

University of Arizona
Plan to Meet National Science Foundation
Responsible Conduct of Research Training Requirements

Training Requirement and Scope

Consistent with National Science Foundation (“NSF”) policy¹ and the America COMPETES Act, the University of Arizona (the “University”) mandates that all postdocs, undergraduate and graduate students, faculty, and senior personnel supported by NSF to conduct research must complete a NSF Responsible Conduct of Research (“RCR”) Certificate. Completion of the NSF RCR Certificate requires engaging in online instruction in 1) the responsible and ethical conduct of research, and 2) mentoring and mentorship best practices.

Oversight

The Research Integrity and Training Office, a unit of Research, Innovation & Impact, is responsible for monitoring compliance with this plan and the NSF requirements.

NSF RCR Certificate

To complete the University’s NSF RCR Certificate, learners must complete the following two (2) online courses:

1. Responsible Conduct of Research (RCR) – Basic (offered through the [CITI Program](#))
2. MENTOR Institute Training Level 1 (Offered through the [EDGE Learning system](#))

Completion of the Certificate will be tracked through the EDGE Learning system and UAccess Analytics ([Analytics Access and Provisioning Information](#)).

Deadline for Completion of NSF RCR Certificate and Scope of Requirement

For faculty and senior personnel named on all NSF proposals submitted on or after July 31, 2023:

- A completed NSF RCR Certificate must be on file in EDGE Learning no later than 30 days after the Notice of Award.

For students and postdoctoral researchers supported on all NSF grants, regardless of submission date:

- A current NSF RCR Certificate of completion must be on file in EDGE Learning no later than 30 days after first being paid on the grant.

Notifications and Consequences for Noncompliance

Monthly Notification to PIs: The Principal Investigator (“PI”) on an NSF grant that is subject to the RCR requirements will be notified via an automated email from UAccess Analytics at the beginning of each month if anyone being paid on the grant and subject to the training requirement has not completed the RCR Certificate.

¹ NSF Responsible and Ethical Conduct of Research Policy: <https://new.nsf.gov/policies/papppg/23-1/ch-9-recipient-standards#b-responsible-and-ethical-conduct-of-research-recr-9c7>

30-Day Noncompliance Escalation: If any individual subject to the training requirement is more than 30 days past due completing the NSF RCR Certification, then the Research Integrity & Training Office will notify the PI and the PI's Department Head and Associate Dean for Research of the noncompliance.

60-Day Noncompliance Escalation: If any individual subject to the training requirement is more than 60 days past due completing the NSF RCR Certification, then the Research Integrity & Training Office will notify the PI, the PI's Department Head, Associate Dean for Research, and Dean of the noncompliance. The Research Integrity & Training Office will instruct the PI's college leadership to hold off on approving any new NSF proposals from the PI until the NSF RCR Certificate has been completed by all individuals who are out of compliance with the training requirement.

Frequency of Instruction

Ethical standards and best practices in research and mentoring are constantly evolving. The University therefore requires that students and trainees renew their NSF RCR Certificate at each subsequent stage of their training. For example, a student who completes their undergraduate degree, graduate degree, and a postdoctoral fellowship at the University, and who is supported by NSF during each of those stages, will be required to complete the NSF RCR Certificate a total of 3 times – once for each stage.

Faculty and senior personnel are required to complete the NSF RCR Certificate once but are strongly encouraged to engage in supplemental continuing RCR education throughout their career.

Instructional Format

The mandatory components of the NSF RCR Certificate are offered in an online self-paced format. Supplemental training and continuing education in the responsible and ethical conduct of research is offered through live synchronous workshops during the fall and spring semesters.

Supplemental Continuing RCR Education

The University strongly encourages continuing RCR education beyond the minimum requirements of the certificate. The Research Integrity and Training Office offers numerous workshops on the responsible and ethical conduct of research for the University research community. The workshop schedule is posted online approximately 30 days before the start of the fall and spring semesters. Please visit the RCR Program webpage for more information and to register for workshops: <https://research.arizona.edu/research-compliance/rcr>.