

October 6, 2022

The Office of Research Integrity and Outreach (ORIO) at the University of Southern Maine has earned a seal of approval from prestigious international accreditors, the only such distinction for an academic institution in Northern New England.

The Washington D.C.-based [Association for the Accreditation of Human Research Protection Programs](#) accredited the Institutional Review Boards at USM. These collaborative IRBs at the university review research projects that request the use of human subjects. Such ethical reviews are a necessary step in research and innovation. These services to any Maine researcher in need of an IRB. As collaborative review boards, USM serves over 30 entities including: health care providers, state agencies, colleges and universities in Maine and beyond engaging in research.

“An accreditation like this is part of building the infrastructure needed to grow the life sciences in this state,” said Ross Hickey, Assistant Provost for Research Integrity at USM and Director of the Maine Regulatory Training and Ethics Center (MeRTEC). The only other such accreditation in Maine is held by MaineHealth, a frequent USM partner.

The accreditation for USM and four other institutions worldwide was announced Sept. 23rd AAHRPP President and CEO Elyse I. Summers.

“Despite the disruptions of the pandemic, these five organizations made it a priority to pursue accreditation and commit to AAHRPP’s high standards,” Summers said in a release. “With that decision, they signaled their dedication to quality research and, above all, to protecting the participants who make scientific advances possible.”

AAHRPP has accredited research entities across the U.S. and in Australia, Belgium, Brazil, Canada, China, India, Japan, Jordan, Mexico, Republic of Korea, Saudi Arabia, Singapore, Taiwan and Thailand.

All major U.S. independent Institutional Review Boards have earned AAHRPP accreditation. In addition, more than 85% of the top U.S. National Institutes of Health-funded academic medical centers and 70% of U.S. medical colleges are AAHRPP accredited or have begun the accreditation process.