

NSF Responsible Conduct of Research Plan

Effective January 4, 2010, institutions applying for NSF research grants must have in place a plan for ensuring that students (undergraduate and 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 will be delivered on-line. Individual Principal Investigators will be 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 is based on the content of 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 with references to regulations and to UCLA resources, policies, and procedures, and their interpretation; will also be included.

All undergraduate and graduate students and postdoctoral scholars supported by NSF research grants and subawards will be required to take the course. Those who successfully complete it will receive certification that will be valid for two (2) years. Students and postdoctoral scholars 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. Students and postdoctoral scholars 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 requirements, and reminded that all students and postdoctoral scholars who are supported by NSF awards will be required to take the course within a short time after they begin working on the research project.

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