

Implemented: June 1, 2023

MONTANA STATE UNIVERSITY BILLINGS PLAN FOR FULFILLING NSF RESPONSIBLE AND ETHICAL CONDUCT OF RESEARCH (RECR) TRAINING REQUIREMENTS

Introduction

In accordance with the America COMPETES Act, NSF requires training in the Responsible Conduct of Research for all undergraduates, graduate students, and postdocs who receive NSF funds in the form of support from salary and/or stipends to conduct research on NSF grants. The Responsible and Ethical Conduct of Research (RECR) training requirement applies to all awards from proposals to conduct research, which excludes, for example, conference, symposium, workshop, or travel proposals. (Details about the NSF RECR requirements are available here: <http://www.nsf.gov/pubs/policydocs/rcr/rcrfaqs.jsp>)

Effective June 1, 2020, the NSF has broadened its definition of RECR to include the responsibility to:

- a. Conduct peer review with the highest ethical standards;
- b. Diligently protect proprietary information and intellectual property from inappropriate disclosure; and
- c. Treat students and colleagues fairly and with respect.

Guidelines

It is the responsibility of the Principal Investigator (PI) to ensure that all students who receive NSF funds in the form of support from salary and/or stipends to conduct research on NSF grants receive training in RECR. In general, training should be completed within one month of when the individual begins work on the project, or the individual must provide a plan through which training will be completed within a reasonable timeframe (e.g., registering for a course in the coming semester). Where individuals are working on NSF projects for a short time, such as the summer, training should be completed within 10 business days of their start date.

A. Options for fulfilling RECR training requirement

The University offers several options for individuals to receive training in RECR:

- **Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative (CITI) Training** – CITI provides a web-based training in the Responsible Conduct of Research. Learners are required to complete 10 modules, with 2 optional where applicable:
 1. Introduction to RCR
 2. Authorship
 3. Collaborative Research
 4. Conflicts of Interest and Commitment
 5. Data Management
 6. Mentoring
 7. Peer review
 8. Research Misconduct
 9. Plagiarism
 10. Research, Ethics and Society
 11. Human subjects (if applicable)
 12. Animal subjects (if applicable)

- **School/Departmental Offerings** – A department may provide or plan to provide RCR training through previously established or newly created offerings.

To ensure compliance with NSF requirements, departmental offerings must be reviewed by the Office of Research Compliance, and the department must maintain appropriate compliance documentation. Such offerings will be reviewed by the Office of Research Compliance to assure that they are generally comparable to other commonly accepted RCR trainings.

Finally, in addition to the above offerings, many issues related to NSF’s RECR component, “Treat and colleagues fairly and with respect,” are covered from another angle by the Montana State University Mandatory Equity Training. This training is required of all personnel, including faculty, staff, researchers, librarians, and student workers and may be accessed through the MSUB Human Resources Department.

B. Requirements for Individuals Who Previously Completed RCR Training

- Individuals who have previously completed CITI RECR training at another institution will be credited for the modules they have taken. However, since CITI allows institutions to select from among different RECR offerings, individuals must complete any MSUB-required modules that have not been previously completed.
- Individuals who have previously completed RECR training at another institution (other than CITI RCR training) will be required to complete one of the RCR training options at MSUB.

C. Monitoring Process

- a. PIs are expected to collect and report training for all students involved in research for their project.
- b. Completion data for CITI and University courses will be collected regularly. Individuals who meet the training requirement through other methods will be required to submit evidence of compliance (e.g., course transcripts, certification from department).
- c. Reminders will be sent once a semester to PIs for a total of 3 notifications per year. Individuals who are noncompliant after those 3 notifications will have their information forwarded to the Vice Chancellor of Academic Affairs for further follow up.
- d. Failure to complete the training could result in the individual student’s ineligibility to be funded by NSF projects.

Questions

Questions regarding the NSF RCR requirement may be directed to the Office of Research Compliance, 406-657-2364, or irb@msubillings.edu. Information is also available at <https://www.msubillings.edu/orc/training.htm>