFFECTIVE DATE

Upon signature.

POLICY OWNER

Policy Coordination Office (PCO)

SIGNATURE


07/17/2024

Ron J. Jarmin
Deputy Director and Chief Operating Officer
U.S. Census Bureau

³⁸ Note: Adapted from Government of Canada "Model Policy on Scientific Integrity", <https://www.ic.gc.ca/eic/site/052.nsf/eng/00010.html> Martin, B, Suppression of Dissent in Science. In: Research in Social Problems and Public Policy, Volume 7, edited by William R. Freudenburg and Ted I. K. Youn (Stamford, CT: JAI Press, 1999), pp. 105-135.

³⁹ Delborne, J.A., (2016) Suppression and Dissent in Science. In Bretag, T. (Eds.), Handbook of Academic Integrity (pp. 943-956), Singapore: Springer.