


MEMORANDUM

DATE: August 8, 2013

TO: Deans, Associate Deans, Research Council and Graduate Council

FROM: Mark R. McLellan, Vice President for Research and  
Dean of the School of Graduate Studies 

SUBJECT: **Responsible Conduct of Research Training –  
Mandatory for All Doctoral Students admitted to the doctoral programs  
of USU.**

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Ethical and responsible conduct of research (RCR) is critical to public trust in science, technology and engineering --- and education in the responsible and ethical conduct of research is now considered a best practice in the professional development of future scientists and engineers.

As a result, three federal agencies now require all students (graduates, undergraduates and postdocs) to complete RCR training if they are working on grants awarded through one or more of their programs (NSF: all awards; USDA: competitive awards beginning in 2013; NIH: trainee grants, career development award (individual or institutional), research education grant, or dissertation research grant). To satisfy these requirements and provide opportunity for RCR professional development to all USU graduate students, USU has developed the Research Scholars Certification program.

Based upon earlier discussions with the deans, it was our consensus that if USDA added this as a requirement for their awards then USU should require RCR training for all doctoral students. Now that USDA done so effective this fall, joining NSF and parts of NIH in this requirement, **USU is now implementing a mandatory RCR training for all new doctoral students (PhD, EdD, and AUD).**

To make the training as accessible as possible we will move our Research Scholar Certification program to an extensive online approach that will require all incoming doctoral students to:

1. Attend Research Scholars Orientation – a 2.5-hour session that includes forum-type lectures from faculty.
2. Attend nine online modules, each about 15-20 minutes, provided by the collaborative institutional training initiative (3-4 hours).

3. Attend two (1 hour long) Research Scholars Forums. The forums are taught by faculty and will be offered twice a year, once in the fall and once in the spring.

For those unable to attend the summer orientation or forums, these sessions will be recorded made available for viewing online through Canvas, with a short quiz on content. However, agencies require that at least one of the live sessions must be attended in person. As we implement this, we will address hardship cases due to remote location of students on an individual basis. Use of Canvas will also provide a mechanism for tracking whom accesses the online materials for this certification program.

Completion of the above three components will satisfy a noncredit course (USU 6900) that will appear on the student's transcript. All new USU doctoral students will be required to register for this zero credit course during the spring semester. This will provide the student, their faculty, and the university, with documentation that RCR training has been completed. This approach will also allow us to ensure compliance under auditable conditions with the requirements of federal funding agencies. It remains the responsibility of the faculty principal investigator to ensure that all students (graduate, undergraduates and postdocs) working and associated with these grants have taken and passed USU 6900.

This new mandatory approach will be applied to all incoming doctoral students starting this fall. It is the responsibility of the grant principal investigator to ensure that new and currently enrolled students (undergraduate, graduate or postdocs) who are working on NSF, NIH and USDA funded projects, are made aware of this requirement and complete this training by receiving a passing grade in USU 6900. The instructor of record is Russ Price and he is also the coordinator of the entire RCR training. Further questions regarding details should be directed to Russ ([russ.price@usu.edu](mailto:russ.price@usu.edu)).

No one enjoys implementing a mandatory training program of any sort, but we continue to believe that RCR training is a best practice in the professional development of graduate students, and particularly doctoral students.

MRM/tts

Cc: President Albrecht  
Provost Cockett  
BrandE Faupell  
Russ Price  
RGS Leadership