

Mississippi State University
Mississippi Agricultural & Forestry Experiment Station (MAFES)
Responsible Conduct of Research

PURPOSE

The purpose of this operating procedure is to define requirements for training in Responsible Conduct of Research (RCR) for MAFES personnel. This guidance is intended to work in tandem with OP70.03.

BACKGROUND

Federal sponsors, including but not limited to the National Institutes of Health (NIH), National Science Foundation (NSF) and National Institute of Food and Agriculture, require that recipients of federal funding implement policies and training programs that help to ensure responsible conduct of research. The federal statutes dictating such requirements are outlined in the Mississippi State University Responsible Conduct of Research Implementation Plan: [Implementation Plan.pdf \(msstate.edu\)](#)

Responsible Conduct of Research (RCR) training is intended to promote the responsible conduct of research, and to discourage research misconduct and questionable research practices, through education. Core areas defined for instruction include data acquisition, management, sharing and ownership; mentor/trainee responsibilities; publication practices and responsible authorship; peer review; collaborative science; research misconduct; conflict of interest and commitment, human subjects, and research involving animals.

DEFINITIONS

Responsible Conduct of Research (RCR) is defined as the practice of scientific investigation with integrity. It involves the awareness and application of established professional norms and ethical principles in the performance of all activities related to scientific research.

Research Misconduct is defined as fabrication, falsification, or plagiarism in proposing, performing or reviewing research, or in reporting research results (see http://ori.hhs.gov/documents/42_cfr_parts_50_and_93_2005.pdf). Research Misconduct, however, does not include honest error or honest difference of opinion.

GUIDANCE for MAFES Personnel

All MAFES scientists, Administrators, Research Associates, Graduate Research Assistants, and Post-doctoral Associates are required to complete the 2 RCR training components as described on MSU's Office of Research Compliance & Security website:

<https://www.orc.msstate.edu/compliance/rcr/training>

All other support staff and undergraduates: As a matter of policy, MAFES requires that all personnel paid from NIFA competitive or Hatch (MAFES 16 funds) funds complete RCR training *unless* granted an exemption.

Classes of employees *exempt* from RCR training requirements include:

- employees working exclusively in an administrative role on a project (for example; administrative assistants, office associates, etc.).
- employees whose project roles do not include core principles covered by RCR training (for example; washing glassware, providing animal care, plot preparation, equipment operation/maintenance, greenhouse labor, etc.).

Non-PI Participants on NSF or NIH competitive awards: For NIH this includes undergraduate students, graduate students, postdoctoral researchers, and any staff; for NSF this includes undergraduate students, graduate students, and postdoctoral researchers – must complete RCR “training for other project personnel” as listed on the Office of Research Compliance & Security website:

<https://www.orc.msstate.edu/compliance/rcr/training>

It is the PI’s responsibility to ensure that all participants on an award comply with training requirements.

Sponsored Programs Administration will not issue an award from NIFA, NSF, or NIH until the PI and Co-PIs have completed these training requirements.

For more information on MSU RCR Implementation Policy and Implementation Plan see <http://orc.msstate.edu/conduct/>.

Approved:



Scott T. Willard
Director, Mississippi Agricultural and Forestry Experiment Station

8/1/23
Date