

August 23, 2011

**RESEARCH STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES (SOP)**  
**ANIMAL CARE AND USE PROGRAM**  
Training & Credentialing

1. **PURPOSE:** All individuals involved in animal research must receive the training necessary to ensure animal research is carried out in the prescribed manner and is consistent with VA and Federal regulations related to the appropriate care and use of research animals. Purpose of this policy is to identify who is required to complete animal research education and credentialing. This SOP establishes training requirements, procedures for verifying training completion, and credentialing requirements. All personnel involved in animal research must possess adequate credentials and training to ensure fulfillment of their obligation to the protection of animal subjects and ethical conduct of research. The education, licensure, and training that are relevant to the research activities performed by the employee must be documented and verified.

2. **POLICY:** Principal Investigators, Research Assistants, husbandry staff and IACUC members are required to complete appropriate annual Collaborative Institute Training Initiative (CITI) animal research or committee training and obtain appropriate credentialing. This training meets VACO and Federal requirements for conducting animal research.

3. **ACTION:**

a. **REQUIRED TRAINING AND CREDENTIALING:**

- (1) Investigators and research staff utilizing animals – must complete the VA web-based course entitled “Working with the VA IACUC” plus all species-specific web courses that relate to animals used in their research. In addition, all new research study personnel since April 2007 must complete Biosecurity training that will perform their work within VA Facilities. All courses are located at <http://www.citiprogram.org> . See Attachment 1.
- (2) **Investigator and lab personnel conducting In-Vitro studies** – must complete CITI course entitled “Biosecurity.”
- (3) **Data security training** – is determined by work location, funding source, and if the individual is a principal investigator. These courses are at <https://www.tms.va.gov/> . See attachment 2.
  - a. Working without Compensation (WOC) employees/research Assistants participating in animal research projects on-site must complete Information Security 201, Information Security Awareness and Rules of Behavior, and VHA Privacy Policy Web training.
  - b. VA-funded principal investigators, regardless of work location, must also complete Information Security, Information Security Awareness and Rules of Behavior and VHA Privacy Policy web training.
  - c. Off-site research personnel working on approved VA-funded projects must complete Information Security 201.
- (4) **IACUC members** – must pass the exam covering the VA web-based course entitled “Essentials for IACUC Members” found at <http://www.citiprogram.org>. See Attachment 1.

(5) **Veterinary Medical Unit husbandry staff** – The VMU supervisor will identify the courses required for VMU staff. Courses may include those on the CITI <http://www.citiprogram.org> web site and the web-based training developed for them by American Association for Laboratory Animal Science at [www.aalaslearninglibrary.org](http://www.aalaslearninglibrary.org). All VMU husbandry staff have also been provided authorizations for the AALAS courses.

(6) **Orientation Training** – The VMU Supervisor provides this training to new researcher personnel that will work in the VMU. This training includes safety procedures, a review of VMU standard operating procedures and a tour of the VMU facilities.

(7) **Credentialing** research personnel that hold a degree that may make them eligible for licensure, registration, or certification (e.g. unlicensed foreign medical graduates) must be credentialed in VetPro, VHA's national electronic credentials databank.

**b. VERIFICATION AND TRACKING:**

(1) **New Protocol Submission**: The principal investigator is required to list all investigators and research assistants participating in the project and to inform them of the requirement to complete CITI specific animal training. This training and credentialing will be verified by the IACUC Administrator. If training was completed for another project within the 24-month currency window, that training will suffice for the new research project. Final IACUC and R&D Committee approvals will not be granted until all training and other prerequisites have been verified for all individuals listed on the project.

(2) **Annual Protocol Review**: IACUC and R&D Committee final continuing approval are contingent upon completion of biennial CITI animal training requirements and appropriate credentialing for all personnel engaged in animal research.

(3) **Project personnel**: The R&D Office will maintain a current Access database for training of all personnel verified through UTHSCSA or VA CITI affiliation and credentialing status.

c. **COURSE INSTRUCTIONS**: Instructions for accessing the VA web-based training are included in Attachment 1.

d. **FREQUENCY**: Everyone must complete required biennial animal training. Principal investigators and research assistants must have completed courses within the prior twenty four months for a project under review.

**d. DOCUMENTATION:**

(1) On- and off-site principal investigators and their personnel's' training can be verified under their UTHSCSA or VA CITA affiliation. The R&D office uses its dual administrative access to ensure verification. It is suggested that investigators and research personnel print CITI completion certificates to serve as paper record documentation in the event of an electronic database interruption.

(2) Husbandry staff will complete CITI web-based training courses for all animals serviced in the facility.

4. **REFERENCES**: VHA Handbook 1200.7; VHA Directive 2009-054, dated November 2, 2009

RESEARCH SERVICE POLICY MEMORANDUM 11-13

5. **RESPONSIBILITY:** ACOS for Research and Development (151)

6. **RESCISSIONS:** Research Memorandum 09-13, December 16, 2009

7. **RECERTIFICATION:** August 2016

  
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Attachments (2)

**COLLABORATIVE INSTITUTE TRAINING INITIATIVE**

**WHO:** All individuals involved in animal research studies must complete the mandatory training bi-annually

**WHAT:** All investigators/staff must complete the VA web-based training (1) “Working with the IACUC” specific animal species training. The UTHSCSA CITI training equivalents are acceptable for off-site research personnel. Biosecurity training is required for all research investigators regardless of work location and personnel working on VA premises.

**DOCUMENTATION:**

- (1) A Certificate of Completion can be printed upon completion of the course.
- (2) The IACUC Administrator will maintain an Access database for tracking of training requirements.

**WHEN:** All training must be completed prior to participation in a VA-approved animal research study and on or before the biennial anniversary. New project approvals and continuing review re-approvals will require that all project staff complete the training within the previous 24 months.

**PROCEDURES FOR COMPLETING THE VA WEB-BASED ANIMAL COURSES**

1. Location: <http://www.citiprogram.org>

Courses:

IACUC Members: “*Essentials for IACUC Members*”

Investigators/staff: “*Working with the VA IACUC*” plus the following that apply to the research:  
“*Post-Procedure Care of Mice and Rats in Research: Reducing Pain and Distress*”  
“*Working with Guinea Pigs in Research Settings*”  
“*Working with Hamsters in Research Settings*”  
“*Working with Mice in Research Settings*”  
“*Working with Rabbits in Research Settings*”  
“*Working with Rats in Research Settings*”  
“*Biosecurity (Note: This applies to all principal investigators regardless of site location and their personnel working on VA premises)*”  
(Courses for other species are also available)

TALENT MANAGEMENT SYSTEM (TMS)

This is the national website to the TMS: <https://www.tms.va.gov/> . From this site staff can access the training curriculum.

It is very important to ensure "desktop configuration settings" are correct on PC's prior to taking any courses in the TMS. If using a VA Computer, IT can validate proper desktop settings. If using a non-VA computer, setting the desktop is critical. Here is the link to desktop setting instructions: <http://www.insidetms.va.gov/> If these settings are not correct, some courses may not launch properly or record completed learning. Besides logging in for the first time, the biggest problem users' encounter is not being able to access courses due to wrong desktop settings.

Hard copies of the instructions are also on the wall rack located outside of Education Service on Unit 3D along with <http://www.insidetms.va.gov/> pamphlets.

In addition, Education Service has given access to the TMS administrator privileges to the Research Office for its personnel only. They can assist Research Service users with unlocking their TMS accounts, resetting passwords and running training reports.

ATTACHMENT 2