POLICY ON OWNERSHIP OF RESEARCH DATA

VANDERBILT UNIVERSITY MEDICAL CENTER

The following general principles govern ownership of research data obtained from any research activity using Vanderbilt University Medical Center facilities or with support from funds administered by the Medical Center. This policy applies to employees of the Howard Hughes Medical Institute but does not apply to work done by other organizations in space leased by Vanderbilt University. "Data" are defined as "recorded information, regardless of form or the media on which it may be recorded." (Federal Acquisition Regulations, Subpart 27.4.) Tangible data is a general term which includes devices, cell lines, vaccines, plasmids, etc.

1. Consistent with the University policy on Technology and Literary and Artistic Works, Vanderbilt University Medical Center asserts its rights to ownership of original primary research data developed by its faculty, fellows, students, and employees, regardless of the technology used to create, preserve, or record it.

2. The principal investigator of a project or subproject is, for practical purposes, the steward of the research data. It is the responsibility of this individual to preserve, if feasible, the data for a minimum period of seven (7) years. A decision to destroy research data prior to seven years must be reviewed and approved by the Deans or their designees on advice of the Chair of the principal investigator. A permanent record must be kept in a central place reflecting the inventory of destroyed data.

3. When principal investigators for a project retire or depart the University, upon written request they shall be permitted normally to take their research data and related documentary material. If they wish the research data to remain at Vanderbilt, the Deans or their designees shall appoint, under advisement of the principal investigator, a person to assume stewardship of the research data. The principal investigator responsible for the research data must assure in writing that Vanderbilt University will have access to all of the data, if required. If the death of a principal investigator at Vanderbilt, the Deans or their designees, on advice of the Chair of the deceased researcher, shall appoint a person to assume stewardship of the research data.

4. The original data must remain in the principal investigator's department of primary appointment if so mandated by the Deans or their designees or by law or the funding organization. Principal investigators will have the right and opportunity to access and copy these data for their research needs on request to the Deans or their designees.

5. In those cases where there may be a dispute concerning the stewardship, removal, or destruction of tangible data, the final decision will be made by the Deans or their designees with the opportunity to appeal to the Vice-Chancellor for Health Affairs.

Approved by the Executive Faculty, School of Medicine, September 6, 1995
Approved by the Vice-Chancellor for Health Affairs, September 8, 1995