Responsible Conduct of Research
Office of the Vice President for Research
Virginia Tech

New Training Requirement in the Responsible Conduct of Research – Effective January 4, 2010

The National Science Foundation (NSF) has established a new training requirement in the Responsible Conduct of Research (RCR) for students and postdoctoral fellows (postdocs) supported by NSF projects.[1] The new requirement applies to all undergraduates, graduate students, and postdoc researchers who receive support from salary and/or stipends to conduct research on NSF projects submitted (and subsequently awarded) after **January 4, 2010**, including competitive renewals. "However, NSF anticipates that institutions will develop their RCR training programs in a manner that helps prepare the next generation of researchers, including the consideration of risks or other factors associated with student and postdoctoral researcher participation in research." It is strongly recommended that faculty, including principal investigators, supported by NSF projects or directing students or postdocs supported on NSF projects, also review and are familiar with the content of these modules. This requirement **does not** apply retroactively to students and postdocs funded on projects submitted before January 4, 2010. The new regulations implement provisions of the America COMPETES Act. Additional information regarding the NSF requirement for training in RCR is included in the following documents:

- NSF Administration and Award Guide, January 2010
- Federal Register, Vol. 74, No. 160, Thursday, August 20, 2009, Notices
- Responsible Conduct of Research (RCR) Frequently Asked Questions, March 1, 2010

The University has established the following option for satisfying the new NSF requirement:

On-line instruction

Through the website for the Office of the Vice President for Research (http://www.research.vt.edu), individuals can access an on-line course created and maintained by the Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative (CITI), a nationally-recognized source for research-related training.

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[1] "The [Authorized Organizational Representative] is required to complete a certification that the institution has a plan […] to provide appropriate training and oversight in the responsible and ethical conduct of research to undergraduates, graduate students, and postdoctoral researchers who will be supported by NSF to conduct research. Additional information on NSF's RCR policy is available in the AAG, Chapter IV.B. While training plans are not required to be included in proposals submitted to NSF, institutions are advised that they are subject to review upon request." (Ref: http://www.nsf.gov/pubs/policydocs/pappguide/nsf11001/aag_4.jsp#IVB)

Learners are required to complete a basic set of required modules within a specialty area, including case studies, which are appropriate to the nature of his or her role in the sponsored research. The specialty areas include:

- o Biomedical Responsible Conduct of Research
- o Social and Behavioral Responsible Conduct of Research
- o Physical Science Responsible Conduct of Research
- o Humanities Responsible Conduct of Research
- o Responsible Conduct of Research for Engineers

The basic modules within these specialty areas review the following issues concerning ethical research:

- o Introduction to Responsible Conduct of Research
- o Research Misconduct
- o Conflicts of Interest and Commitment
- o Publication Practices and Responsible Authorship
- o Data Acquisition, Management, Sharing and Ownership
- o Mentor/Trainee Responsibilities
- o Peer Review
- o Collaborative Research

The minimum "passing" aggregate score for the collection of Responsible Research Conduct modules is 80%, which is required in order to satisfy the NSF requirement described above.

Instructions for VT CITI Learners

Please see instructions located at http://www.research.vt.edu/research-integrity-office/files/vt-instructions-citi.pdf

Principal Investigators will be responsible for assuring that all postdocs, graduate students, and undergraduates who are funded by their NSF projects, including subawards, submitted (and subsequently awarded) after **January 4, 2010**, complete RCR training. All such personnel working on an NSF funded project after January 4, 2010, must complete this training in Responsible Conduct of Research **no later than 30 days** following the start date of the project, including individuals added to a project in progress.

Failure to comply with this policy by any required participants within the specified time frame may result in freezing the account of the project supporting these personnel.

The Manager of Research Education and Development in the Office of the Vice President for Research will coordinate access to the training materials, as well as the tracking mechanism for compliance with this requirement. Tracking will include identification of required participants,

collection of training data, and reporting results of participants to PIs, the Authorized Organizational Representative, and the Research Integrity Officer. After the learners complete and pass the appropriate module, they will be able to print a completion report.

Please note that this plan is subject to revision as NSF requirements change.

For more information:

Technical issues regarding content delivered on the CITI website should be addressed to citisupport@med.miami.edu or to 305-243-7970.

Questions regarding NSF requirements should be addressed to Vicky Ratcliffe, Manager of Research Education and Development, at vratcliffe@vt.edu or 540-231-7964.

Questions regarding this policy should be directed to Dr. Thomas Inzana, Associate Vice President for Research Programs and Research Integrity Officer, at tinzana@vt.edu or 540-231-5188.

Revised: December 12, 2011