1.0 POLICY

1.1 The University of Alabama has created the Human Research Protections Program (this includes but is not limited to the University of Alabama IRBs) to protect the rights and welfare of research participants and to provide guidance to the University and external communities about the ethical and legal protection of research participants.

1.2 It is the policy of the University of Alabama that all individuals involved with the Human Research Protections Program shall understand and apply their obligation to protect the rights and welfare of research participants.

1.2.1 Persons involved with the Human Research Protections Program (HRPP) include all members of UA’s research community, including the Institutional Official; Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs, the University Deans and Department Chairs, the Associate Deans and Directors of Research, the Office of Sponsored Programs staff; the Research Compliance Officer and Research Compliance staff; the IRB chairs and, members; investigators and their research staffs, faculty supervising student research, students conducting research, and students learning about research ethics and their rights as research participants.

1.3 All university employees involved with research on human subjects are expected to avail themselves of the various forms of training and guidance about research ethics, regulations, legislation, and procedures provided through the Office for Research and IRB websites (See Policy: Improving Qualifications and Expertise of IRB members, Investigators, Compliance Staff, and Sponsored Programs Staff) and to apply that knowledge in regard to specific research applications.

1.4 Members of disciplines with codes of professional or scientific ethics are also expected to know and abide by those codes, which reinforce or complement federal and university regulations and policies.

1.5 UA persons involved with the HRPP are welcome to consult with the Research Compliance Officer, a Research Compliance Specialist, an IRB chair, or an IRB member at any time about protection of the rights and welfare of research participants. Contact information for these persons is provided on the IRB website. The main telephone number for Research Compliance is (205) 348-8461.

1.6 UA believes that students, regardless of discipline, should know their rights and responsibilities in research. Faculty are expected to encourage and foster student
knowledge regarding both the ethical conduct of research and the protections available to them as research participants.

1.7 To improve the quality of the HRPP, investigators are invited to voice concerns and suggestions for improvement for the HRPP. (See Policy: Investigator Input to Human Research Protections Program and IRB Review Process.)

1.8 Faculty are encouraged to conduct research on the effectiveness of methods and measures to protect the rights and welfare of research participants, thus increasing knowledge about effective HRPP/IRB policies and procedures and facilitating quality improvement of HRPP.

1.9 Responsibility

1.9.1 The Vice President for Research (UA Institutional Official) is ultimately responsible for this policy. Enabling parties are the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs, the University Deans and department chairs, the Associate Deans and Directors of Research, the Office of Sponsored Programs staff; the Research Compliance Officer and Research Compliance staff; the IRB chairs and, members; investigators and their research staffs, faculty supervising student research, and students conducting research.

2.0 PROCEDURE

2.1 All documents on the Office of Research/Research Compliance website are intended to assist persons involved with the Human Research Protections Program to achieve the expectations of this policy.

3.0 REFERENCES

3.1 None

4.0 RELATED SECTIONS

4.1 POLICY: Improving Qualifications and Expertise of IRB members, Investigators, Compliance Staff, and Sponsored Programs Staff

4.2 POLICY: Investigator Input to Human Research Protections Program and IRB Review Process

4.3 POLICY: Evaluation and Improvement of the Human Research Protection Program

4.4 POLICY: Investigator and Staff Response to Participants’ Questions and Complaints

4.5 GUIDANCE: Investigator Responsibilities