

UT - Martin Policy: RE0001-M - The University of Tennessee Policy and Procedures on Responsible Conduct in Research and Scholarly Activities	
Version: 1	Effective Date: 08/03/2022

UNIVERSITY OF TENNESSEE AT MARTIN
RESPONSIBLE CONDUCT IN RESEARCH (RCR) INSTITUTIONAL PLAN

Background

Responsible and ethical conduct in research (RCR) is critical not only to ensure excellence but also to promote the public trust. As such, it is considered an essential component of the education of future scientists, engineers, educators, and researchers. The University of Tennessee at Martin (UT Martin) is committed to the implementation and support of best practices in research, scholarship, and creative endeavors. This plan has been developed to provide appropriate guidance and oversight in the responsible and ethical conduct of research in accordance with Section 7009 of the *America Creating Opportunities to Meaningfully Promote Excellence in Technology, Education, and Science (COMPETES) Act* (42 U.S.C. 1862o-1).

The National Institutes of Health (NIH) defines RCR 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” (<https://grants.nih.gov/grants/guide/notice-files/not-od-10-019.html>). Ethical norms in research are important for many reasons. First, ethical norms support the aims of research, such as knowledge, truth, and avoidance of error. Second, ethical norms support the values that are essential to collaborative work, such as trust, accountability, fairness, and mutual respect. Third, ethical norms help ensure that researchers are held accountable to the public. Fourth, these ethical norms help build public support for research.

Training

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Training in RCR is available to everyone at UT Martin. UT Martin strongly encourages all faculty, staff, and students to participate in RCR training. RCR training is mandatory for certain categories of researchers when required by external funders, including the United States Department of Agriculture National Institute of Food and Agriculture (USDA NIFA), National Science Foundation (NSF), and National Institutes of Health (NIH). Researchers should contact the Office of Research and Sponsored Programs (ORSP) to determine potential requirements.

UT Martin subscribes to the Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative (CITI) program to allow UT Martin affiliated researchers and students to participate in online research ethics training. CITI offers online coursework regarding the use of human subjects in research, the use of animals in research, and the responsible conduct of research. These courses are available to faculty, staff, and students at no cost. CITI courses are recognized by many other institutions and offer certificates of completion that are transferrable and valid for a period of three years. Instructions for accessing the CITI training are available by contacting the ORSP or by visiting the ORSP website.

A number of course offerings through various academic departments include components related to RCR. Also, several training modules are available on the Office of Research and Sponsored Programs (ORSP) website (<http://www.utm.edu/departments/rgc/>). This training can be used by faculty and staff as part of their annual training. Personnel from the ORSP will facilitate face-to-face training for class sessions or group meetings upon request.

Occurrence of RCR Training

Federal regulations require that all Institutional Review Board (IRB) committee members, Institutional Animal Care and Use (IACUC) committee members, and all persons involved with the care of animals on campus have documentation of RCR training on file. UT Martin requires all graduate

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students, undergraduate students, and postdoctoral researchers to complete the online CITI training prior to engaging in any research endeavors. Consistent with that requirement, the UT Martin IRB strongly suggests that all applications for review and approval of human subjects research include documentation of completion of the CITI training regarding the use of human subjects in research. Continual RCR training occurs through course instruction and faculty/student interactions. Monitoring Compliance

The Executive Director of the Office of Research, Outreach, and Economic Development is the Research Integrity Officer (RIO) for UT Martin. The RIO promotes the responsible conduct of research, receives and manages allegations of misconduct, and oversees inquiries and investigations. The RIO receives notifications of completion of CITI training modules for affiliated personnel and maintains a record of such notifications. CITI training records are also available in the UT learning system K@TE.

RCR Program Assessment

This Institutional RCR Plan is intended to provide flexibility in content and delivery and to address the varying needs of the wide range of disciplines and career stages. It is a living document and as such subject to regular assessment and modification as the educational outcomes are evaluated and best practices continue to develop.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Executive Director

Office of Research, Outreach, and Economic Development

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