RCR: Responsible Conduct of Research

Beginning January 4, 2010, the National Science Foundation implemented specific guidelines and requirements for the responsible conduct of research in Section 7009 of the America Creating Opportunities to Meaningfully Promote Excellence in Technology, Education, and Science (COMPETES) Act. 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.

As King’s College looks to expand its research activities for faculty and student experience and in possible collaboration with other organizations, it is important that this new requirement be explored at the curriculum level. In addition, it is a component that will soon be required by other funding agencies and other educational disciplines.

Statutory Requirement

"The Director shall require 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."

Frequently Asked Questions Regarding RCR

Are there types of proposals/awards that are exempt from the RCR requirement?
The RCR training requirement applies to all proposals submitted, or due, on or after January 4, 2010, to conduct research, which excludes, for example, conference, symposium, workshop, or travel proposals.

Who must receive the RCR training?
NSF expects institutions to be able to verify that those students (undergraduates and graduates) and postdoctoral researchers who receive NSF funds (support from salary and/or stipends to conduct research on NSF grants) will obtain RCR training. However, NSF anticipates that institutions will develop their RCR training programs in a manner that helps prepare the next generation of researchers, including the consideration of risks or other factors associated with student and postdoctoral researcher participation in research.

Must RCR training be provided on an annual basis? Is there a minimum content requirement?
Each institution is responsible for the content requirements of its RCR training program, and the frequency with which such training must occur. It is the responsibility of each institution to determine both the content and the delivery method for the training that will meet the institution’s specific needs for RCR training in all areas at that institution for which NSF provides support. Each
institution must decide if development of content or pedagogical method is required, or if appropriate content and training can be provided from some existing sources or capabilities, and take appropriate action to implement their decisions.

Does the RCR requirement flow down to any subawardee identified on the project? Yes. The RCR training requirement does flow down to all subawardees, at any tier. The proposing institution must therefore ensure that these RCR requirements are appropriately addressed in the subaward instrument.

Does the RCR training plan have to be in place before any award is made, or at the time of proposal submission? The RCR training plan must be in place before any award is made, or at the time of proposal submission.

Do undergraduates, graduate students and postdoctoral researchers have to receive RCR training before being identified on a proposal to NSF? No. It is not required that the training be completed at that time. The institution plan for training should include when individuals are to receive the training.

For More Information:....

CITI: Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative - some institutions are using this free online training course to meet their RCR needs while they develop customized training plans.

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**Academic Grant Funding News**

The **King’s Biology Department** has submitted an application to the **National Science Foundation** in collaboration with **The Commonwealth Medical College** to fund the purchase of a Nikon Confocal Microscope System under the NSF Major Research Instrumentation Program. The project will advance King’s faculty biological research and shared research opportunities with TCMC as well as provide training in this important microscopy technique and research experience for students. PI: Ann Yezerski, Ph.D. Funding request - $540,760.

**Anne Massey, Ph.D.** has submitted an application to the **National Endowment for the Humanities** Summer Seminar Program. “Image-ening Peru: Stories of Globalization,” proposes to connect local, regional, and global issues. Using literature as a foundation for discussion, K-12 educators will explore key issues that have influenced development in Peru on both local and regional levels, discuss the global repercussions of these issues, consider the efficacy of proposed solutions, and develop plans for sharing an understanding of these connections with their students. Funding request - $86,189.

**Ron Supkowski, Ph.D.** has submitted an application in collaboration with **Solutions Mining, Inc.** to the **Ben Franklin Technology Partners Alternative and Clean Energy Technology Development and Commercialization Initiative**. The project combines two environmentally sustainable practices which have not been previously studied together, into one viable commercial process. The project studies the treatment of acid mine drainage (AMD) to produce valuable by-products of clean water and minerals, and the geothermal heat potential. The group will perform research at the Old Forge Borehole, which releases approximately 50 million gallons of subterranean AMD into the Lackawanna River per day. Funding request - $17,965.

**Frances Feudale, D.O.** and the **Physician Assistant Studies Program** is submitting two applications to the **Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA)** supporting the Program. The Equipment to Enhance Training for Health Professionals Program proposal requests funding for the purchase of new simulation models for clinical instruction in women’s health. Funding request - $35,000.

The second application, “King’s College PA Program: Growing to Meet the Community Needs,” will help address the growing national shortage of primary care providers in medically underserved areas. Luzerne County and the surrounding eight counties are all designated by HRSA to be medically underserved. Funding from this program will assist King’s College in building capacity to train more physician assistants as they assume a greater role in providing much needed primary care in the United States. A major component of this proposal is an additional curriculum focus on care in medically underserved areas. Funding request - $439,816.

In addition to these great projects, we’re also looking into funding opportunities for Technology in Communications and Fine Arts. There are some great opportunities outthere to match almost any project or research interest. **Now is the time to get started!**

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