

B. Collection of Information Employing Statistical Methods.
If statistical methods will not be used to select respondents and item 17 on Form 83-I is checked “No” use this section to describe data collection procedures.

1. Respondent Universe and Sampling Methods

- There are approximately 800 U.S.-based institutions of higher education that report annually to ORI on the number of research misconduct allegations they receive. An estimated 17 percent of these institutions (approximately 135) of higher education have reported at least one allegation of research misconduct made in the previous five years. Up to 10 of these RIOs will be selected randomly and contacted to participate in a pilot test of the interview. For the main study, RTI will solicit the participation of the remaining 125 RIOs.
- Targeting the pool of eligible RIOs to institutions of higher education that reported at least one allegation of research misconduct in the previous five years is intended to maximize the likelihood of interviewing a RIO who has actually spoken with a complainant or potential complainant. The goal is to complete up to 100 RIO interviews. RTI conducted a survey of RIOs within the past three years ago using a very similar methodology and obtained 91 completed interviews from a sample of 112 RIOs, a response rate of 81.3 percent. Obtaining information from 100 RIOs on the kinds of questions that complainants and potential complainants ask and the responses they are given would essentially be getting such information from virtually every RIO who has spoken to a complainant or potential complainant during the previous five years and should provide valuable data needed to guide ORI in the development of RIO educational materials and training opportunities.

2. Procedures for the Collection of Information

- The information will be obtained by means of a personal interview conducted one time by an experienced, trained interviewer over the telephone. The study has designed the interview to take an average of 60 minutes to complete. The intended interview instrument largely consists of items that are pre-coded but allows for other answers to be specified. The interviewers will be trained to administer the interview, record responses, and respond to queries from the RIOs in a standardized manner.
- Recruitment into the study will be made through an advance letter that explains the purpose of the survey, method of selection, time commitment, human subjects review, and procedures to maintain

confidentiality. (See Appendix E for a copy of the letter.) The letter also provides a way to verify the legitimacy of the survey. The advance letter will be mailed to the RIOs based on the latest address ORI and RTI have for the institution. The letter will also identify a secure web site at RTI where RIOs may go to select an interview day and time. RIOs who do not take the initiative to make an appointment for the interview will be contacted directly by an interviewer to make an appointment for an interview. This will be done by telephone at first and by e-mail if possible thereafter. Up to eight attempts will be made to reach a RIO to make an appointment. Interviewers will also be prepared to conduct the interview at the time of a follow up call. Confirmatory/reminder appointment e-mails will be sent to the RIO and interviewer, with instructions on changing the appointment if necessary. At the appointed time, the interviewer will place the call to the scheduled RIO. RTI has used this approach successfully before when interviewing RIOs. Permission will be asked to allow the interviewer to record the interview so that missed response elements can be obtained after the call without holding up the respondent. The recordings will be destroyed after the data collection and cleaning have been completed.

3. Methods to Maximize Response Rates and Deal with Nonresponse

- RTI recently conducted a study for ORI involving telephone interviews with RIOs and was able to obtain an 81.3 percent response rate. The personal touch of a live person and the ability to establish rapport quickly enhances the willingness of those solicited to respond. In scheduling the interviews, every effort is made to accommodate the schedule limits of potential respondents including work times, time zone differences, last minute appointment cancellations, and broken appointments. Cancellations and broken appointments are followed-up by a telephone call to the RIO on the following day to reschedule the appointment.

4. Tests of Procedures or Methods to be Undertaken

- There is a planned pilot test of the data collection instrument to be conducted during the time in which this study is undergoing OMB review. We will obtain IRB approval/exemption for the study before contacting RIOs for the pilot study. (See Appendix F for a copy of the IRB approval/exemption.) The expectation is that only minor changes to the instrument that serve to alter or change wording to clarify the intent of instructions or questions will result. We do not expect the pilot test results to add significant items or substantially alter the content or format of the instrument, nor is it expected that it will result in changes that will greatly reduce or increase the average length of the

interview. We will inform OMB of any changes in procedures or data instrument or advance letter content before beginning actual study data collection.

5. Individuals Consulted on Statistical Aspects and Individuals Collecting and/or Analyzing Data

- The study is intended to be descriptive in nature and involves potentially collecting data from all RIOs who have within the past five years spoken with a complainants or potential complainant. Development of the data collection instrument has been a joint activity of the ORI project officer, the agency's consultant, and the contractor's project director. Data collection will be the primary responsibility of the contractor's project director who will train and supervise the work of up to six experienced interviewers. Analysis of the data will be a joint activity of the ORI project officer, the agency's consultant, and the contractor's project director.

ORI Project Officer:

Sandra Titus, Ph.D.
Director, Intramural Research Program
Division of Education and Integrity
Office of Research Integrity
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
1101 Wootton Parkway, Suite 750
Rockville, Maryland 20852
Phone (240) 453-8437
E-mail sandra.titus@hhs.gov

Agency Consultant:

David Wright, Ph.D.
Professor
CARRS/CANR
315 Natural Resources Building
Michigan State University
East Lansing, MI 48824
Phone (517) 353-1916
E-mail dewrite@msu.edu

Contractor's Project Director:

Arthur J. Bonito, Ph.D.
RTI, International
Box 12194
3040 Cornwallis Road
Research Triangle Park, N.C. 27709
Phone (919) 541-6377
E-mail AJB@RTI.ORG