



## MINORS IN RESEARCH AND SCHOLARSHIP

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### I. Purpose

This policy provides guidance for monitoring and coordinating minors in laboratories.

### II. Policy Statement

Georgia Southern University's concern for safety extends not only to employees and students but to anyone, especially minors (under the age of 18), visiting university laboratories, research facilities, shops, and studios who may be exposed to hazards including, but not limited to, chemical, biological, and radioactive materials; thermal, physical, and electrical hazards; compressed gases; lasers, or sharp objects.

Minors are not permitted in GSU laboratories, research facilities, studios, or shops except for the sanctioned activities defined below:

#### A. Sanctioned Activities:

1. Participants (study subjects) in a research project approved by the GSU Institutional Review Board.
  - a. Participants must follow the approved IRB protocol.
2. Tour groups hosted by a GSU outreach facility, including, but not limited to, the Planetarium, Center for Wildlife Education, GSU Museum, Garden of the Coastal Plain, or departmental personnel.
  - a. Participants must provide parental consent and follow outreach facility or departmental conduct procedures.
3. Participants over the age of 14 in a directed educational mentorship, including science fair projects, following GSU educational mentorship procedures; approved by the college dean, department chair, or designee; and with parental permission and a GSU waiver of liability. (No younger students will be accepted for these mentorships.)
  - a. Participants will follow the procedures for educational mentorships attached to this policy.
4. GSU students enrolled in courses listed in a campus catalog or engaged in activities that are part of an approved curriculum or the duties of student employment.
  - a. Minors will follow the same policies and procedures that apply to all GSU students and student employees.

While participating in sanctioned activity, minors must be under the direct supervision of a university

employee trained in, and knowledgeable about, potential hazards and receive appropriate orientation to potential hazards in the laboratory, research facility, shop, or studio where they will be engaged. Prior to allowing minors to tour, observe, or participate at a GSU facility with potential hazards, the supervising employee must conduct a basic safety orientation addressing general safety and any hazards particular to the space in question. Parental permission and a GSU liability waiver must be obtained prior to admittance.

### **III. Exclusions**

None.

### **IV. Procedures**

#### **A. Educational mentorship procedure:**

1. A faculty member must sponsor the minor. The faculty member's department chair must approve the proposed project description and plan prior to the minor's first visit to the lab, research facility, studio, or shop.
2. The faculty sponsor must complete a supervision contract describing the activities the minor will perform and obtain signatures from the principal investigator/faculty lab director, direct supervisor of the minor, and department chair. The completed form is kept on file with the relevant laboratory safety plan and department chair.
3. The faculty sponsor ("Faculty or Staff with direct supervision") must provide orientation to the laboratory safety plan for the minor. At a minimum, training must cover the contents of the plan, relevant protocols (e.g., IBC, IACUC, IRB, GSU chemical hygiene plan), and relevant procedures and protocols for the specific work the minor will perform, with specific examples of safe work practices (correct handling procedures; required personal protective equipment). Training documentation must be maintained in the laboratory safety plan and with the department chair.
4. The minor and his/her parent or legal guardian must sign the GSU release from liability and consent to emergency medical treatment and release of records. These forms are kept on file with the relevant laboratory safety plan and department chair. One copy of the signed forms must be readily available in an emergency, so medical personnel can quickly see the minor's consent to medical treatment.
5. A designated, trained, and knowledgeable university employee must directly supervise minors in the laboratory at all times.
6. Whenever possible, minors will seek secondary school and/or college credit for their activities.

#### **Related Information:**

[OSHA 29 CFR 1910.1450 – Occupational Exposure to Hazardous Chemicals in Laboratories](#)

[OSHA 29 CFR 1910.1200 – Hazard Communication](#)

[Biosafety in Microbiological and Biomedical Laboratories \(BMBL 5<sup>th</sup> Edition\)](#)

[USG Policy on Age Criteria](#)

University Policy on [Age Restrictions 2115](#)

University Policy on [Background Investigation 2030](#)

University Policy on [Children in the Workplace 3050](#)