Revised NSF Responsible Conduct of Research Plan

Since January 4, 2010, institutions applying for NSF research grants have been required to have in place a plan for ensuring that students (undergraduate/graduate) and postdoctoral scholars supported by resulting awards receive education in the responsible and ethical conduct of research. UCLA’s plan for providing this instruction includes creation of a required foundation course that is delivered on-line. Individual Principal Investigators are encouraged to supplement this core course through discussion, reading, and other mentoring activities.

The UCLA RCR foundation course was developed by a faculty committee charged with designing a basic curriculum to be used by students and postdoctoral scholars across disciplines. The course focuses on ethical issues associated with research, and the content is based on the recently published third edition of the National Academy of Sciences, “On Being a Scientist.” Topics covered include advising and mentoring; treatment of data; mistakes and negligence; research misconduct; suspected violations of professional standards; protection of human participants and animal subjects in research; laboratory safety; sharing of research results; authorship and the allocation of credit; intellectual property; competing interests, commitments and values; and the researcher in society. Illustrative scenarios and quizzes are incorporated into the course. A section is included with references to regulations and to UCLA resources, policies, procedures, and their interpretation. This on-line course is available to UCLA employees through the University of California Learning Management System (LMS). For students who do not have access to LMS, the same course is posted on the Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative (CITI) site at https://www.citiprogram.org.

The Principal Investigator, all undergraduate/graduate students, postdoctoral scholars, and all other academic/staff appointees who are supported by NSF research grants and subawards are required to take the course. Individuals who complete the course while supported on one NSF grant will not have to retake the course if they move to another NSF grant at UCLA within a two-year period. Individuals who may have previously completed an RCR course at another academic institution will be expected to complete the UCLA course.

Upon acceptance of NSF research support by the campus, the Principal Investigator will be notified of the NSF RCR course requirements.

UCLA’s Vice Chancellor for Research will be responsible for overseeing compliance with the NSF RCR training requirement.