

305 Responsible Conduct of Research (RCR) Policy For National Science Foundation (NSF) Awards

PURPOSE

Colorado Mesa University's (CMU) Responsible Conduct of Research (RCR) policy is intended to comply with the requirements of the National Science Foundation's (NSF) implementation of Section 7009 of the America Creating Opportunities to Meaningfully Promote Excellence in Technology, Education, and Science Act (42 U.S.C 1862o-1).

Background

The National Science Foundation (NSF) has established a training requirement in the Responsible Conduct of Research (RCR) for students and postdoctoral fellows (postdocs) supported by NSF projects. The requirement applies to all undergraduates, graduate students, and postdoc researchers who are supported by NSF projects submitted and subsequently awarded. The regulations implement provisions of the America COMPETES Act, which requires grantees to provide training and oversight in the responsible and ethical conduct of research for undergraduate and graduate students and postdocs. However, it is strongly recommended that faculty, including principal investigators, also review and become familiar with the content of the issues concerning ethical research.

At the time an NSF proposal is submitted, CMU is certifying that it has a plan to provide appropriate training and oversight for students (undergraduate and graduate) and postdoctoral fellows, who will be supported by NSF, to conduct research. Plans are not to be submitted with proposals but they are subject to review on request by NSF.

Training Program

NSF does not specify the content and delivery mode for RCR training, but suggest seminars, web-based programs, workshops, and mentoring as acceptable modes of delivery. CMU has joined the Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative (CITI), a web-based training site to provide all NSF research-related RCR compliance training. CMU has identified and established a specific RCR curriculum for learner groups by specific disciplines (Physical Sciences, Social & Behavioral Research, Biomedical, Engineers, Arts & Humanities, and Administrators). Topics covered by the CITI RCR program include, but are not limited to, Research Misconduct, Data Management, Publication Practices and Responsible Authorship, Conflicts of Interest, Collaborative Research, Mentoring, protections of Human Subjects, and use of animals in research.

CMU is responsible for verifying that undergraduate students, graduate students, and postdoctoral researchers supported by NSF to conduct research have received training in the responsible and ethical conduct of research. Principal Investigators/Project Directors are responsible for ensuring their students and postdoc researchers complete the RCR education requirements within 60 days their appointment to the research/grant project. The Office of Sponsored Programs receives electronic notification when an individual has successfully completed the training. RCR training is valid for a three year period from the date the training is completed.

CITI RCR Procedures

Go to the CITI website at <https://www.citiprogram.org/>. Create an account or login if you have already have an account. As part of the registration process, you will be asked to “Select an Institution”. From the “Participating Institutions” drop down box, select “Colorado Mesa University.” Once you have established your account, you will have the option of selecting the curriculum. You will see an option for “Responsible Conduct of Research” and will need to select the appropriate course for your area of research/discipline. You must successfully complete the RCR program within 60 days of your appointment to research/grant project.

Noncompliance

Non-compliance with Federal and CMU policies and regulations may result in the PI’s sponsored project privileges being suspended.

Other Federal Agency RCR Requirements

Other federal agencies such as the National Institutes of Health (NIH) and the US Department of Agricultural (USDA) National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA) also have RCR training requirements. While the NSF has not specified the content and mode of delivery of the RCR, other agencies such as the NIH have. For example, NIH requires that RCR training include substantial face-to-face discussion which is defined as at least 8 hours of in-person RCR training. CMU does not currently pursue research projects with NIH or the USDA NIFA. This policy is specific to awards CMU receives from the NSF and any federal flow down NSF awards.