PI GUIDE – USDA-NIFA GRANTS – RESPONSIBLE CONDUCT OF RESEARCH (RCR) TRAINING

Here is a step-by-step guide for PIs organizing RCR training compliance on a NIFA Project.

STEP 1: What NIFA-funded projects require RCR training?
- The NIFA General Terms and Conditions explicitly state 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. This extends to all research and research-related awards (i.e. research, education and extension), including grants, cooperative agreements and special projects.

STEP 2: When does NIFA require the RCR training?
- NIFA requires each participant’s RCR training before participation or payment from the project.

STEP 3: How does the NIFA RCR training compliance process work?
- You are responsible for 1- Identifying each participant and 2- Ensuring their appropriate RCR training before participation or payment from the project.
  - In addition to AU participants, include all participants at a sub level (e.g., under a subaward or PSA).
  - Include paid and unpaid participants.
- Before OSP processes the award or modification to scope of work, all known participants on the project must complete RCR training.
  - For participants involved at a sub level, their first resource for RCR training is their own institution. Sub participants may affiliate with AU on the CITI website to complete RCR training only if 1- their institution does not offer appropriate RCR training or they are not operating under an institution (e.g., PSA) and 2- after you consult with the Office of Research Compliance.
- After account setup/modification approval, but before participation or payment from the project, you must ensure that all persons added to the project complete RCR training before participation or payment from the project.

STEP 4: What are the steps to take the online RCR Training? They’re in this Guide. What is the appropriate RCR Course for NIFA project participants?
- 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 in the CITI RCR enrollment screen suggesting it for NIFA researchers.
- The participants’ role and activities determine their final course choice. Some NIFA participants have chosen Social, Behavioral and Education Sciences RCR training.
- In any event, the CITI enrollment screen explains that taking the RCR for Research Administration course does not satisfy NIFA’s RCR training requirements.

STEP 5: How do you know that all the participants have taken RCR training?
- Request that each participant send their Course Completion Certificate to you as a pdf. You can forward them to your Contract Administrator for documentation, along with the Course Completion Certificate for yourself.

We’re here to help! Please direct any questions to your Contract Administrator who will coordinate with the Office of Research Compliance as necessary. Rev. 2-25-2016