

**Tennessee Technological University  
Policy No. 750**



Effective Date: January 1, 2018

**Policy No.:** 750  
**Policy Name:** Responsible Conduct of Research (RCR)

### **I. Purpose**

The purpose of this policy is to set forth Tennessee Tech's requirements for training in Responsible Conduct of Research (RCR).

Tennessee Tech recognizes that maintaining the highest standards of ethics in research is essential to the advancement of knowledge and to retaining public trust in the research and scholarly activities conducted by its faculty, students, and staff. Consequently, all faculty, staff, and students engaged in research and scholarly activities are required to be familiar with the training requirements described in this policy.

### **II. Review**

This policy will be reviewed every three years or whenever circumstances require review, whichever is earlier, by the Associate Vice President for Research, with recommendations for revision presented to the Vice President for Research and Economic Development, Administrative Council, and University Assembly.

### **III. Definitions**

- A. Responsible Conduct of Research:** 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.
- B. Research:** A systematic investigation, including research development, testing, and evaluation, designed to develop or contribute to generalizable knowledge.
- C. Systematic Investigation:** A predetermined method of studying a specific topic, answering a specific question(s), testing a specific hypothesis(es), or developing theory. It includes observational studies, interview or survey studies, group comparison studies, test development, and interventional research.
- D. Generalizable Knowledge:** The intent and/or purpose of the systematic investigation such as dissemination of findings or results of the investigation through publication or presentation of the results.

### **IV. Policy**

- A.** All faculty, staff, post-doctoral students, graduate students, and undergraduate students must familiarize themselves and comply with applicable guidelines and policies including, but not limited to:

1. National Science Foundation (NSF): NSF requires that all students and post-doctoral scholars who receive NSF funds complete an [RCR CITI training](#).
  2. National Institutes of Health (NIH): NIH requires that all trainees, fellows, participants, and scholars who receive support through any NIH training grant, career development awards, research education grant, and dissertation research grant, complete [RCR training](#).
  3. Department of Health and Human Services Office of Research Integrity: oversees and directs Public Health Service (PHS) research integrity activities on behalf of the Secretary of Health and Human Services and the American public. It articulates important shared values for the responsible conduct of research that bind all researchers together, such as honesty, accuracy, efficiency, and objectivity.
  4. USDA National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA): NIFA stipulates that by accepting a NIFA award, the grantee assures that program directors, faculty, undergraduate students, graduate students, post-doctoral scholars, and any staff participating in the research project receive appropriate training and oversight in the responsible and ethical conduct of research and that documentation of that research be maintained.
- B.** Tennessee Tech provides the Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative (CITI) Course in the Responsible Conduct of Research (RCR) for all individuals involved in research and scholarly activity.
- C.** All faculty, staff, post-doctoral students, graduate students, and undergraduate students who are personnel or are involved in sponsored research and scholarly activities, regardless of source of funding, must take and pass the Tennessee Tech University's basic [RCR training](#) modules of the CITI within six weeks of initiating their research activities.
- D.** All faculty, staff, post-doctoral students, graduate students, and undergraduate students who are involved in research or scholarly activities in human subjects or animal care and use must take and pass the basic RCR training modules of the CITI, in addition to CITI Human Subjects modules or Animal Care and Use modules that are pertinent to their project, prior to initiating their research or scholarly activities.
- E.** All faculty, staff, and students who serve on the Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects (IRB), Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC), and Intellectual Property Advisory Committee (IPAC) must take and pass the basic RCR training course, in addition to pertinent CITI modules for the committees they serve.
- F.** On-line training certificates will be valid for five years, provided there is no major change to the regulations. The Office of Research will notify researchers if their training certificates are more than five years old and need to be updated.

- G.** Researchers must maintain records of their completion of training in RCR. Additionally, researchers must submit a copy of their training certificates with all grant proposals (internally and externally) for which they are principal investigator (PI) or co-PI to the Office of Research and Economic Development to ensure that the PI or co-PI has passed the required RCR training in accordance with this policy.
- H.** Non-compliance that occurs in the context of RCR's approved training requires corrective action. The policy and procedures for preventing and reporting fraud, waste, or abuse can be found in TTU Policy 131 (Preventing and Reporting Fraud, Waste, or Abuse).
- I.** TTU Policy 780 (Misconduct in Research) describes the process for investigating allegations of research misconduct.

## **V. Interpretation**

The Vice President for Research and Economic Development or his/her designee has the final authority to interpret the terms of this policy.

## **VI. Citation of Authority for Policy**

T.C.A. § 49-8-203(a)(1)(E); 42 CFR Part 50, Subpart A; Department of Health and Human Services Office of Research Integrity; Animal Welfare Act (PL 89-544); National Research Act (PL 93-348); Health Research Extension Act (PL 99-158); Office of Science and Technology Policy

Approved by:

Administrative Council: November 15, 2017

University Assembly: November 29, 2017