
LAMAR UNIVERSITY
MANUAL OF ADMINISTRATIVE POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

SECTION: Academic Affairs
AREA: ORSPA

MAPP 02.07.08

Responsible Conduct in Research
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I. POLICY

- A. At Lamar University, our commitment to fostering a culture of excellence in research, innovation, and academic pursuits is paramount. To ensure the integrity, quality, and effectiveness of our research endeavors, it is essential to define terms, establish responsible parties, and provide guidance.

II. PURPOSE AND SCOPE

- A. The purpose of this policy is to establish a framework of guidelines, procedures, and ethics concerning the submission and implementation of research at Lamar University.
- B. Continuous growth of research enterprises is a critical priority as Lamar University continues its mission to seek new knowledge and contribute to the larger academic and professional community. Promoting the public good by fostering the transfer of knowledge gained through research to the private sector is a vital element of this mission. The University holds its research and sponsored program activities to the highest standards of moral, ethical, and legal bases of operation.
- C. This policy has been established to address conduct in all research, funded and unfunded, and in all sponsored programs regardless of funding source. Lamar University provides resources to assist in this effort. The on-line training certificate program CITI is available to faculty to assist in the development of a training program. The modules included in CITI can be used to guide and augment responsible conduct in research training in addition to face-to-face didactic interactions with students.

III. REGULATORY BASIS

- A. According to the NIH's notice "Update on the Requirement for Instruction in the Responsible Conduct in Research" Notice Number: **NOT-OD-10-019, dated 11/24/09**, upon award of any NIH Institutional Research Training Grants, Individual Fellowship Awards, Career Development Awards, Research Education Grants, Dissertation Research Grants, or other grant programs with a training component that requires instruction in responsible conduct in research as noted in the Funding Opportunity Announcement, the following must be satisfied:

1. Completion of a formal training program which includes at least 8 hours of contact hours (face to face engagement) between faculty and trainees is required, and
 2. This training program should be provided throughout the trainees' scientific career and should occur as an undergraduate, graduate, and post-doc student, as well as during Career Awards and other milestones in a scientist's career.
- B. Pursuant to the **2007 America COMPETES Act**, the National Science Foundation adopted a new certification requirement effective January 4, 2010. The updated NSF Grant Proposal Guide states: "When submitting a proposal to NSF, the Authorized Organizational Representative is required to complete a certification that the institution has a plan to provide appropriate training and oversight in the responsible and ethical conduct of research to undergraduates, graduate students, and postdoctoral researchers who will be supported by NSF to conduct research." The plan must also include a system to verify that the training has occurred. The plan does not have to be submitted with proposals, but NSF could request it at any time—and NSF has the right to audit compliance. Currently, institutions are free to develop their own plans, and at present there are no NSF-recommended models. Grantees must designate one or more persons to oversee compliance with the RCR training requirement. Grantees are 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, in accordance with the plan the grantee has put in place for their organization.

IV. DEFINITIONS

- A. **Chief Research Officer.** An individual ultimately responsible for the oversight of funded research and sponsored programs at Lamar University. At Lamar University, the Chief Research Officer is the Associate Provost for Research. The Chief Research Officer may designate an appropriate official to act on their behalf.
- B. **Conflicts of Interest (COI).** A potential or actual Conflict of Interest exists when commitments, professional judgment, obligations to Lamar University, or to widely recognized professional norms are compromised by a researcher's other interests or commitments (or those of a member of their immediate family) or could be perceived by an objective third party as such. Federal regulations provide that a conflict of interest exists if a significant financial interest or general conflict could "directly and significantly affect the design, conduct, or reporting" of federally funded research activities.
- C. **Financial Conflict of Interest Disclosure Form.** A document, provided by the Office of Research and Sponsored Programs Administration, that requests an individual to describe all Significant Financial Interests or General Conflicts of Interest of the researcher and immediate family that are, or would reasonably appear to be, directly and significantly affected by, or related to, funded or unfunded research or Sponsored Programs activities. This also includes all significant relationships of the researcher and immediate family to entities whose financial interests are, or would reasonably appear to be, directly and significantly affected by, or related to, such activities.
- D. **Researcher.** All Individuals who are engaged in research, whether funded or unfunded, or in sponsored programs activities. For the purposes of this policy, the term researcher refers to any Lamar University faculty or staff member having direct responsibility for the design, conduct or

reporting of funded or unfunded research or other sponsored programs activities funded or proposed for funding by the federal government or other external funder.

- E. **Research Compliance Officer.** An individual responsible for interpreting and enforcing compliance across all research and sponsored programs enterprises across the University. This officer shall be appointed by the Chief Research Officer and work within the Office of Research and Sponsored Programs Administration.
- F. **Sponsored Programs.** All extramurally funded activities, including but not limited to: research, training, instruction and/or public service projects involving funds, materials, or other compensation from sources (sponsors) outside of Lamar University, under a grant, contract or other agreement that meets any of the following conditions:
 - 1. Lamar University is bound to a line of scholarly or scientific inquiry specified to a substantial level of detail. Such specificity may be indicated by a plan, by the stipulation of requirements for orderly testing or validation of particular approaches, or by the designation of performance targets;
 - 2. The sponsor requires, or the proposal submitted for consideration contains, a line-item budget or modular budget. A line-item budget details expenses by activity, function, or project period. The designation of overhead (or indirect costs) qualifies a budget as the sponsor requires financial and/or programmatic reports;
 - 3. The sponsor requires that the services performed, the funds awarded, or the materials supplied under the agreement are subject to internal and/or external audit; or
 - 4. The agreement provides for the disposition of either tangible (e.g., equipment, records, technical reports, theses, or dissertations) or intangible (e.g., rights in data or inventions) properties that may result from activities covered by the agreement.

V. REPORTING OBLIGATIONS

- A. It is incumbent upon the Principal Investigator of an NIH award requiring responsible conduct in research training to prepare, administer, and document the training provided to students involved in research and sponsored program activities per the below Roles and Responsibilities.

VI. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- A. **Chief Research Officer.** The Associate Provost for Research and the Office of Research and Sponsored Programs Administration bear responsibility for all sponsored grants and contracts and their possible conflicts by providing continuous support and oversight of these activities. Decisions on a case-by-case basis can be made to determine responsibility for students whose only participation in NSF-funded research falls into one of the following situations:
 - 1. The active NSF grant funds equipment that is used in courses to provide research training.

2. The active NSF grant funds research that is incorporated into the research training provided to students in a course.
- B. **Office of Research and Sponsored Programs Administration.** The Office of Research and Sponsored Programs Administration shall be represented by the Research Compliance Officer as appointed by the Chief Research Officer. This individual has the following responsibilities:
1. Maintaining current and accurate files on every researcher involved in internal and external sponsored programs.
 2. Requesting updated disclosures from researchers at the time of funding.
 3. Developing approved management plans when applicable.
 4. Providing and maintaining relevant training to researchers.
 5. Investigating non-compliance or misconduct.
- C. **Academic Deans** may amend this plan at any time after consultation with the Office of Research and Sponsored Programs Administration. Details of any amended plan will be sent to all faculty with NSF grants, the Office of Research and Sponsored Programs Administration, and the Research Compliance Officer and will be posted on the ORSPA websites.
- D. **Researchers** must successfully complete appropriate trainings, as assigned by the Research Compliance Officer, prior to carrying out any research duties. This is required for all undergraduates, graduate postdoctoral researchers receiving wages (or working as volunteers) or receiving academic credit for participating in research. Upon completion of the online training, certification of the course is provided. Documentation of this certification will be required for participation in NSF-funded research. Responsible Conduct in Research (RCR) training will include the following components:
1. **Each student** must successfully complete the appropriate CITI module of Responsible Conduct in Research training. This requirement can be waived for students who have successfully completed an RCR workshop at another institution designed to satisfy NSF's training requirement or other comparable training; the Chief Research Officer will specify what constitutes appropriate documentation in these cases. Successful completion will be documented by attaching a certificate generated by the online training program or by acceptable alternative documentation.
 2. After completion of the online course, **students and postdoctoral researchers** must provide the certificate of completion to the Research Compliance Officer in ORSPA. An EPAF will not be processed without the documentation and pay start date cannot be prior to date of completion of the course (unless determined comparable training has been received.)
 3. **Principal Investigators** will certify that the student has received RCR training appropriate to the research project and discipline.

- 4. **Principal Investigators** will give the Research Compliance Officer periodic updates listing the students participating in the research. The Compliance Director will facilitate this process by sending reminder emails to all faculty who are PIs on NSF grants at the beginning of each semester and before summer research begins.

VII. NON-COMPLIANCE

- A. Lamar University requires that all researchers comply fully, truthfully and in a timely manner with this policy. Instances of deliberate breach will subject the researcher to disciplinary actions under policies of Lamar University and the Texas State University System. Such action could result in a formal reprimand, non-renewal of appointment, termination of appointment, or other enforcement action.
- B. If the failure of a researcher to comply with this policy has biased the design, conduct or reporting of funded or unfunded research or sponsored programs activities, Lamar University will promptly notify the appropriate granting agency, sponsor, or other appropriate agency of the incident and corrective action will be taken.

VIII. EDUCATION AND TRAINING

- A. The University will provide education and training sessions through the CITI system on conflict of interest regulations and best practices to ensure researchers understand their obligations and responsibilities.

IX. REVIEW AND RESPONSIBILITY

Responsible Parties: Academic Policy Advisory Council; Office of Research and Sponsored Programs Administration.

Review Schedule: Every three years on or before the date the policy was last revised and/or approved.

X. APPROVAL

Dr. Brett Welch	11/08/2024
Interim Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs	Date

Dr. Jaime Taylor	11/08/2024
Lamar University President	Date

POLICY LOG

Version	Date	Description of Changes
1	01/01/2011	Issued.
	08/01/2023	Last updated.
		Reviews by constituency groups completed.
		Review by campus community completed.
		Policy approved by President.

APPENDICES

Related Links

Office of Research and Sponsored Programs Administration (<https://www.lamar.edu/research/research-and-sponsored-programs.html>)

NIH NOT-OD-10-019 (<https://grants.nih.gov/grants/guide/notice-files/NOT-OD-10-019.html>)

NSF Responsible Conduct in Research (<https://www.nsf.gov/od/recr.jsp>)

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