

## Responsible and Ethical Conduct of Research – USDA Training Requirements

The responsible and ethical conduct of research (RECR) is critical for excellence, as well as public trust, in science and engineering. Consequently, education in RECR is considered essential in the preparation of future scientists. The United States Department of Agriculture’s National Institute of Food and Agriculture (USDA NIFA) requires training in RECR for program directors, faculty, undergraduate students, graduate students, postdoctoral researchers and any staff participating in a USDA NIFA funded research project. NIFA requires that documentation of training be maintained and that it is subject to NIFA review upon request.

### What Do I Need to Do?

**Take the required course(s).** The RECR training requirement can be met by completing coursework offered online through UTC’s [CITI Program](#) subscription.

If you are a new CITI Program user, a tutorial on how to register for a CITI account and access the required courses is available [here](#).

If you already have a CITI account:

- Log in and click the “Courses” menu link at the top of the page, then the “View Courses” button.
- Next, click the “Learner Tools” and “Add a Course” links.
- On the “Select Curriculum” screen, scroll down to Question 4, “Responsible & Ethical Conduct of Research.” Check the box next to the discipline-specific course that best aligns with your major field of study. **Do not select the “Introduction to RCR” course – it does not meet USDA NIFA’s requirement.**
- If you are a graduate student, postdoc, faculty, or Program Director, also click the box next to the “Advanced Topics in RCR” course.
- Scroll to the bottom of the page and click the “Submit” button. You may be required to respond to one of the optional course selection questions; if so, you will be prompted by the system.
- The RCR course(s) should now be visible on your “Active Courses” list. Click “Start Now” to begin.

The discipline-specific RCR course typically takes approximately 4 hours to complete, and the Advanced Topics in RCR course takes approximately 2 hours. Each course includes several modules with brief quizzes at the end. You can work on the course at your own pace; progress will be saved after you complete each module. You do not have to complete the entire course in one session.

**Send completion certificate(s) to the Office of Research Integrity** at [rcr@utc.edu](mailto:rcr@utc.edu). In the subject header of your e-mail, note “USDA” plus the last name of the Principal Investigator of the grant that is supporting you, e.g., “USDA – Jones.”

**Discuss any questions you may have about the training** with the Principal Investigator or other faculty mentors involved in the project.