

# Scientific Integrity Survey at EPA 2021

## Participant Overview

### **1. For which EPA Program Office or Region do you work?**

- OA
- OAR
- OCSPP
- OCFO
- OECA
- OGC
- OIG
- OLEM
- ORD
- OW
- OITA
- OMS
- Region 1
- Region 2
- Region 3
- Region 4
- Region 5
- Region 6
- Region 7
- Region 8
- Region 9
- Region 10

### **2. In what OLEM Office do you work?**

- IOAA
- FFRRO
- OCPA
- OMIS
- OPM
- OSRTI
- ORCR
- OUST
- OBLR
- OEM
- MDP

### **3. In what OAR Office do you work?**

- IOAA
- OAQPS
- OAP
- OTAQ
- ORIA

### **4. In what OW Office do you work?**

- IOAA
- OGWDW
- OST
- OWM
- OWOW

### **5. In what OCSPP Office do you work?**

- OPS
- OPPT
- OPP
- IOAA

### **6. What is your Division?**

- Communication Services and Information Division
- Information Technology and Resources Management Division
- Mission Support Division
- OPS Immediate Office

### **7. What is your Division?**

- Data Gathering and Analysis Division
- Existing Chemicals Risk Assessment Division
- Existing Chemicals Risk Management Division
- New Chemicals Division
- Project Management and Operations Division
- OPPT Immediate Office

**8. What is your Division?**

- Antimicrobials Division
- Biological and Economic Analysis Division
- Biopesticides and Pollution Prevention
- Environmental Fate and Effects Division
- Health Effects Division,
- Pesticide Re-evaluation Division
- Registration Division
- OPP Immediate Office

**9. In which ORD Office or Center do you work?**

- IOAA
- ORM
- OSAPE
- CEMM
- CCTE
- CPHEA
- CESER
- OSIM

**10. Which of the following categories best describes your primary role at EPA?**

- Planning, conducting, or managing science, scientists, or technical activities. This includes basic or applied research; or the collection, synthesis, or analysis of existing data. Examples include modeling, data collection in the field or laboratory, analysis or evaluation of lab samples, analytical method development, quality assurance/quality control, social, behavioral and economic analysis, systematic review, risk assessment, or other technical activities; or supervising, managing, or overseeing personnel performing such tasks.
- Making policy decisions using scientific findings, products, or conclusions. This includes decisions about policies, guidance, or regulations (for example: policy analysis, rule, or policy development, permit writing, pesticide or chemical registrations, compliance approvals, grant review, inspections or evaluations, enforcement, or similar activities).
- Communicating science or about scientific findings (internally or externally) via any media (for example: public affairs, internal communication, community outreach, stakeholder engagement, write/publish manuscripts or press releases, or similar activities).
- My primary role at EPA encompasses more than one of the previously listed categories.
- My primary role at EPA does not fit into any of these categories (please briefly describe how your work relates to science, if at all).

Prior Knowledge and Experiences

**11. Prior to taking this survey, were you aware that the Scientific Integrity Policy must be adhered to by...**

- EPA Contractors: Yes, No
- EPA Grant Recipients: Yes, No

**12. Have you ever reported an allegation related to a potential lapse in scientific integrity?**

- No
- Yes

**13. Are you a supervisor/manager at EPA? (Please select all that apply)**

- No
- Yes (1<sup>st</sup> line)
- Yes (2<sup>nd</sup> line)
- Yes (above 2<sup>nd</sup> line)
- Yes (other)

## Questions for Managers/Supervisors

**14. Have you ever participated in any type of management training on scientific integrity at EPA?**

- Yes
- No

**15. Did the management training help you feel more equipped to address scientific integrity issues as a supervisor/manager of scientific activities at EPA?**

- Yes
- No

**16. Over the past 2 calendar years (2019-2020), did anyone from your staff report a scientific integrity concern to you?**

- Yes
- No

**17. Currently, as a supervisor/manager, what additional resources do you most need to effectively respond to scientific integrity concerns? Please choose your top 2.**

- More time
- More funding
- More training
- More support from my managers
- More staff
- More support from my Deputy Scientific Integrity Official
- Other please specify

**18. Thinking of your experience over the past 2 calendar years (2019-2020), please rate your agreement with the following statements about scientific integrity and your roles as a supervisor/manager (Strongly agree, Somewhat agree, Somewhat disagree, Strongly disagree, NA/No basis to judge).**

- As a supervisor/manager, I understood how the Scientific Integrity Policy applies to my role.
- As a supervisor/manager, I included scientific integrity behaviors when I evaluated the performance of the people I supervise.
- As a supervisor/manager, I felt supported and empowered to uphold a culture of scientific integrity.
- I was rewarded by my supervisor/manager for upholding a culture of scientific integrity.

**19. If you have additional comments about your experiences as a supervisor/manager upholding scientific integrity, or suggestions for how you as a supervisor/manager could be better supported in your efforts, please share them below.**

## Culture of Scientific Integrity at EPA

**20. The following questions are based on your experiences at EPA over the past 2 calendar years (2019-2020). Please indicate how strongly you agree or disagree with the following statements about the culture of scientific integrity at EPA during that time period (Strongly agree, Somewhat agree, Somewhat disagree, Strongly disagree, NA/ No basis to judge).**

- I had the ability to review scientific content of an Agency document to which I have significantly contributed before finalization or public dissemination.
- In our work culture, people felt free to raise dissenting opinions without it having a negative impact on their careers.
- Scientific findings, products, and conclusions were generated, reviewed, and shared in a timely and transparent manner.

**21. The following questions are based on your experiences over the past 2 calendar years(2019-2020). Please indicate how strongly you agree or disagree with the following statements about the culture of scientific integrity at EPA and in my Program Office/Region (Strongly agree, Somewhat agree, Somewhat disagree, Strongly disagree). Program Office includes OA, OAR, OCSPP, OCFO, OECA, OGC, OIG, OLEM, ORD, OW, OITA, OMS. Region includes Regions 1-10**

➤ **EPA**

- Scientists were able to do their work knowing they are protected from intimidation or coercion to alter scientific data or findings.
- Decision-makers made the scientific and/or non-scientific basis for their policy decisions accessible/transparent.
- Decision-makers maintained high standards of honesty and integrity.

➤ **PROGRAM OFFICE/REGION**

- Scientists were able to do their work knowing they are protected from intimidation or coercion to alter scientific data or findings.
- Decision-makers made the scientific and/or non-scientific basis for their policy decisions accessible/transparent.
- Decision-makers maintained high standards of honesty and integrity.

**22. The following questions are based on your experiences over the past 2 calendar years(2019-2020). Please indicate how strongly you agree or disagree with the following statements about the culture of scientific integrity at EPA and in my Program Office/Region (Strongly agree, Somewhat agree, Somewhat disagree, Strongly disagree). Program Office includes OA, OAR, OCSPP, OCFO, OECA, OGC, OIG, OLEM, ORD, OW, OITA, OMS. Region includes Regions 1-10**

➤ **EPA**

- I could openly express my scientific opinions about the Agency's scientific work without fear of retaliation.
- My scientific findings, products, or conclusions were not altered or suppressed
- My submissions to peer reviewed scientific journals were not delayed regardless of the level of controversy of the topic.

➤ **PROGRAM OFFICE/REGION**

- I could openly express my scientific opinions about the Agency's scientific work without fear of retaliation
- My scientific findings, products, or conclusions were not altered or suppressed
- My submissions to peer reviewed scientific journals were not delayed regardless of the level of controversy of the topic

**23. If you have any additional comments to share about the culture of scientific integrity related to the following, please share below**

- Open expression of scientific opinions
- Scientific products
- Factors that hindered or supported your scientific integrity efforts at EPA

**24. The following is a list of behaviors that demonstrate support for a culture of scientific integrity. Based on your experiences within the past 2 calendar years (2019-2020), please indicate whether you think your 1st line and 2nd line supervisors, political appointees and career leaders in in my Program Office/Region and political appointees and career leaders across EPA have exhibited these supportive behaviors (Strongly agree, Somewhat agree, Somewhat disagree, Strongly disagree). Program Office includes OA, OAR, OCSPP, OCFO, OECA, OGC, OIG, OLEM, ORD, OW, OITA, OMS. Region includes Regions 1-10**

- Created a supportive environment for staff to report lapses in scientific integrity
- Put scientific integrity above pressures to get tasks done.
- Ensured that scientific conclusions are independent of policy implications or political

- interference
  - Cultivated a workplace culture that supports honesty and rigor.
  - Stood behind scientific staff who put forth scientifically defensible positions (including those that may be controversial)
- 25. Based on your experiences within the past 2 calendar years (2019-2020), how would you rate the following characteristics related to the Culture of Scientific Integrity at EPA and in my Program Office/Region (Excellent, Good, Average, Poor)?**
- Transparency of decision-making
  - Rigor of science
  - Independence of scientific conclusions from their policy implications
- 26. In general, considering the past 2 calendar years (2019-2020), how satisfied were you with the Culture of Scientific Integrity at in my Program Office/Region (Very satisfied, Somewhat satisfied, Somewhat dissatisfied, No basis to judge). Program Office includes OA, OAR, OCSPP, OCFO, OECA, OGC, OIG, OLEM, ORD, OW, OITA, OMS. Region includes Regions 1-10**
- EPA
  - PROGRAM OFFICE
  - Region
- 27. Since the reorganization of my Program Office has your level of satisfaction with the culture of scientific integrity changed?**
- My level of satisfaction has improved
  - My level of satisfaction has stayed the same
  - My level of satisfaction has gotten worse
  - No basis to judge as the reorganization occurred prior to my placement with the Program Office
- 28. Thinking of your experience over the past 2 calendar years (2019-2020), were you satisfied with the scientific professional development opportunities available to you at EPA?**
- Yes (please provide comments and/or detail your reasons)
  - No (please provide comments and/or detail your reasons)
- 29. Please provide any comments about your experiences during your time at EPA that demonstrate support for or a lack of support for a culture of scientific integrity at the Agency, and why.**

### Reporting & Addressing Lapses in Scientific Integrity

**30. How familiar are you with EPA's Scientific Integrity Policy? (select one):**

- Extremely familiar
- Moderately familiar
- Slightly familiar
- Unfamiliar

**31. Prior to taking this survey:**

**Did you know that you could contact the EPA Scientific Integrity Official?**

- No, I was not previously aware
- Yes, I was previously aware but have not done so
- Yes, I was previously aware because I have reached out

**Did you know that you could contact your Deputy Scientific Integrity Official?**

- No, I was not previously aware
- Yes, I was previously aware but have not done so
- Yes, I was previously aware because I have reached out

**Did you know that you could contact anonymously?**

- EPA Scientific Integrity Official: Yes, No
- Deputy Scientific Integrity Official: Yes, No

**Did you know that you can contact for advice and assistance without making a formal allegation?**

- Scientific Integrity Official: Yes, No

- Deputy Scientific Integrity Official: Yes, No

**32. Who did you contact about your allegation?**

- EPA's Scientific Integrity Official: Yes, No, N/A
- Deputy Scientific Integrity Official: Yes, No, N/A
- Office of Inspector General: Yes, No, N/A
- First-line supervisor: Yes, No, N/A
- Second-line supervisor: Yes, No, N/A
- Union: Yes, No, N/A
- Other (please specify): Yes, No, N/A

**33. Were the individuals/groups you contacted about your allegation helpful?**

- EPA's Scientific Integrity Official: Yes, No
- Deputy Scientific Integrity Official: Yes, No
- Office of Inspector General: Yes, No
- First-line supervisor: Yes, No
- Second-line supervisor: Yes, No
- Union: Yes, No
- Other: Yes, No

**34. Thinking of your experience in the past 2 calendar years (2019-2020), do you have any allegations relating to a potential lapse in scientific integrity that you have not reported?**

**(Select all that apply)**

- |  |                                     |
|--|-------------------------------------|
| ➤ No, I do not have any allegations that have not been reported              | ➤ Yes, Falsification or fabrication |
| ➤ Yes, I do have an allegation(s) that has not been reported                 | ➤ Yes, Plagiarism                   |
| ➤ Yes, Suppression or delay of release of a scientific report or information | ➤ Yes, Conflicts of interest        |
| ➤ Yes, Interference with science by a manager or other decision-maker        | ➤ Yes, Differing scientific opinion |
| ➤ Yes, Scientific methods  | ➤ Yes, Data quality concerns        |
|  | ➤ Yes, Authorship                   |
|  | ➤ Yes, Other                        |

**35. Please detail the Other issue you have not reported.**

**36. Please explain why you have not reported this potential lapse in scientific integrity.**

**37. If a concern emerged in the future, how comfortable would you feel**

**reporting allegations relating to a potential lapse in scientific integrity to (Very comfortable, Somewhat comfortable, Not at all comfortable, N/A):**

- EPA's Scientific Integrity Official/Scientific Integrity Program
- Deputy Scientific Integrity Officer
- Office of Inspector General
- 1<sup>st</sup> Line Supervisor
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Line Supervisor
- Union
- Other

**38. Please select the reasons you may feel discomfort with reporting allegations relating to a potential lapse in scientific integrity**

- I do not understand how to report a concern: Yes, No
- I do not want to be considered a troublemaker: Yes, No
- I am concerned that my confidentiality will not be protected: Yes, No
- I fear retaliation by my supervisor: Yes, No
- I fear retaliation by senior Agency leadership: Yes, No
- I do not believe my complaint will be handled promptly: Yes, No
- I do not believe my complaint will be handled fairly: Yes, No
- I do not believe the incident will be resolved: Yes, No
- I think nothing will change: Yes, No
- I don't have time to make the report/allegation: Yes, No
- I don't want to get involved: Yes, No
- Other (please specify): Yes, No

**39. Have you ever experienced retaliation for an issue related to scientific integrity?**

- Yes
- No

**40. Without scientific justification, has anyone at EPA ever prohibited you from:**

- Conducting needed experiments: Yes, No
- Collecting necessary samples: Yes, No
- Engaging with other federal agencies in the conduct of your scientific work: Yes, No
- Engaging with State, City, Tribal, or other local partners, in the conduct of your scientific work: Yes, No
- Other, please specify: Yes, No

**41. The EPA expects and encourages all employees to offer and welcome differing scientific opinions (DSOs) as a legitimate and necessary part of the scientific process. Ideally DSOs would be resolved internally or through peer review, but if not resolved, DSOs are included in deliberative documents for decision officials.**

- Were you aware of EPA's DSO approach prior to taking this survey: Yes, No
- Do you think the DSO approach could be useful: Yes, No

**42. Thinking of your experience in the past 2 calendar years (2019-2020), please rate your agreement with the following statements about the expression and resolution of employee DSOs (Strongly agree, Somewhat agree, Somewhat disagree, Strongly disagree, No basis to judge)**

- *EPA*
  - The open expression of employee DSOs was encouraged.
  - Overall, employee DSOs were resolved in a satisfactory manner.
- *PROGRAM OFFICE/REGION*
  - The open expression of employee DSOs was encouraged.
  - Overall, employee DSOs were resolved in a satisfactory manner.

**43. In the past 2 calendar years (2019-2020), were you ever pressured to misrepresent or inappropriately alter, without scientific justification**

- Authorship (Yes, No, N/A)
- Research design/ methodology (Yes, No, N/A)
- Research protocols or standards (Yes, No, N/A)
- Collection of data (Yes, No, N/A)
- Analysis of data (Yes, No, N/A)
- Scientific conclusions or research findings in scientific products (Yes, No, N/A)
- Scientific conclusions or research findings in policy documents (Yes, No, N/A)
- Oral/written presentation of research findings (Yes, No, N/A)
- Other (please specify) (Yes, No, N/A)

- 44. As the Scientific Integrity Policy notes, lapses in scientific integrity can occur if there is: a failing to differentiate between science and policy; intentional/purposeful misrepresentation or exaggeration of uncertainty; or downplaying or misuse of science in policy decision-making. If you have ever observed these behaviors at EPA, please feel free to share comments below. Your comments will help us improve the future implementation of the Scientific Integrity Policy.**
- 45. How confident are you in your understanding of scientific misconduct (e.g. fabrication, falsification, plagiarism)?**
- Not at all
  - Slightly
  - Somewhat
  - Moderately
  - Extremely
- 46. Please indicate your agreement with the following statements about scientific misconduct (e.g. fabrication, falsification, plagiarism) at different organizational levels at EPA (Strongly agree, Somewhat agree, Somewhat disagree, Strongly disagree)**
- I rarely encounter scientific misconduct
  - The culture is supportive of openly resolving research errors or scientific misconduct concerns.
  - There is a high level of time pressure related to research activities.
  - There is a high level of workload pressure related to research activities.
  - Staffing shortages lead to scientific misconduct issues.
  - Funding shortages lead to scientific misconduct issues.

#### Release of Scientific Information to the Public

- 47. Many parts of the Agency have specific procedures for obtaining permission for the release of scientific products outside of the EPA. Thinking of your experience over the past 2 calendar years (2019-2020), please rate your level of agreement to the following statements about the clearance process or procedure for scientific products in your Program Office/Region (Strongly agree, Somewhat agree, Somewhat disagree, Strongly disagree, No basis to judge)**
- Internal review of scientific content in my Program Office/Region is impartial.
  - The clearance procedure is consistent in my Program Office/Region.
  - The clearance procedure is transparent in my Program Office/Region.
  - I can accurately predict the amount of time it will take to clear a scientific product in my Program Office/Region.
- 48. Please comment on your personal experiences over the past 2 calendar years (2019-2020) at EPA with the clearance process (for any scientific products to which you contributed) and/or include any suggestions for improvement. Experiences can include internal clearance and/or cross-agency or inter-agency review.**
- 49. Over the past 2 calendar years (2019-2020), were you asked to provide information to the media (the term media includes but is not limited to newspaper, magazines, radio, television, internet, or news sections of scientific journals; and responses made by interview or in written form)? Please select all that apply.**
- Yes, I was asked by an outside media entity to provide information
  - Yes, I was asked by the Office of Public Affairs (OPA) to provide information
  - No, I was not asked to provide information
  - No, this does not apply to me/It is not a part of my job responsibilities
- 50. Were you only given the option to provide written comments?**
- Yes
  - No



**51. Were you interviewed by a member of the media on the phone or virtual platform?:**

- Yes
- No

**52. Did an EPA public affairs/media representative join you on the call?:** Yes, No

**53. Considering your experiences over the past 2 calendar years (2019-2020), please rate your agreement with the following statement (Strongly agree, Somewhat agree, Somewhat disagree, Strongly disagree):**

- I could freely express my scientific views to the media and public provided I specify that I am not speaking on behalf of, or as a representative of, the Agency

**54. What is your current comfort level and interest in speaking with the media in your professional/expert capacity? Please indicate whether you agree or disagree with the following statements:**

- I am comfortable speaking to the media about my research and/or scientific knowledge: Agree, Disagree
- I prefer having an OPA or other EPA media official on the line when speaking with the media: Agree, Disagree
- I have received media training: Agree, Disagree
- I want/need media training to feel comfortable: Agree, Disagree
- I don't want to speak with the media about my research and/or scientific knowledge: Agree, Disagree
- I am interested in engaging on social media platforms to share my expertise, provided I specify that I am not speaking on behalf of, or as a representative of, the Agency: Agree, Disagree

**55. Please share anything that you think is useful to aid the Scientific Integrity Program in revising how the Scientific Integrity Policy addresses interactions between EPA scientists and the media.**

### Suggestions for Enhancing EPA's Culture of Scientific Integrity

**56. Currently, what do you think are the greatest obstacles to achieving a Culture of Scientific Integrity at EPA? (Select your top 5 choices and rank them from 1 to 5, with 1 being the greatest obstacle)**

- fear of retaliation
- misrepresentation of science as policy
- interference in science by political appointees across EPA
- interference in science by career leaders across EPA
- lack of appropriate resources (staff and/or funding)
- mischaracterization of scientific uncertainty
- interference in science by managers/supervisors within EPA
- inappropriate influence of nongovernmental and/or external stakeholders (such as advocacy groups)
- inappropriate influence of industry
- inappropriate influence of the Office of Management and Budget or other White House offices, or other governmental agencies
- failures of internal and/or external peer or technical review practices (including advisory committees)
- scientific misconduct
- other, please specify

**57. Which of the following would be most useful for enhancing the culture of scientific integrity at EPA? (Select your top 5 choices and rank them from 1 to 5, with 1 being the most useful)**

- Greater visible commitment to scientific integrity by decision-makers across EPA
- Decision-makers across EPA held accountable for violations of the Scientific Integrity Policy
- Finding ways to meet deadlines without a loss of scientific rigor
- Manager/supervisor(s) respect differing scientific opinions as a legitimate and necessary part

- of the scientific process
- Mandatory training on scientific integrity for all staff every two years
- Mandatory training on scientific integrity tailored to upper management
- Mandatory training on scientific integrity tailored to public affairs staff
- Creation of clear guidance about science versus policy
- Creation of clear guidance about inappropriate influence on science
- Best practices documents on topics related to scientific integrity
- More outreach from the Scientific Integrity Official
- Supplemental training on topics related to scientific integrity
- A hotline maintained by the EPA Scientific Integrity Program to report allegations of lapses in scientific integrity
- Other (please specify)

**58. Based on your understanding and experiences, please share any suggestions that you have for improving scientific integrity at EPA.**

**59. If there are other scientific integrity concerns that have not been covered in the survey, please feel free to discuss them here.**

### Demographics

**60. My current grade or classification level is**

- GS-8 or below
- GS-9 - 11
- GS-12 or 13
- GS-14
- GS-15
- SES
- ST or SL
- Title 42
- Schedule C
- Other

**61. I have worked at EPA for:**

- |                    |                      |
|--------------------|----------------------|
| ➤ Less than 1 year | ➤ 16-20 years        |
| ➤ 1-5 years        | ➤ 21-25 years        |
| ➤ 6-10 years       | ➤ 26-30 years        |
| ➤ 11-15 years      | ➤ More than 30 years |

**62. Please select the racial category or categories with which you most closely identify.**

**Please select the appropriate box. Check as many as apply.**

- |                                     |                                    |
|-------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| ➤ American Indian or Alaskan Native | ➤ Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander |
| ➤ Asian                             | ➤ White                            |
| ➤ Black or African-American         | ➤ Other                            |

**63. Are you Hispanic or Latino? (A person of Cuban, Mexican, Puerto Rican, South or Central American, or other Spanish culture or origin, regardless of race.)**

- Yes
- No

**64. Which of the following best represents how you think of yourself?**

- |   |                           |
|---|---------------------------|
| ➤ Lesbian or gay                        | ➤ Something else          |
| ➤ Straight, that is, not lesbian or gay | ➤ I don't know the answer |
| ➤ Bisexual                              |                           |

**65. What sex were you assigned at birth?**

- Male

➤ Female

**66. Do you currently describe yourself as male, female, or transgender?**

➤ Female

➤ Transgender

➤ Male

➤ None of these

**67. Are you an individual with a disability?**

➤ Yes

➤ No

**68. Please share your birth year using a 4-digit format (e.g. 2021).**

### Final Comments

**Is there anything else you would like to share with us regarding scientific integrity at EPA? Your response will be extremely useful to the Scientific Integrity Official and Committee because it will inform the Agency's future implementation of the Scientific Integrity Policy.**