

# VAPHS Research Training Requirements

Members of the VAPHS research community are required to complete a series of trainings associated with research activities, as outlined in their Research Scope of Practice.

The VAPHS Research Office requires that all Research Staff satisfy training requirements before beginning any research-related activities. Most training must be renewed. Information regarding the frequency at which these trainings must be renewed is provided below.

Use this document to learn [How to Complete Trainings](#) and the [Specific Research Training Requirements](#).

Questions regarding training can be emailed to [Stephanie.Partee@va.gov](mailto:Stephanie.Partee@va.gov) in the VAPHS Research Office.

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## How to Complete Trainings

The trainings are completed using one of two online platforms, TMS and CITI. There is an additional online platform that human subjects researchers must use called ProSPECT. Each platform requires users to self-enroll for an account. The directions for self-enrollment are outlined below:

### 1. VA Talent Management System (TMS)

- 1) Go to [www.tms.va.gov](http://www.tms.va.gov)
- 2) Click “Create New User”, located in the orange ribbon on the main page.
  - i. *Note:* All WOC employees must self-enroll.
  - ii. *Note:* All VA paid employees will have a TMS account created for them.
  - iii. *Note:* If you have an established TMS account, you do not need to create a new one.
- 3) Answer the questions as they relate to you.
  - i. *Note:* You should select VHA for the first answer.
- 4) Fill out all account and job information fields.
  - i. *Note:* If you do not have a VA email address, you can self-enroll using your preferred or personal email address.

### 2. CITI Program

- 1) Go to [www.citiprogram.org](http://www.citiprogram.org)
- 2) Click “Register”, located at the top right of the screen. There are 7 easy steps.
  - i. *Note:* You do not need to create a new account if you have an established CITI account, but you will need to affiliate with VA Pittsburgh (See item 2.c.)
- 3) The next screen will ask you to “Select Your Organization Affiliation. Start typing **VA Pittsburgh, PA-646** in the field and it should populate.
  - i. *Note:* Do not register as an independent learner.
- 4) After you affiliate, you will be asked to provide information to set up your account.
  - i. *Note:* If you do not have a VA email address, you can self-enroll using your preferred or personal email address.
  - ii. *Note:* List “Research” or your applicable VAPHS department in Step 6 of account step up.
- 5) Make sure to answer all questions in Step 7 and click the blue “Complete Registration” button to populate the required trainings in your account.
  - i. Question 1 relates to involvement in human subjects research

- ii. Questions 2 and 3 relate to involvement in animal research
  - iii. Questions 4 and 5 relate to IACUC committee members
  - iv. Question 6 relates to post-approval monitoring
  - v. Question 7 relates to laboratory staff
  - vi. Question 8 related to rDNA
- 6) A few additional notes regarding CITI trainings:
- i. You do not need to take all modules in one sitting. You are encouraged to complete the course in multiple login sessions.'
  - ii. Download a **Completion Report** as evidence that you have met your requirements (use the "*View course completion history for {your institution}* and print completion certificates" link in the list of learner utilities). **Forward the completion report to [Stephanie.Partee@va.gov](mailto:Stephanie.Partee@va.gov) in the VAPHS Research Office.**
  - iii. If you forget your username or password, you can retrieve them via email using links on the home page.
  - iv. If that approach is unsuccessful, you can call the CITI help desk at 305-243-7970.

### 3. ProSPECT

All individuals who plan to work on a VAPHS IRB approved human subjects research study must have a ProSPECT account. ProSPECT is the electronic portal system used by the VAPHS IRB for all protocol submissions, including submissions to add individuals to projects.

- 1) ProSPECT is only accessible while on the VA network. The ProSPECT website can be accessed from the [VA Research Human Subjects webpage](#), or by following this [link](#).
  - i. Tip: Bookmark this page for easy access in the future.
- 2) Click the "[registration](#)" hyperlink on the right hand side of the ProSPECT homepage to complete the self-registration form, and click "Register" on the bottom right to submit your request.
  - i. Register for a ProSPECT account after you have completed all other mandatory trainings described in this document and associated with your research scope of practice.
  - ii. While there are no trainings that must be completed through ProSPECT, there are several helpful tools and guidance documents when conducting human subjects research at VAPHS. To access these resources, click the "Institutional Review Board" hyperlink on the left hand side of the homepage, and browse our Human Subjects Guidance, Forms and other folders!
- 3) After you submit your registration request, please send an email to [Stephanie.Partee@va.gov](mailto:Stephanie.Partee@va.gov).
  - i. You will receive a ProSPECT username and password once the research office verifies appointment status (VA paid or WOC), completed trainings, and credentialing (if applicable).
- 4) To learn more about ProSPECT, please review this helpful [User Manual](#).



# Specific Research Training Requirements

The following outlines the specific training requirements as they relate to research staff members who are:

[Conducting any research activity at VAPHS \(requirements for all research staff\)](#)

[Conducting research with human subjects research](#)

[Conducting research with animal research](#)

[Working with chemicals in a laboratory and all laboratory staff members](#)

[Working with formaldehyde or other tissue fixation chemicals](#)

[Working with human blood, body fluids, tissues and/or cells](#)

[Working with ionizing radiation](#)

[Working with recombinant or synthetic nucleic acid molecules](#)

[Research committee members](#)

*\*click the hyperlinks to jump to applicable sections\**

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## Conducting any research activity at VAPHS (requirements for all research staff)

- The following **TMS** courses are required to be completed **annually** by all research staff members (VA-paid and WOC):
  - VA Privacy and Information Security Awareness and Rules of Behavior
  - VHA Privacy and HIPAA Focused Training

*Note:* You can enter these courses in the search field in your TMS account.



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## Conducting research with human subjects

- All individuals (VA-paid or WOC) involved in the conduct of VA human subjects research, including but not limited to; investigators, research coordinators, research assistants, other members of the research team, and trainees, such as house officers and students must take training in ethical principles on which human subjects research is to be conducted.
- The Office of Research and Development (ORD) has established the mandatory trainings, which are described on their [website](#). Trainings are completed through **CITI Program**. Initial trainings must be completed **prior** to conducting any work with human subjects, and refresher trainings **every 3 years** thereafter.
  - [Initial trainings for all individuals new to VA human subjects research](#)
    - Learners must complete two (2) required Ethics Modules selected by ORD, plus 6 additional modules from a selected list of 16 elective modules from the [listing of initial training modules](#).
  - [Refresher trainings for individuals who have already completed initial trainings](#)

- Learners must complete two (2) required Ethics Modules selected by ORD, plus 6 additional modules from a selected list of 30 elective modules from the [listing of refresher modules](#).
- VAPHS Research staff who are involved with clinical trials or other projects for which Good Clinical Practice training is required may access GCP related courses via CITI or may complete other GCP trainings that are acceptable to the study sponsor. There are a number of other ORD-approved courses which satisfy the requirement. Please contact the VAPHS Research Office for a list of these trainings. The Research Office does not however, track this training and therefore it will be a responsibility of the staff.



## Conducting research with animals

- All individuals who are involved on an animal research protocol, regardless of their role, must complete the [Working with the IACUC](#) course on **CITI prior** to beginning work with animals, and **every 3 years** thereafter.
  - *Note:* Individuals who have taken CITI animal training courses for the University of Pittsburgh can affiliate with VAPHS to have the courses accepted.
- Training requirements are applicable to individuals who utilize laboratory animals for research, training, or teaching in any of settings below:
  - Conduct or supervise use of animals on VA property
  - Conduct or supervise use of animals purchased with VA funds;
  - Conduct or supervise use of animals while on a VA tour of duty but not on VA property.
- Animal Training: The specific courses required related to animal research are dependent upon the role of the staff member and the particular type of animal research being conducted. The following courses must be completed **every 3 years** through **CITI**, as applicable. If you anticipate working with a species not listed below, please contact [Elizabeth.Toth2@va.gov](mailto:Elizabeth.Toth2@va.gov) for additional guidance.
  - Working with **Mice** in Research Settings
  - Working with **Rats** in Research Settings
  - Post-Procedural Care of **Rodents**
  - Working with **Swine** in Research Settings
  - Working with **Nonhuman Primates** in Research Settings
  - Working with **Zebrafish** (*Danio rerio*) in Research Settings
- Individuals who will be working with Anesthetic Gases must complete a **one time, in-person** [Safe Use of Anesthetic Gases](#) training with the VAPHS Industrial Hygienist.
  - If you will be working with anesthetic gas, please contact [Christian.Lewis2@va.gov](mailto:Christian.Lewis2@va.gov) to schedule the training



## Working with chemicals in a laboratory and all laboratory staff members

- All new VA and WOC research laboratory staff are required to complete the following trainings:
  - [VA Biosecurity](#) training is completed **one time only** through **CITI Program**.

- Research Lab Safety Training is completed **annually** through **TMS** by searching "Research Safety Training- VAPHS (VA 4180538)" and assigning it to your learning plan.
  - *Note:* This TMS course does not provide a certificate of completion. Please contact [Stephanie.Partee@va.gov](mailto:Stephanie.Partee@va.gov) when training is complete.
- Individuals who will be handling chemicals in a wet laboratory or in the animal facility must complete a **one-time, in-person** Global Harmonization System (GHS) Training with the VAPHS Biosafety Officer.
  - If you will be handling chemicals, please contact [Dana.Roolf@va.gov](mailto:Dana.Roolf@va.gov) to schedule the training.



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## Working with formaldehyde or other tissue fixation chemicals

- Any research staff member working with formaldehyde, formalin, paraformaldehyde or other tissue fixation chemicals must complete a **one time only in-person** Safe Use of Formaldehyde training with the VAPH Industrial Hygienist.
  - If you will be working with formaldehyde or other tissue fixation chemicals, please contact [Christian.Lewis2@va.gov](mailto:Christian.Lewis2@va.gov) to schedule the training.



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## Working with human blood, body fluids, tissues and/or cells

- Research staff working *directly* with human blood, body fluids, tissues, or cells must complete the **TMS** Bloodborne Pathogens course **annually** by searching "Research BBP Training- VAPHS (VA 4180537)" and assigning it to your learning plan.
  - *Note:* Practicing Physicians and Clinical Nurses may fulfill this requirement by providing the Research Office with verification of completed related clinical trainings, such as JCAHO biological training.
  - *Note:* The TMS course does not provide a certificate of completion. Please contact [Stephanie.Partee@va.gov](mailto:Stephanie.Partee@va.gov) when training is complete.
- Research staff shipping dry ice and/or biological hazards must complete the Saf-T-Pak training **every 2 years**. This training is not on TMS or CITI. Staff must contact [Stephanie.Partee@va.gov](mailto:Stephanie.Partee@va.gov) for access.



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## Working with ionizing radiation

- Any research staff member working with ionizing radiation must complete the Radiation Safety Training **annually**. This training is not on TMS or CITI. Staff must contact [Stephanie.Partee@va.gov](mailto:Stephanie.Partee@va.gov) for access.
  - *Note:* This course does not provide a certificate of completion. Upon completion, please forward a copy of your completed quiz to [Stephanie.Partee@va.gov](mailto:Stephanie.Partee@va.gov) and [Mitchell.Belanger@va.gov](mailto:Mitchell.Belanger@va.gov), VAPHS Radiation Safety Officer. Any questions about Radiation Safety Training should be directed to Mr. Belanger.



## Research involving recombinant or synthetic nucleic acid molecules

- Any research staff member working with Recombinant or Synthetic Nucleic Acid Molecules in research must complete the Overview of NIH Guidelines training.
  - The Overview of NIH Guidelines is completed **once** through **TMS** by searching "Overview of NIH Guidelines (VA 4251816)" and assigning it to your learning plan.



## Research committee members

- In addition to applicable training modules described above, requirements apply to those individuals serving on Research Committees. Please see below for the specific additional requirements:
  - R&D Committee and IRB members
    - VA Human Subjects Protection through **CITI**. Please contact the Research Office for additional courses that may satisfy this requirement. This course must only be completed **every three years**.
  - IACUC members
    - The Essentials for IACUC Members **CITI** course must be completed **every 2 years**.
  - IBC members
    - Overview of NIH Guidelines **TMS** course #4251816. This course must only be completed **once**.

