

Office of the Dean
McCormick School of Engineering & Applied Science
Northwestern University
August 21, 2018

Responsible Conduct of Research (RCR) Training Policy (Revised)

Effective January 4, 2010, the National Science Foundation (NSF) mandated that, at the time of proposal submission, the institution must have a plan to provide appropriate RCR training and oversight to undergraduate students, graduate students and postdoctoral researchers who are supported by NSF funding. The Office for Research Integrity maintains a website (<http://www.researchintegrity.northwestern.edu/>), which describes how the NSF mandate is implemented and complied with. The plan below details the requirements that each category of researchers in McCormick must fulfill and consequences of not fulfilling them in a timely manner.

PhD Students and Post-Doctoral Researchers

- Complete the online CITI course (Responsible Conduct of Research) and obtain a passing grade of at least 80% on the accompanying quizzes. This course consists of 9 common core modules for all disciplines, one of which is the Introduction that does not require a quiz completion. This requirement must be completed within the first quarter at NU. If the student or the post-doc has passed the equivalent CITI course previously at another institution, then he/she must submit a proof of completion to the department in order to waive this requirement.
- Complete the GEN ENG 519 (Responsible Conduct of Research for Engineers) course with a satisfactory grade of S within the first calendar year at NU. This is a five-week course for PhD students and post-docs. Each weekly class meeting is two hours. An equivalent RCR course (e.g., NUIN 409, IBIS 423, CHEM 519 or the NUCATS course) may be used as a substitute.
- If the researcher does not complete the online CITI course within the first quarter of appointment at NU or the GEN ENG 519 (or an equivalent course) within the first calendar year at NU, then any charges to the NSF grant for the salaries of this researcher must be removed from the award and charged to a non-sponsored account such as a department or the investigator's discretionary account. The researcher must submit a proof of completion of the requirement to the department in order to begin charging the salary to the grant.

Other Categories of Researchers

- Other categories of researchers include undergraduate students, REU trainees, masters students, visiting pre-doctoral and post-doctoral fellows and visiting scholars.

- Undergraduates and REU trainees are required to complete only the online CITI course (Responsible Conduct of Research) and obtain a passing grade of at least 80% on the accompanying quizzes if they are funded by NSF grants. They are not required to take the GEN ENG 519 course.

As per the memo from the VP of Research

(<http://www.researchintegrity.northwestern.edu/training-2/responsible-conduct-of-research-rcr-training/>) undergraduate students paid by NSF research awards must complete the training within 60 days after their salaries are first charged to the account. Other researchers must complete this requirement as soon as the appointment begins but certainly before the appointment ends. Otherwise any charges to the NSF grant for the salaries of any of these researchers must be removed from the award and charged to a non-sponsored account such as a department or the investigator's discretionary account.

- Other categories of researchers listed above must complete CITI on-line training and GEN_ENG 519 if paid on NSF awards. Completion of CITI must occur within the researcher's first quarter of payment from the award; completion of GEN_ENG 519 must occur before the end of the first year of payment from the award.
- All faculty, especially those funded by NSF, are encouraged, but are not required, to complete the CITI online course.

Administration of RCR Training

- The principal investigator (PI) of an NSF grant is responsible for ensuring that the students and post-docs supported on his/her grant complete appropriate RCR training requirement in a timely manner.
- The Office of Research Integrity (ORI) tracks the completion of the appropriate RCR requirement by graduate students, post-docs, undergraduates and other researchers. The McCormick Dean's Office assists ORI in this task and disseminates information about RCR compliance status to each department for their follow-up.
- Additionally, the McCormick Dean's Office tracks completion of on-line and instructor-led training for all McCormick PhD students and post-docs regardless of funding.