

National Science Foundation Responsible Conduct of Research (RCR) Policy²²

1. Background

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. 1862o-1 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.”

The language specified below provides NSF’s implementation of Section 7009.

2. Institutional Responsibilities

- a. 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.1.e, institutional certification to this effect is required for each proposal.
- b. 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.
- c. An institution must designate one or more persons to oversee compliance with the RCR training requirement.
- d. Institutions are responsible for verifying that undergraduate students, graduate students, and postdoctoral researchers supported by NSF to conduct research have received training in the responsible and ethical conduct of research.²³

²² From NSF’s January 2010 *Award and Administration Guide* (AAG), Chapter IV.B.

(http://www.nsf.gov/pubs/policydocs/pappguide/nsf10_1/aag_4.jsp#IVB)

²³ There is a wide array of resources, in addition to the CITI online training, that can be used for education in the responsible conduct of research. NSF has funded two beta sites ([NSF Award 0936857](#) and [NSF Award 0936865](#)) to begin to provide an interactive community online resource on ethics education in science and engineering.