SRAI LevelUP Course Descriptions

Relationships, Roles, and Responsibilities in Research Administration

Research administrators come to this profession from a variety of educational backgrounds and professional experiences. You may have come to it accidentally or by design, through academic channels or administrative ones, while looking for a challenge or to pursue a passion. You may work in a variety of organizations from a university who receives funding to a mission-driven nonprofit who sponsors research. Whatever your path and now role is as a research administrator, you are probably awed by the expanse of the research enterprise. The number of awards, the variety of sponsors, and the sheer amount of money available can be staggering. This course lays an initial foundation to research administration while providing context and a framework for which to build your professional skills.

After completing this course, you will be able to:

- Describe the goals and the research administrator's role in the research enterprise.
- Explain how the federal government supports sponsored research projects through its agencies.
- Differentiate the type of sponsors and the funding instruments used.
- Recognize the types of recipient organizations who receive sponsored research projects.
- Identify the roles and responsibilities of key players in the research enterprise.

HOURS: 3.00

Principles in Research Development

The current research funding environment is highly competitive given the limited resources from funding agencies. This increases the demands on Principal investigators (PIs) who must often submit multiple proposals in order for a successful funding outcome. PIs must balance this increasing demand while also teaching, conducting research, mentoring trainees, and serving their institutions. To assist PIs and strengthen the research enterprise, research administrators provide multiple support mechanisms such as research development programming and resources. This course presents the administrative and functional aspects of working with groups of investigators as well as individual PIs. There is also specific advice on searching for funding opportunities and matching those options to the right investigator. After completing this course, you will have a clear understanding of the need for research development programs in an institution and, more importantly, an organized reference of tools and advice for implementing a targeted and efficient program for your investigators.

After completing this course, you will be able to:

- Create tools to identify and address critical gaps in the capabilities of institutions and individual applicants.
- Assess which RDP activities are most appropriate for your institution’s needs and priorities.
- Search, discover, and disseminate solicitations that align with investigator’s and team’s strengths.

- Contribute to the development of a limited submissions selection process that benefits your institution.

HOURS: 4.00

Principles in Proposal Development

Once a funding opportunity is identified, the time-consuming task of preparing a competitive grant proposal begins. Research administrators support Principal Investigators (PIs) through grantsmanship programs focusing on time management, matching PIs to their best opportunity, and forming a deep understanding of sponsors and their application. Knowing the differences between major proposal types and their intended outcomes is necessary for becoming an effective research administrator. It is your role to instruct PIs on grantsmanship skills and provide tools and resources for them to avoid common mistakes. In this highly competitive landscape, this course can give you the tools to make the difference between winning an award or not.

After completing this course, you will be able to:

- Describe the general format, differences between, and unique elements of each proposal type.
- Advise a principal investigator (PI) on sponsor trends, requirements, and opportunities; grantsmanship style and resources; and project management parameters.
- Apply the review process to any proposal.

HOURS: 4.50

Principles in Pre-Award Research Administration

During the pre-award phase of the sponsored project lifecycle, the primary goal of the research administrator and the entire proposal team is to ensure the very best possible proposal is submitted to the sponsor. This can be a challenge for even experienced research administrators because of competing deadlines, multiple budget revisions, and onerous regulations and policies. The ultimate reward for the team's dedication, attention to detail, and persistence in solving problems is the institution being granted the award. In this ultra-competitive environment though, pre-award processes, procedures, and policies must be clearly defined and communicated to the entire team. This course will assist you in preparing for your key roles and responsibilities during the pre-award phase.

After completing this course, you will be able to:

- Describe the roles of key personnel and the organizational structures used in research administration.
- Distinguish funding mechanisms.
- Recognize the research administrator's role in creating a strong proposal.
- Summarize the role of the research administrator in financial and regulatory compliance issues.
- Identify the purpose of eRA software.
- Apply regulations and sponsor guidelines to aspects of budget development.

- Describe key roles and responsibilities during the final review and submission phase.

HOURS: 4.50

Principles of Post-Award Non-Financial Research Administration

What is post-award non-financial research administration? Why is it necessary, and who provides these services? LevelUP's newest course explores the vital role Research Administrators share in keeping operations moving smoothly, facilitating effective communication, and fulfilling regulatory and sponsor requirements when managing the non-financial components of active awards. Learners will understand managing and making changes to sponsored projects, compliance obligations, reporting formats and requirements, and the core skills needed for successfully discharging these requirements. This program is a deep dive focused on explaining the *what* of post-award non-financial research administration and the *why* to prepare professionals for the inevitable nuances and exceptions they will encounter in their day-to-day responsibilities.

After completing this course, you will be able to:

- Apply appropriate skills to the roles of post-award non-financial research administration.
- Interpret a Notice of Award (NoA) through the lens of a post-award administrator.
- Administer the main elements of post-award non-financial award management.
- Carry out the primary duties of post-award non-financial award management, reporting, and award closeout.

HOURS: 4.00

Principles of Award Negotiation and Set-Up

Well done! The project has been awarded to your institution, launching the project into the post-award phase. Before your institution accepts this award, though the terms and conditions of the award need to be negotiated. The negotiation of the award depends largely upon the sponsor and the awarded funding mechanism as well as your institution's culture and policies. This course focuses on defining the common agreement types and standard terms and conditions that may be problematic to your organization. It also presents strategies to solve these problems and ensure compliance. We end the course with a discussion of administering the agreement from award set-up to closeout.

After completing this course, you will be able to:

- Conduct a grant or contract review noting areas of potential issues.
- Differentiate common legal agreements in terms of confidentiality agreements, budgeting, and key contract elements.
- Define the purpose of common contract clauses including indemnification, publication rights, and intellectual property.
- Recognize the key research offices and key personnel involved in award negotiation and set-up.
- Describe how some clauses can adversely impact the institution or work performance.

- Explain policies and procedures related to administering agreements.

HOURS: 4.50

Principles of Post-Award Financial Research Administration

Receiving an award is one of the most exciting steps in the research administration life cycle. Full of anticipation, energy and ripe with limitless possibilities, a new project kicking off can create enthusiasm and generate a sense of aligned purpose within the entire research team including a wide array of support offices. In many ways, financial administration and financial oversight of awards are what facilitate the important discoveries waiting to be unveiled. This course will build the foundation necessary to understand the post-award research administration lifecycle, the core responsibilities for managing research finance, and tips and approaches that will increase productivity and improve accuracy.

Key areas covered in this course include:

- Receiving and establishing an award
- Award management
    - Expenditure review and monitoring
    - Subrecipient Monitoring
    - Sponsor invoicing and LOC draws
- Financial Reporting
    - Regular federal reports (Quarterly Cash Transaction Reports, Annual Expenditure Data Reports)
    - Reporting of income generated by award activities
    - Final financial reporting and award closeout
- Introduction to external audits

HOURS: 4.50

The PI-RA Partnership: Critical Skills for Successful Projects

In this course you'll explore practical strategies for developing collaborative, compliance-focused relationships with principal investigators (PIs)—relationships that enhance proposal competitiveness, reduce risk, and strengthen institutional stewardship.

As research administrators, working with PIs can sometimes be challenging. It may feel like you're speaking different languages, even when you're discussing the same project. It can take patience, adaptability, and a willingness to adjust your communication style to collaborate effectively.

Learning Objectives:

- Describe the role of the PI–RA partnership in supporting proposal quality, regulatory compliance, and institutional stewardship.

- Differentiate the responsibilities of RAs and PIs and explain why their relationship is collaborative rather than transactional.
- Recognize the multiple roles RAs may take on (advisor, translator, mediator, problem-solver) and reflect on how these roles impact partnerships.
- Identify strategies for adapting communication styles to build trust and reduce misalignment with PIs.
- Apply practical tactics—such as framing outcomes, setting boundaries, and managing expectations—to strengthen collaboration with PIs.
- Evaluate how strong PI–RA partnerships contribute to long-term success across the research lifecycle.

HOURS: 3.00

Research Compliance Frameworks

Research Compliance Frameworks course is designed to serve as a primer on the various compliance elements that help support effective grants management. Research compliance spans a wide range of complex subtopics making it difficult for most research administrators to gain mastery in any specific topic. Often grants administrators are not familiar with these compliance areas, and if they are, could benefit from a deeper understanding to help fulfill their responsibilities. This course will build the foundation necessary to understand research compliance and hopefully lead to increased job proficiency, effectiveness, and success for learners.

This course will:

- Introduce learners to the compliance areas are most commonly embedded in grants management.
- Gain a deeper understanding of the key principles of research compliance in grants management and grants congruency.
- Emphasize the importance of these compliance areas for protecting participants, organizations, and the larger community.
- Explore how adherence to these compliance touchpoints help contribute to an institutional culture of research integrity and sound financial stewardship.
- Develop a foundation in institutional policies and procedures regarding research compliance and foster effective communication to institutional stakeholders.

HOURS: 3.50

Introduction to Clinical Research Management: Clinical Studies and Trials

Clinical research management is a dynamic profession requiring coordination with multiple departments, institutional offices, and investigator teams. Effective research administrators need a deep understanding of clinical research management to be effective in successfully executing their role in the process. This course explores the management and administration of clinical research from study initiation to contract close-out, with an extensive focus on regulatory responsibilities, budgeting and finance, and project management. The emphasis throughout the course is placed on the importance of protecting human subjects, their data, and the integrity of the research process.

After completing this course, you will be able to:

- Describe the history and regulations associated with human experimentation and the protection of human subjects in research.
- Identify the institutional oversight and management requirements that ensure compliance for its programs involving human subjects research.
- Understand the roles, processes, and responsibilities for research administration and management professionals conducting clinical research involving research participants during pre-study activities, study conduct, and study completion.

HOURS: 4.50

Cost Transfer Essentials

The Cost Transfer Essentials LevelUP course is a comprehensive overview of cost transfers in the financial management of sponsored projects; this course is tailored for early and mid-career professionals. Participants will learn about the importance and fundamentals of cost transfers, including what they are, why they are significant, and how they impact project management. The course covers both regulatory and institutional controls, detailing the steps for making, documenting, and submitting cost transfers. The training also explores the central office review process, approval mechanisms, and strategies for managing audits and ensuring compliance. Separate sections are devoted to personnel and non-personnel cost transfers, addressing the unique considerations and challenges associated with each.

Learning Objectives:

- Gain a solid understanding of cost transfers, including their definition, importance, and impact on the financial management of sponsored projects.
- Learn how to create, document, and submit cost transfers that adhere to regulatory and institutional guidelines.
- Learn the different processes required to effectively handle personnel-related cost transfers and non-personnel-related cost transfers.
- Develop skills to navigate the review and approval processes effectively and understand how to prepare for and respond to audits to maintain compliance.
- Gain an understanding of the audit process, including that factors may trigger and audit and how to effectively respond if an audit is triggered.

HOURS: 2.50

Principles of Effort: From Management to Reporting in Research Administration

This course will help you understand the necessary requirements and the different methods of conducting effort reporting. It explains a Principal Investigator's perspective in measuring time and effort, the benefits of the effort reporting requirements to the institution, and the importance of compensation compliance. This course also includes exercises to better understand what the Uniform Guidance says about compensation compliance.

Learning Objectives:

- Gain a solid understanding of cost transfers, including their definition, importance, and impact on the financial management of sponsored projects.
- Explain the fundamental concept of effort management and its significance in research administration.
- Identify key federal sponsor and institutional compliance obligations.
- Describe how effort management contributes to institutional accountability and financial compliance.
- Explain how to manage effort at the transaction initiation level to ensure accurate reporting.
- Recognize effort reporting tools to perform accurate and timely effort documentation.
- Apply key strategies to ensure compliance and prevent common effort reporting errors.
- Analyze the risks associated with inaccurate effort reporting and propose mitigation strategies.

HOURS: 2.50

FAR Fundamentals: Essential Knowledge for Research Administrators

This LevelUP course is designed to equip new and intermediate research administrators and managers with a foundational understanding of the U.S. Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR). Participants will explore the structure and purpose of the FAR, learning how it governs federal contracts and impacts universities, research institutions, and non-profit organizations. Through practical examples and case studies, the course demystifies complex regulatory language, highlighting key clauses and compliance requirements relevant to research settings. Learners will develop essential skills to navigate and negotiate FAR provisions effectively, manage federal contracts confidently, and mitigate risks associated with non-compliance. By the end of the course, learners will be better prepared to apply best practices in contract administration and enhance their institution's compliance posture. This training is ideal for professionals seeking to strengthen their expertise in federal acquisition processes related to research.

Learning Objectives:

- Describe how the FAR governs federal acquisitions and its relevance to research institutions.
- Recognize essential FAR provisions applicable to research contracts and grants.
- Utilize effective techniques to negotiate terms and ensure compliance with FAR regulations.

- Adopt measures to manage federal contracts responsibly and mitigate compliance risks.

HOURS: 2.00

NIH RPPR mGuide

Effective development and submission of NIH RPPRs is an essential skill. This SRAI mGuide is the perfect tool to prepare research administrators to support research faculty and investigators in developing the RPPR. This mGuide touches on every requirement of the RPPR so learners see the entire process. Specific topics include effective project management, institutional policies and procedures that affect the process, and step-by-step explanations and insights for each section of the RPPR. This mGuide is interactive, designed to be completed over a traditional lunch break, and includes video vignettes that take learners a layer deeper to hear words of wisdom from SRAI's experienced authors.

After completing this mGuide, you will be able to:

- Utilize the NIH resources for completing an annual RPPR.
- Develop project management strategies for managing, developing, and submitting an annual RPPR.
- Recognize the requirements and components of an annual RPPR.
- Select appropriate data points in an annual RPPR.
- Understand the sponsor's perspective when receiving and reviewing RPPRs.
- Apply key tips and tricks in an annual RPPR's development and submissions.

HOURS: 2.00

NIH R Series mGuide

NIH Research Projects with activity code R form the foundation of many NIH grant portfolios. LevelUP's *NIH R Series mGuide* is the ultimate training to demystify R activity code application planning, development, and submission. This course explores strategies for preparing grants, developing budgets, completing forms, and navigating final submission. The mGuide is interactive, designed to be completed over a traditional lunch break, and includes video vignettes that pass along wisdom from our experienced authors. Whether new or experienced with NIH grant applications, this course is the perfect resource to avoid confusion, issues, and complications during your proposal development and submission processes.

After completing this mGuide, you will be able to:

- Interpret a National Institutes of Health (NIH) Funding Opportunity Announcement (FOA).
- Manage the development of a proposal for a National Institutes of Health (NIH) R Series Grant.
- Prepare an NIH proposal budget.
- Complete and submit an error-free NIH R Series application.

HOURS: 1.50

NSF CAREER Proposal mGuide

The NSF CAREER Proposal mGuide is designed to teach you the skills you need to assist a Principal Investigator in preparing, writing, and submitting a CAREER proposal to the NSF. This mGuide walks you through each step of the CAREER Proposal process, from determining PI eligibility, to drafting budgets and justifications, and even best practices post submission. Not only will you learn how to complete a CAREER proposal, but you will also learn proposal and PI management tips that transcend CAREER Proposals. The mGuide is interactive, and can be completed in 1-2 hours.

After completing this mGuide, you will be able to:

- Interpret requirements of a National Science Foundation (NSF) CAREER Program Solicitation
- Employ project management skills in proposal development
- Prepare an NSF CAREER proposal
- Submit a CAREER proposal to NSF via Research.gov
- Recognize common errors that may contribute to a proposal returned without review.

HOURS: 1.50

NSF Research Proposal mGuide

The NSF Research Proposal mGuide teaches research administrators the skills they'll need to assist a Principal Investigator (PI) in preparing, writing, and submitting a full research proposal to the National Science Foundation (NSF). This mGuide will focus on the process of submitting an NSF proposal and highlight the submission guidelines and common errors so you can avoid a Return without Review. The NSF has carefully created guidelines, processes, and systems to assist the proposal development process—knowing these guidelines inside and out will help ensure that you put your PI in the best possible position to be funded. This interactive mGuide is designed to be completed in 1-2 hours.

At the end of this mGuide, you'll be able to:

- Interpret requirements of a National Science Foundation (NSF) Program Description.
- Employ project management skills in developing a Full Research Proposal
- Complete an NSF Collaborative Full Research Proposal using Research.gov
- Explain how internal policies and procedures affect the development of a Full Research Proposal
- Recognize common errors that may contribute to a Full Research Proposal being returned
- Apply NSF proposal development skills to other NSF Funding Opportunity Announcements.

HOURS: 1.50

Cybersecurity Maturity Model Certification mGuide

This training equips Research Administrators with the essential knowledge and tools to navigate the complexities of the Cybersecurity Maturity Model Certification (CMMC) as it relates to their role in managing federal contracts and safeguarding sensitive information. Participants will gain a comprehensive understanding of CMMC requirements and their impact on securing and managing government-funded research. With a focus on collaboration and the research administrator's critical role in ensuring compliance, this training highlights the importance of facilitating conversations and working with institutional stakeholders to protect sensitive data and meet cybersecurity standards.

HOURS: 1.50

FFATA Unfolded: Mastering Transparency in Federal Funding mGuide

Explore the fundamentals of the Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act (FFATA) in our online training course, "FFATA Unfolded: Mastering Transparency in Federal Funding." This self-paced course is designed for learners at introductory and intermediate levels, focusing on roles and responsibilities, the importance of compliance, and practical reporting practices.
Through interactive content and detailed guidelines provided in this course, participants will learn how to effectively handle FFATA reporting requirements and improve organizational accountability.

After completing this mGuide, you'll be able to:

- Acquire a solid understanding of FFATA and its reporting requirements to recognize who is required to report, what information must be reported, and the systems involved in the reporting process.
- Develop and apply effective institutional policies and procedures to meet FFATA requirements and ensure accurate reporting.
- Implement best practices to enhance reporting and compliance strategies for ensuring data quality, addressing common reporting issues, and using reported data to support decision-making and compliance.

HOURS: 1.50
