Answers about Responsible Conduct of Research (RCR) Training Compliance on a USDA-NIFA Project

What NIFA-funded projects require RCR training?
- NIFA explicitly states that by accepting a NIFA award the grantee assures that program directors, faculty, undergraduate students, graduate students, postdoctoral researchers, and any staff participating in the research project receive appropriate training and oversight in the responsible and ethical conduct of research. RCR training of all participants is required by accepting a NIFA research or research-related award (i.e. research, education and extension), including grants, cooperative agreements and special projects. See Exceptions on the AU NIFA RCR webpage.

When does NIFA require the RCR training?
- NIFA requires each participant’s RCR training before participation or payment from the project.

How does the NIFA RCR training compliance process work? The PI/PD ensures timely online RCR training for ALL PARTICIPANTS.
- PIs/PDs are responsible for 1- Identifying each participant and 2- Ensuring their appropriate RCR training before participation or payment from the project.
  - Paid and unpaid participants are included.
  - In addition to AU participants, all participants at a sub tier (e.g., under a subaward or PSA) must complete RCR training.
- Before OSP processes the award or modification to scope of work, all known persons who will participate on the project must complete RCR training.
  - For participants involved at a sub tier, the first resource for RCR training is their own institution/organization.
  - Sub participants may affiliate with AU on the CITI website to complete RCR training only if 1- their institution/organization cannot verify compliance with NIFA RCR training requirements or they are not participating in the project under an institution/organization (e.g., PSA) and 2- OSP approves and provides direction for the affiliation, coordinating with the Office of Research Compliance as necessary.
- After processing of the award/modification, all persons added to the project must complete RCR training before participation or payment from the project.

What are the steps to take online RCR Training? They’re in this Guide. What is the appropriate online RCR Course for NIFA project participants?
- CITI offers RCR training for various participant learner groups: 1) Biomedical Sciences, 2) Social, Behavioral and Education Sciences, 3) Physical Sciences, 4) Humanities and 5) Engineering and Computing.
- NIFA’s desired RCR training content lines up with the modules in the RCR Biomedical Sciences course. To clarify this for NIFA participants, there is a note after the Biomedical Sciences choice on the CITI RCR enrollment screen suggesting it for NIFA researchers.
- A participant’s role and activities determine final course choice. Some NIFA participants choose Social, Behavioral and Education Sciences RCR training.
- Participants must choose a RCR course other than Research Administration RCR.

How does the PI/PD know that all the participants have successfully completed RCR training before participation or payment from the project?
- PIs/PDs can request that each participant send them their CITI RCR Course Completion Certificate as a pdf. PIs/PDs can forward participants’ Certificates to the Contract Administrator for documentation of training, along with their own Course Completion Certificates.

We’re here to help! See the NIFA RCR webpage or contact your Contract Administrator or the Office of Research Compliance. Rev. 3-10-2016