Columbia University
NSF Responsible Conduct of Research Requirements
Frequently Asked Questions

1. <u>What is the new requirement?</u>
   The National Science Foundation requires training in the Responsible Conduct of Research (RCR) for all students and postdocs supported on NSF sponsored projects submitted (and subsequently awarded) on or after January 4, 2010.

2. <u>When does the new requirement go into effect?</u>
   The new requirement applies to sponsored projects submitted (and subsequently awarded) on or after January 4, 2010, including competitive renewals.

3. <u>Who is affected by the new requirement?</u>
   All undergrads, graduate students and postdocs who are funded by NSF projects submitted (and subsequently awarded) on or after January 4, 2010, including competitive renewals, are required to complete RCR training.

4. <u>Does the requirement apply retroactively?</u>
   No, students and postdocs funded on projects submitted **before** January 4, 2010, regardless of when they are awarded, are not required to complete RCR training.

5. <u>What is required?</u>
   The NSF guidelines state that, beginning on January 4, 2010, the University is required to have "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." All NSF applications filed on or after January 4, 2010 will include a certification to this effect. Additionally, the University is obligated to verify that individuals have received the required training.

6. <u>Should I add a description of RCR training in my NSF proposals?</u>
   No, it is not necessary to include additional language to NSF proposals. All NSF applications will automatically include the RCR terms and conditions.

7. <u>What are the PI's responsibilities?</u>
   PIs are responsible for assuring that all affected postdocs, graduate students and undergrads complete RCR training. The Office of Research Compliance and Training will track who is required to complete training and whether they have complied and share that information with the PI.

8. <u>Is the University required to submit its training plan or evidence of compliance in progress reports or other communication with the NSF?</u>
   No. However, training plans and appropriate verification of training compliance must be available upon audit.

9. How can students and postdocs receive RCR training?
   There are several RCR training options available, including an on-line course available through Rascal. This course was created and is maintained by the Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative (CITI), a nationally-recognized source for research-related training. The requirement can also be met through established Columbia courses and departmental offerings. More information on RCR training options is available on the Research Compliance and Training website here.

10. What topics are covered in RCR training?
    Typical topics covered include data management and data sharing, authorship, research misconduct, conflict of interest, and other similar issues.

11. Can departments offer their own RCR training? Who would need to review it?
    Departments may train individuals through previously established or newly created training options. Such departmental offerings must be reviewed by the Office of Research Compliance and Training to assure that they are generally comparable to other commonly accepted RCR trainings.

12. If an individual has previously completed one of the Columbia RCR courses, must RCR training be taken again to fulfill the NSF requirement?
    No, individuals who have previously completed one of the Columbia RCR courses (Morningside or CUMC) are not required to repeat it for purposes of fulfilling the NSF requirements.

13. If an individual has previously completed CITI RCR training at another institution, must he or she take it again to fulfill the NSF requirement?
    Individuals who have previously completed CITI RCR training at another institution will be credited for the modules they have taken. However, since CITI allows institutions to select from among different RCR offerings, individuals must complete any Columbia-required modules that have not been previously completed.

14. Can an individual receive credit for taking RCR training at another institution?
    In general, individuals who have previously completed RCR training at another institution (other than CITI RCR training) are required to complete one of the RCR training options at Columbia.

15. When must training be completed?
    In general, training should be completed within three months of when the individual begins work on the project. Where individuals are working on NSF projects for a short time, such as the summer, training must be completed before the individual's work on the project ends.

16. How will compliance be monitored?
    The Office of Research Compliance and Training coordinates the collection and maintenance of compliance information, including identification of affected individuals, collection of training completion data, and reporting to PIs.

17. Must RCR training be repeated for each NSF sponsored project or PI?
    No, RCR training need not be repeated if an individual changes projects or PIs.

18. How is the NSF RCR requirement different from the NIH RCR requirement?
    The NSF RCR requirement applies to all undergraduates, graduate students and postdocs regardless of the type of project; the NIH RCR requirement applies only to training grants, but it applies to all trainees, including junior faculty. The NIH RCR requirement includes a face-to-face component while the NSF requirement does not. More information about the NIH requirement can be found here.

19. Where can I find more information about the NSF RCR requirement?
    Information about the new requirements, including links to NSF and other resources, can be found on the Research Compliance and Training website on the training page. For questions, please contact Joel Roselin at research-compliance@columbia.edu.