Plan to Provide Training and Oversight in the Responsible Conduct of Research to Students and Postdoctoral Researchers Supported by NSF to Conduct Research

Background

The National Science Foundation (NSF) requires that each institution applying for financial assistance from the Foundation have a plan to provide appropriate training and oversight in the responsible conduct of research (RCR) to undergraduate students, graduate students (students) and postdoctoral researchers (postdocs) who will be supported by NSF to carry out research. (See the NSF requirement.) DePaul has implemented the following plan to fulfill this requirement.

Those Affected

This training requirement applies to students and postdocs at DePaul who are supported by NSF awards funded from proposals submitted on or after January 4, 2010. "NSF support" includes salaries, stipends, one-time payments, tuition payments, or other such financial support derived from NSF awards or subawards and provided to students or postdocs to carry out their own research or participate in the research projects of others.

Training Delivery

DePaul uses the on-line RCR training program offered by the Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative (CITI) at the University of Miami to deliver this training and verify completion of it. This program consists of a series of brief modules that address generally accepted RCR topics. See the Office of Research Services (ORS) web site for a link to the training and user instructions: https://offices.depaul.edu/ors/award-management/training/Pages/rcr.aspx Once this training is successfully completed, it does not need to be renewed at a later time.

Timeframe for Training

Students affected by this requirement are expected to complete the CITI RCR training within 45 days of the date their NSF support begins. In most cases, this beginning point will be the effective date of employment on an NSF project that is subject to the training requirement. Students receiving NSF support for a period of less than 45 days must complete their training before their NSF support ends.   Postdocs affected by this requirement are expected to complete the CITI RCR training before their effective date of employment.

Notification and Verification Procedures

When ORS approves a hiring request for a student who is subject to this training requirement, ORS sends an initial notification e-mail to the PI. ORS then monitors the student's training progress in the CITI program and sends the PI biweekly progress reports/reminders during the 45-day period.

When ORS approves the creation of an NSF-supported postdoc position, the initial notification e-mail also asks that, once the search has been completed, the PI send ORS the name of the individual who will fill the position and the anticipated start date. Once this information is received, ORS sends the PI biweekly updates on the postdoc's training progress leading up to the anticipated start date, as needed.

ORS also sends notices of training completion by students and postdocs to the PIs supervising them after verifying completion in the CITI system.

PIs who receive these notices are responsible for ensuring that the students and postdocs who work on their NSF projects fulfill their training obligations, and for providing appropriate oversight in the ethical and responsible conduct of research for these personnel. For this reason, PIs are encouraged, though not required, to complete the CITI RCR training program.

Requirement Not Completed

If the RCR training is not completed within the required timeframe, the expenses associated with student's or postdoc's NSF support are transferred from the relevant NSF award(s) to the PI's academic unit. For students, this occurs shortly after the 45-day point, or when the student's NSF support ends if earlier than 45 days. For postdocs, the transfer is initiated at the point where the postdoc's salary costs begin appearing on the NSF award(s) to which the postdoc is assigned. The biweekly training progress reports issued by ORS contain reminders of the need for such transfers in the event that the training requirement is not fulfilled. ORS notifies the PI and the business manager of the PI's college or school when such transfers are initiated.

Who to Contact

Douglas Petcher, Director of Grants Compliance and Award Management, Office of Research Services, is responsible for overseeing compliance with this RCR training requirement. He can be reached at 312-362-7595.

For questions about notices received, the CITI training, or student/postdoc progress in the completion of it, contact Gina Gilson, Assistant Director, at 312-362-6415.