

**Employee Survey on the NIST Scientific Integrity and Responsible
Conduct of Research Programs**

FOUR STANDARD SURVEY QUESTIONS

1. Explain who will be surveyed and why the group is appropriate to survey.

Background

The National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) Director, Research Protections Office is appointed as the NIST Scientific Integrity Officer and Research Conduct Officer. This survey will support the NIST Scientific Integrity and Responsible Conduct of Research Programs (hereafter referred to as “programs”). Each program includes procedures for training staff on the policy and reporting processes, adjudicating allegations, and providing an annual report. We intend to use this survey to assess NIST staff understanding of the programs to inform training activities and an annual report.

The programs were first developed in response to the [Presidential Memo on Scientific Integrity, dated 3/9/2009](#), which indicated that each “agency should have appropriate rules and procedures to ensure the integrity of the scientific process within the agency.” In 2019, a Government and Accountability Office (GAO) review of NIST’s scientific integrity program found that NIST should take steps to educate employees on its policy and develop mechanisms to regularly monitor and evaluate implementation of its policy. Finally, the [Presidential Memorandum on Restoring Trust in Government Through Scientific Integrity and Evidence-Based Policymaking, dated 1/27/2021](#), further emphasized the need to routinely monitor and report on agency programs.

This survey will directly address one of the findings from the 2019 GAO review and address several of components in the 2021 Presidential Memorandum. It will monitor and evaluate the NIST policies so that the information can be included in an annual report to be shared internally and externally, which further improves the transparency in scientific integrity policies, procedures and practices.

Target population

This survey will be administered to all NIST staff, including Federal and non-Federal employees. Non-Federal employees may include guest researchers, contractors, students and anyone working at or for NIST. The 2021 Presidential Memorandum specifically extends the scope of scientific integrity beyond Federal scientists to include all employees and our intent is to do the same with this survey. It is important to survey all NIST staff so that we ensure all viewpoints regarding scientific integrity at NIST are considered and to capture an unbiased

sample.

2. Explain how the survey was developed including consultation with interested parties, pre-testing, and responses to suggestions for improvement.

The survey was developed using examples of surveys with similar content and focus from other Federal agencies (e.g., EPA, DOI) and in consultation with survey and content experts at NIST. We tested for comprehension with staff experienced in reviewing surveys. Responses from all parties were incorporated into the current version of the survey. We have made every attempt to ensure the survey is as anonymous as possible, while still ensuring we are able to capture data that will enable us to tease out where we may have concerns about scientific integrity at NIST. The analysis plan is described in question 4.

3. Explain how the survey will be conducted, how customers will be sampled if fewer than all customers will be surveyed, expected response rate, and actions your agency plans to take to improve the response rate.

The survey will be administered annually and electronically using Google Forms. An email invitation, provided below, will be sent to all NIST staff. Given NIST's total staff estimated to be about 7000 people, the potential burden for this survey is estimated at: $7000 \text{ respondents} * 15 \text{ (minutes)} / 60 \text{ (minutes in an hour)} = 1,750 \text{ burden hours}$. The expected response rate is approximately 30%. We intend to send follow up reminders and encourage participation at staff meetings and town hall events.

Proposed survey invitation email:

Dear colleagues,

We invite you to consider participating in a survey about NIST's Scientific Integrity and Responsible Conduct of Research Programs (hereafter referred to as "programs"). The purpose of this survey is to assess NIST staff understanding of both sets of policies. The results of this survey will be shared with NIST leadership and will be used to inform the Scientific Integrity and Research Conduct training programs and policies.

No identifying information about you will be collected. Survey data will be summarized, and aggregated results will be included in presentations and publications which may be shared with NIST management, staff and the public. The raw, individual data will be accessed only by the team administering this survey, which is led by Anne Andrews.

The survey is completely voluntary and should take you about 15 minutes to complete. If you have any questions, please contact Anne Andrews, PhD, Director, Research Protections Office, and also NIST Scientific Integrity Officer and NIST Research Conduct Officer.
anne.andrews@nist.gov or 301.975.5445

4. Describe how the results of the survey will be analyzed and used to generalize the results to the entire customer population.

The survey results will be aggregated and analyzed to identify trends in responses. These trends may include staff knowledge/awareness and beliefs the programs at NIST, how well-supported they feel in the scientific process, and overall comments that are provided. The proposed analysis plan is listed below. In particular, we will be looking for areas where we need to improve training and awareness of the programs. Finally, the results will be shared in an annual report to NIST leadership, staff, and the public. The results will be posted to NIST internal and external websites.

- Preliminary analysis
 - Quantitative: Summary results for each question
 - For multiple choice questions: count per response
 - For scaled questions: mean response
 - Qualitative: Summarize responses to two Comments questions for themes
- Secondary analysis
 - Group responses by
 - Role (section 1 question regarding role at NIST)
 - Supervisor status
 - Employment status (Federal employee, NIST Associate, contractor, other)
 - We may group non-Federal employee groups, if necessary
 - Career path and band
 - Exploratory analysis: comparison between groups
- Future analyses will include comparing these results over time as we implement the survey annually.