

TIGER TIPS
RESOURCES FOR AUBURN RESEARCHERS
Research Terms and Conditions (RTC)

In 2000, the Federal Demonstration Partnership (FDP), a cooperative initiative among numerous Federal agencies and institutional recipients of research funds aimed at reducing the administrative burdens associated with research grants and contracts, developed Standard Terms and Conditions as a model implementation of OMB Circular A-110. These terms were an effective set of requirements for many agency research awards. In 2005, following public and agency comment on the original FDP terms, standard research terms and conditions (RTCs) were developed by Research Business Models (RBM), an Interagency Working Group of the Social, Behavioral & Economic Research Subcommittee of the Committee on Science (CoS), a committee of the National Science and Technology Council (NSTC). In 2008, a side-by-side comparison of OMB Circular A-110 and the Research Terms and Conditions was developed; the terms and conditions were updated in 2011.

This project is an initiative of the Research Business Models (RBM) Interagency Working Group. One of the RBM Subcommittee's priority areas is to create greater consistency in the administration of Federal research awards. Given the increasing complexity of interdisciplinary and interagency research, it has become increasingly important for Federal agencies to manage awards in a similar fashion.

On June 30, 2014, a proposal was presented to the RBM on behalf of the participating agencies from the RBM Interagency Working Group to develop a revised set of RTCs for implementing the Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards, 2 CFR 200 (Uniform Guidance). The purpose was to develop a revised set of RTCs as they apply to research and research-related grants made by the following awarding agencies to institutions of higher education and non-profit organizations.

The agencies participating in this activity include the:

U. S. Department of Commerce/National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration and National Institute of Standards and Technology;
U.S. Department of Energy;
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency;
National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA);
National Science Foundation;
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services/National Institutes of Health;
U.S. Department of Agriculture/National Institute of Food and Agriculture;
U.S. Department of Transportation/Federal Aviation Administration; and
U.S. Department of Homeland Security.

Note: each agency has specific [implementation guidance](#) that should be reviewed when determining if the Research Terms and Conditions will apply to an award. For instance, NASA will implement the RTCs for new awards issued **after** October 1, 2017 whereas, effective April 3, 2017, all new NSF grants and funding increments on existing NSF grants will incorporate the

RTCs dated April 2017. In addition, the Department of Defense (DOD) does not utilize these RTCs but will issue their own guidance in the near future.

While the Uniform Guidance outlines provisions that are specific to research, these terms and conditions:

- Incorporate the entire Uniform Guidance by reference, clarifying or supplementing select provisions where appropriate and consistent with government-wide research policy;
- Incorporate the latest version of the Frequently Asked Questions for the Office of Management and Budget's Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards at 2 CFR 200 (located at <https://cfo.gov/cofar-resources>).
- Apply to an award when included as part of the award or when incorporated in the award by reference. Use of the RTCs is envisioned as a streamlined approach that supports the implementation of the Uniform Guidance by providing clarification, supplementary guidance, and, where appropriate, selected options, while meeting the spirit and intent of a uniform implementation.

The side-by-side RTCs depict pertinent sections of the Uniform Guidance on the left side and clarifications for research and research-related awards on the right side.

The RTCs include flexibility for additional individual agency clarification through the incorporation of Appendices (Subaward Requirements; [National Policy Requirement](#)), Agency-Specific Requirements and the Prior Approval Matrix.

These RTCs will apply to an award when they are included as part of that award, or when incorporated into that award by reference. Each participating agency will develop their own implementation plan, and agency specific requirements to the RTCs, which will be posted on the NSF Web site at: <https://www.nsf.gov/awards/managing/rtc.jsp>. Since there will be multiple implementation dates, the RTC web site should be consulted frequently.

A future *Tiger Tips* article will highlight some of the requirements and their impact on Auburn's current (and future) federal grants.