IN THIS ISSUE

Join the UC Merced Institutional Review Board!

The Institutional Review Board (IRB) is seeking new faculty to join the board. IRB members are asked to attend one 1-hour meeting per month and may be asked to complete a protocol review no more than once per month. Please contact the IRB office (irboffice@ucmerced.edu) or Research Compliance Analyst Rhanda Rylant (rrylant2@ucmerced.edu) if you are interested in joining or learning more!

NIH Public Access Policy: Key Information for Investigators

The National Institutes of Health (NIH) has updated its **Public Access Policy** to make research findings resulting from NIH funding available to the public more quickly. Effective **July 1, 2025**, any Author Accepted Manuscript resulting from NIH-funded research must be submitted to PubMed Central immediately upon acceptance for publication**.** These articles will be made publicly available without any embargo period from the official publication date. Resources to help you comply with this new policy are available on the NIH website, including detailed submission guidelines. Additional support and information can also be found through UCOP and the UC Merced Sponsor Projects Office .

Contact the Sponsor Project's Office with any questions or comments regarding this new policy.

NIH Decision Matrix for Assessing Potential Foreign Interference for Covered Individuals or Senior/Key Personnel

NIH recently published a decision matrix for assessing potential foreign interference. See page 4 here.

A primary focus of the NIH decision matrix is non-disclosure of active foreign funding and non-disclosure of active foreign affiliations.

Specifically, the decision matrix factors include

- Malign Foreign Talent Recruitment Program participation – note this factor is automatically disqualifying.
- Foreign Funding – indicators of undisclosed or incompletely disclosed active foreign funding from a Foreign Country of Concern (defined in Section 10638 of the CHIPS and Science Act of 2022) or connected entity.
- Affiliation with Foreign Institutions or Entities - indicators of an undisclosed or incompletely disclosed active affiliation with an institution or entity located in or connected to a Foreign Country of Concern (defined in Section 10638 of the CHIPS and Science Act of 2022).

NIH Policy On New Senior/Key Personnel Training Requirements on Other Support Disclosure Requirements.

The National Institutes of Health (NIH) announced a new policy that requires NIH recipients to provide training to all faculty and researchers identified as senior/key personnel on the requirement to disclose all research activities and affiliations (active and pending) in other support (see other support form). The new requirement to train researchers to comply with other support disclosure requirements adds to the current policy (see NIH grants policy statement, section 2.5.1 "just-in-time procedures") in order to provide a comprehensive plan in the area of disclosure requirements for recipients.

Effective October 1, 2025, all senior/key personnel must complete research security training prior to proposal submission. In addition, the institution must maintain a written and enforced policy on requirements for the disclosure of other support to ensure senior/key personnel fully understand their responsibility to disclose all resources made available to the researcher in support of and/or related to all of their research endeavors, regardless of whether or not they have monetary value and regardless of whether they are based at the institution the researcher identifies for the current grant. The written policy will be maintained at the UCOP level.

For UC researchers, the training module titled, ***Research Security at The University of California***, available through the UC Learning Center will meet this requirement. Alternatively, researchers may take the SECURE Center Consolidated Training module developed by NSF available here.

National Science Foundation: Updates to Research Security Policies

The National Science Foundation (NSF) issued a notice regarding updates to its research security initiatives. The notice introduces several key policy changes aimed at safeguarding the integrity of NSF-supported research, many of which have already been shared with the UC Merced research community. The policies directly affecting researchers are summarized below:

- Mandatory Research Security Training (Effective October 10)
    - Each individual identified as a senior/key person must certify that they have completed the requisite research security training **within** 12 months prior to proposal submission. Senior/ key personnel can complete the UC Training module, ***Research Security at The University of California***, available through the UC Learning Center, to meet this new requirement. Alternatively, researchers may take the SECURE Center Consolidated Training module available here.
- Malign Foreign Talent Recruitment Program (MFTRP) Prohibition (In Effect)
    - Individuals who are a current party to a Malign Foreign Talent Recruitment Program (MFTRP) are not eligible to serve as a senior/key person on an NSF proposal or on any NSF award made after May 20, 2024
- Malign Foreign Talent Recruitment Program Certification (In Effect)
    - NSF requires MFTRP certifications from proposers and individuals identified as senior/key personnel.
        a. Pre-Award Certifications: Each individual identified as a senior/key person must certify that they are not a party to a malign foreign talent recruitment program.
        b. Post-award Certification: Individuals serving as a Principal Investigator (PI) or co-PI on an active NSF award made on or after May 20, 2024, must certify annually via Research.gov to their participation or non-participation in an MFTRP. Additional information regarding the annual certification process can be found at nsf.gov/research-security.

NIH Funding Announcements to Align with NIH Initiative to Prioritize Human-based Research

On April 29, NIH announced it is prioritizing human-focused research and reducing animal use in research. To further this initiative, all new Notices of Funding Opportunity that relate to animal model systems (NOFOs) must now also support human-focused approaches such as clinical trials, real-world data, or new approach methods (NAMs). Examples of NAMs include ex vivo human-based approaches, including perfused human organs and precision-cut tissue slices; in vitro methods, including microphysiological systems and organoids; computational and artificial intelligence-based approaches; and combinations thereof.

Importantly, NIH will no longer issue NOFOs exclusively supporting animal models or limit/specify the types of models that must be used.

This effort intends to ensure that investigators consider the models most appropriate for understanding human states of health and disease and are not constrained by the NOFO. NIH Institutes, Centers, and Programs may issue NOFOs that exclude proposals for animal use entirely.
This new emphasis on human-based research will accelerate medical advances, save animals, and help NIH achieve its crucial mission of improving human health.
Read More on the NIH website.

Friendly Reminders Ahead of our Upcoming AAALAC Site Visit

As we begin preparing for our next AAALAC site visit, we would like to remind researchers that all drugs intended to be used on or in animals that have expired must be properly discarded. Expired materials can be used for non-survival procedures IF they are labeled "for terminal use only" and IF they are not anesthetics, analgesics, or euthanasia medication. For disinfectants, we encourage labs to include expiration dates for solutions that will degrade over time when diluted in the lab (e.g., bleach).

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact the IACUC Office at iacucoffice@ucmerced.edu.

New RCI Staff Member

Rachael is a recent graduate of UC Merced!

Rachael Melgarejo joined the Office of Research Compliance and Integrity as an analyst in May 2025. Rachael supports the Export Control, Research Security and Conflict of Interest programs. Welcome Rachael!

Contact the Office of Research Compliance and Integrity

RCI Website
https://rci.ucmerced.edu/

Mailing Address
Office of Research Compliance and Integrity
University of California, Merced
5200 N. Lake Road
Merced, CA 95340

Campus Internal Mailing Address
Office of Research Compliance and Integrity
Downtown Campus Center Building

Telephone
(209) 228-4805

General Email: rci@ucmerced.edu
IRB: irboffice@ucmerced.edu
IACUC: iacucoffice@ucmerced.edu
Export Controls: exportcontrols@ucmerced.edu
Conflict of Interest: COI@ucmerced.edu
Foreign Engagements: foreignengagements@ucmerced.edu