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### **The Research Compliance and Integrity Office attends the ECAS Symposium**

The RCI team attended the 2024 Ethics, Compliance and Audit (ECAS) Symposium. This year's symposium centered on the federal research security program requirements and other compliance areas such as export controls, conflict of interest, audit services and environmental health and safety. RCI's main takeaway from the symposium is that compliance is a shared responsibility between all stakeholders. The federal government, the federal funding agencies, the academic institutions, the involved units and each individual researcher has a part in ensuring compliance with applicable regulations. RCI will continue to stay updated on federal compliance regulations to support our researchers and ensure that our institution is compliant with federal regulations.



## Important Changes to NSF Proposal Submission Requirements

The National Science Foundation has released an updated [Proposal & Award Policies & Procedures Guide \(PAPPG\)](#), which includes revised requirements for proposals due or submitted on or after May 20, 2024. While all the changes are [summarized](#), the following are updates that we would light to highlight for researchers at UC Merced.

1. Biographical Sketch
  - Must be prepared in SciENCv
  - The 3 page limit has been removed.
  - Synergistic Activities section has been moved
2. Malign Foreign Talent Recruitment Programs
  - Each individual identified as key/senior personnel must certify on both their Biographical Sketch that they are not participating in a [malign foreign talent recruitment program](#). Participants in such programs cannot participate as key/senior personnel on NSF proposals and awards.

## Revisions to the NASA Grant and Cooperative Agreement Manual

NASA released a revised edition of the NASA Grant and Cooperative Agreement Manual (GCAM) on October 1st, 2024. The revised GCAM will combine the current [Grant and Cooperative Agreement Manual](#) (GCAM) and the [Proposer's Guide](#) into a single, consolidated document.

The policies in the GCAM and 2024 Revisions will apply to new awards and funded amendments issued on or after October 1, 2024, regardless of when a proposal was submitted to NASA. This means that if a proposal was submitted in response to a Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) prior to October 1, 2024, but the award was not issued until after October 1, 2024, that award will be subject to the GCAM and 2024 Revisions.

The [Grant Notice](#) outlines the revisions to the updated grant guidance in the NASA Grant and Cooperative Agreement Manual. The following are updates that we would like to highlight for UC Merced researchers.

1. All senior/key personnel (i.e. Principal Investigators (PI), all Co-PIs, and Co-Investigators spending 10% or more of their time on an award) are required to submit a Bio sketch and Current and Pending Support (CPS) form with each application.
2. Senior/ key personnel must certify that information is accurate, current and complete and they are not part of a Malign Foreign Talent Recruitment Program.

Bio sketch and Current and Pending Support forms are posted on the NASA Grants and Cooperative Agreements [website](#) and will be required starting October 1<sup>st</sup>, 2024.



## **The Office of Research Integrity Issue Final Rule on Public Health Service Policies on Research Misconduct**

On September 12<sup>th</sup>, 2024, the Office of Research Integrity (ORI) issued the 2024 Final Rule on Research Misconduct to promote the responsible conduct of research across PHS-Funded agencies and organizations. The new regulation can be found [here](#).

This [chart](#) summarizes the changes in the regulations. Key revisions to the regulations are provided below.

1. Clarification on the definition of plagiarism to state that the following:
  - a. plagiarism also includes the unattributed verbatim or nearly verbatim copying of sentences and paragraphs from another’s work that materially misleads the reader regarding the contributions of the author.
  - b. it does not include the limited use of identical or nearly identical phrases that describe a commonly used methodology. Plagiarism does not include self-plagiarism or authorship or credit disputes, including disputes among former collaborators who participated jointly in the development or conduct of a research project. Self-plagiarism and authorship disputes do not meet the definition of research misconduct.
2. Multiple respondents: If an institution identifies additional respondents during an inquiry or investigation, the institution is not required to conduct a separate inquiry for each new respondent.
3. Multiple institutions: When multiple institutions are involved in a research misconduct proceeding, one institution should be designated as the “lead institution.” The lead institution should obtain the research records from other relevant institutions.
4. The current regulation stipulates that a finding of research misconduct requires that the misconduct be committed intentionally, knowingly, or recklessly but no definition for these terms. The revised regulation defines the following terms:
  - a. “Intentionally” is “to act with the aim of carrying out the act.”
  - b. “Knowingly” is “to act with awareness of the act.”
  - c. “Recklessly” is “to act recklessly means to propose, perform, or review research, or report research results, with indifference to a known risk of fabrication, falsification, or plagiarism.”

The revised regulations go into effect on January 1<sup>st</sup>, 2026. In the coming months, we will update our local research misconduct policy to reflect the revisions in the regulations.

## Office of Science and Technology Policy Releases Final Guidelines for Research Security Programs at Covered Institutions

On July 9, 2024, the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy (OSTP) issued final [guidelines](#) setting forth a framework under which academic research institutions must establish research security programs. The guidance provides federal funding agencies with guidelines for implementing a certification requirement imposed by National Security Presidential Memorandum-33 (NSPM-33) and certain provisions of the CHIPS and Science Act.

The guidelines require covered institutions to certify that their research security programs include elements relating to (1) cybersecurity; (2) foreign travel security; (3) research security training; and (4) export control training.

- Institutions must implement a cybersecurity program consistent with the resources provided in the CHIPS and Science Act ([NIST IR 8481: Cybersecurity for Research: Findings and Possible Paths Forward.](#))
- Individuals engaged in foreign travel must undergo training at least once every six years and implement a travel reporting program.
- Institutions can meet the research training requirements by mandating completion of NSF training modules. Otherwise, an alternate training course can be used if it (1) provides explicit examples of behaviors that have resulted in illegal transfer of government supported R&D and (2) communicates the importance of US research participation in global discovery and leadership. The UC system has plans to develop a UC-specific research security training to meet this requirement.
- Individuals at covered institutions must complete export control training.

The guidance is directed to covered entities, defined as U.S. Research and Development enterprise receiving federal science and engineering support in excess of over \$50 million per year based on the most recent Survey of Federal Science and Engineering Support to Universities, Colleges, and Nonprofit Institutions (fiscal year 2022). Based on this survey, UC Merced received \$22,829,000 in federal funding in fiscal year 2022, therefore, UC Merced has not reached the \$50 million threshold to implement a research security program.

The Office of Research Compliance and Integrity will continue to monitor the annual release of the Survey of Federal Science and Engineering Support to Universities, Colleges, and Nonprofit Institutions to determine when UC Merced must implement a research security program. In the meantime, our institution remains engaged in all federal and UC systemwide discussions regarding the implementation of the final guidelines for research security programs.

### Contact Us

We encourage all members of the research community to reach out to the RCI Office with questions, comments or concerns regarding any of our compliance areas. Contact information for each of our compliance areas can be found on the following page.

## Contact the Office of Research Compliance and Integrity

**RCI Website**

<https://rci.ucmerced.edu/>

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