

Report on Research Compliance Volume 19, Number 3. February 24, 2022

OSTP: Institutions, Feds Must Foster 'Integrity of Government Science'

By Theresa Defino

In the eyes of a governmental task force on scientific integrity, federal “grantee institutions do not conform to any standards for training in scientific integrity and wide variability exists across institutions.” Moreover, according to the new report by a task force empaneled by the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy (OSTP), “scientific integrity training requirements could be incorporated into the terms of the contracts or agreements.”^[1]

While some institutions that receive funds from the National Science Foundation and NIH are required to provide responsible conduct of research (RCR) or research misconduct training, this may only apply to certain investigators, such as undergraduates, graduates and postgraduates, or be attached to specific funding mechanisms.

Different federal agencies also have differing RCR training requirements for investigators they support—and some may have none at all. Similarly, research integrity officers’ (RIOs) priority may mostly be investigating allegations of fabrication, falsification and plagiarism—the federal definition of research misconduct—without giving due attention to the myriad other ways that threaten or outright damage the integrity of science and investigators, as well as their institution.

Standardizing training and harmonizing federal award requirements are among the recommendations in *Protecting the Integrity of Government Science*, issued by the Scientific Integrity Fast-Track Action Committee, part of OSTP’s National Science and Technology Council.

The report is the result of a “memorandum on restoring trust in government through scientific integrity and evidence-based policymaking” that President Biden issued a week after his inauguration. The memorandum called on OSTP to establish an interagency task force “to conduct a thorough review of the effectiveness of agency scientific-integrity policies” developed under a 2009 directive by President Obama.

This document is only available to subscribers. Please log in or purchase access.

[Purchase Login](#)