

Texas A&M University
NSF Required Training and Oversight Plan
Responsible and Ethical Conduct in Research
Revised June 18, 2010

National Science Foundation (NSF) Announcement

The responsible and ethical conduct of research (RCR) is critical for excellence, as well as public trust, in science and engineering. Consequently, education in RCR is considered essential in the preparation of future scientists and engineers. Section 7009 of the America Creating Opportunities to Meaningfully Promote Excellence in Technology, Education, and Science (COMPETES) Act (42 U.S.C. 1862) requires that each institution that applies for financial assistance from the Foundation for science and engineering research or education describe in its grant proposal a plan to provide appropriate training and oversight in the responsible and ethical conduct of research to undergraduate students, graduate students, and postdoctoral researchers participating in the proposed research project. <http://edocket.access.gpo.gov/2009/E9-19930.htm>.

Implementation Date

January 4, 2010 proposal submissions, including subawards.

Institutional Responsibilities

1. An institution must have a plan in place 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. As noted in GPG Chapter II.C.1e, institutional certification to this effect is required for each proposal.
2. 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.
3. An institution must designate one or more persons to oversee compliance with the RCR training requirement.
4. Institutions are responsible for verifying that undergraduate students, graduate students, and postdoctoral researchers who receive NSF funds (support from salary and/or stipends) to conduct research on NSF grants have received training in the responsible and ethical conduct of research.

Who will this training affect?

This new NSF RCR training requirement will apply to undergraduate students, graduate students, and postdoctoral researchers who receive NSF funds (support from salary and/or stipends) to conduct research on NSF grants. Beginning on January 4, 2010, the authorized representatives for TAMU Research Services and the Research Foundation will sign the certification page in proposals stating that the university has a plan to train undergraduate students, graduate students and postdoctoral researchers in RCR.

How will training be delivered?

RCR training will be accomplished by using the Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative (CITI) RCR training course available through the Office of Research Compliance website at:

<http://researchcompliance.tamu.edu/responsible-conduct-of-research>

The CITI training module will include a test at the end of the course which will be used to assess the competency of the student or postdoctoral researcher.

The CITI RCR training module offers training by discipline as follows:

Biomedical
Social & Behavioral
Physical Science
Arts and Humanities
Engineers
Administrative

Will alternative training be allowed?

The Office of the Vice President for Research and Graduate Studies will establish a RCR Training Requirements Committee whose charge is to review and approve courses that may be used as an alternative method to fulfill the RCR training requirement and to address and review on-going questions or concerns such as supplemental training. Alternative training will include courses taught on campus that provide the same essential information as the CITI RCR training; CITI RCR training courses taken at another institution or taken on the CITI Public RCR Training site; and/or, other on-line RCR training courses that are approved by the RCR Training Requirements Committee. The substitution of such courses must be approved by the RCR Training Requirements Committee.

What is the institutional training and verification process?

The CITI module provides a certificate of completion when the student or postdoctoral researcher completes the course and passes the test. The process will be managed as follows:

1. The requirement to provide RCR training to students and postdoctoral researchers will be clearly stated in the NSF grant terms and conditions. Grant awards for proposals processed before the January 4, 2010 implementation, may or may not include the training requirement; however, PIs are strongly encouraged to require their student and postdoctoral researchers to take the training.
2. Research Services will notify the PI upon receipt of a NSF award that requires RCR training under the grant terms and conditions.
3. The PI will identify undergraduate students, graduate students and postdoctoral researchers who will receive NSF funds (support from salary and/or stipends) to conduct research on NSF grants.
4. The PI will direct students and postdoctoral researchers to take the discipline specific CITI RCR Training available on the Office of Research Compliance webpage (<http://researchcompliance.tamu.edu/responsible-conduct-of-research>) or

- other approved RCR training, within 90 days of the student or postdoctoral researcher beginning work on the project, or before the completion of the project, whichever is sooner. The PI should direct those taking the CITI RCR training to print a copy of the training certificate and return it to the PI as proof of training.
5. The PI will send an e-mail containing a list of students and postdoctoral researchers supported by the PI's NSF project to TAMU Research Services office (awards@tamu.edu). The e-mail should contain the following information: PI name, NSF grant number, title, account number, sponsored projects office, student or postdoctoral researcher name, and UIN . When the student or postdoctoral researcher has completed the RCR training course, the PI will forward a copy of the certificate of completion to Research Services. Research Services will maintain the list of students and postdoctoral researchers and their training status for all TAMU NSF grants regardless of the sponsored projects office administering the grant.
 6. Personnel working with the TrainTraq system have been engaged to determine if the verification process can be automated. If it is determined that the TrainTraq system can verify the process, this plan will be revised accordingly.

Additional Information

Office of the Vice President for Research and Graduate Studies
Gregory L. Foxworth, Assistant Vice President
(979) 845-1812
g-foxworth@tamu.edu