

MIDWESTERN UNIVERSITY  
STANDARD POLICY

<b>Subject:</b> Minors in Research Facilities		<b>Policy No:</b> 404
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<b>Division:</b>		
<b>Campus:</b> Glendale and Downers Grove		
<b>Approved By:</b> Kathleen H. Goepfing, Ph.D. President and CEO		

**PURPOSE**

To clarify when minors are allowed in research facilities at MWU across both campuses.

**DEFINITION**

Biohazards = Any infectious agent and/or materials, e.g. biological toxins produced by a living organism that causes disease in another living organism, including but not limited to human blood, bodily fluids, tissues and organs, recombinant DNA materials, bacteria, viruses, fungi and parasites, plant or plant pests carrying plant disease; plant and animal toxins; animal dander and other similar materials.

Minor = Individual under the age of 18

MWU = Midwestern University

ORSP = Office of Research and Sponsored Programs

Research Review Task Force = VP/HR, VP/Research & Strategic Initiatives and the ORSP Director

Sharps = Any device with a sharp point or edge that can puncture the skin (e.g. needle, syringe, lancet, razor blade, scalpel, etc.)

**POLICY**

Owing to the hazardous nature of many research activities, minors are not permitted in research laboratories without permission. Minors may enter laboratories as part of an educational program or to participate in conducting certain research under carefully controlled and supervised conditions as described below.

1. A one-time visit or tour of a research lab to learn about health care or research in general, where a minor will be under constant supervision, and will only be shadowing or observing, can be approved by the department Chair. Similar visits by a group of minors can be approved by the college Dean, Dean of Student Services or Director of ORSP, at the request of the faculty researcher(s). The campus Biosafety Officer must be notified by the individual making the request when minors are approved to enter research laboratories. Visiting minors are not permitted in the following areas:
  - BSL-2 laboratories where any research with biohazards (defined above) is performed;
  - Any laboratory approved for use of radioactive materials;
  - MWU's Animal Facilities;
  - Research laboratories in which known carcinogens, reproductive toxins, strong oxidizers/reducers, or acutely toxic chemicals are being handled during the time of the visit/tour;
  - Areas where radiation producing equipment (e.g. an x-ray unit or laser) is in operation;

- Laboratories where Class 3B or 4 lasers are in use during the visit/tour.

If the one-time visit requests to have a “hands-on” experience, the activity should be performed in a teaching lab as opposed to a research lab, if possible. In addition to meeting all of the above criteria, the hands-on activity must be low risk (e.g., gram staining of dead bacteria) and performed in a clean lab environment where all other research operations are suspended during the visit and efforts have been taken to de-risk the environment, such as securely storing Biohazards, Sharps, and/or hazardous chemicals. Approval in advance by the Research Review Task Force is required upon receiving a recommendation from the campus Biosafety Officer.

2. Requests to have a minor “hands-on” participating in a research laboratory as a volunteer requires approval in advance by the Research Review Task Force with a recommendation from the campus Biosafety Officer. Minors volunteering in research laboratories must successfully complete laboratory training requirements before starting hands-on research consistent with training approved by the Biosafety Committee for the campus. A minor’s Parent/Guardian Waiver Form for a parent/guardian of minors will be required. To request approval, the faculty member who wishes to host a minor should send an email to the campus Biosafety Officer with a cc to the ORSP Director. The email should detail:
  - A. The age of the minor and his/her name;
  - B. Lab(s) that will be accessed;
  - C. Duration of the request and anticipated frequency of visits;
  - D. Description of the volunteer program, such as its purpose, goals, and the volunteer’s specific duties;
  - E. Description of what has been, or will be, communicated to the potential volunteer;
  - F. Description of the extent to which the volunteer’s research participation complements, rather than displaced, the work of paid employees while providing significant educational benefits to the volunteer;
  - G. Description of what will be done to mitigate risk associated with the volunteering;
  - H. A statement by the faculty member attesting that the minor will, during the entirety of their volunteer experience, be supervised by a MWU faculty or staff member having knowledge of laboratory safety.
  - I. Completion of and adherence to the University's Volunteer Policy.

Note that this request will be evaluated for risk by the campus Biosafety Officer, among others. **Any request for a minor to participate in on-going research in a laboratory must take the following into consideration:**

- The minor must be at least 14 years old;
- The laboratory must demonstrate a clean environment where laboratory operations that increase hazardous risk or exposure to hazardous chemical or procedures are suspended while the minor is present;
- Minors cannot participate in research activities in the following:
  - a BSL-2 laboratory, or “hands-on” with any biohazards or sharps (see definitions), NOTE: cell culture projects for minors may be considered if the lab is following BSL- 2 practices out of an abundance of caution, where such projects will be assessed for risk by the campus Biosafety Officer, among others, on a case-by-case basis;
  - a lab where Class 3B or Class 4 lasers are operational;
  - animal facilities or research laboratories that house rodents;
  - laboratories operating radiation producing equipment.
- Minors cannot participate in research in laboratories or facilities utilizing the following:
  - hazardous chemicals such as carcinogens, teratogens, mutagens, toxins, strong oxidizers/reducers, or controlled substances;

- select agents or select agent toxins (on CDC list);
  - radioactive materials.
3. Minors are permitted, with appropriate supervision, in non-research areas of buildings where research is ongoing (e.g. lobbies, staff lounges and offices). Because the Foothills Science Building in Glendale is exclusively a research building with badge-in and badge-out privileges, supervised minors are only permitted in the south entrance lobby, or the student lounge common area. Minors should not be left unattended or unsupervised at any time.