NSF Training Requirement for Responsible Conduct of Research (RCR)

Summary of the NSF Requirement
For all new proposals submitted after January 4, 2010, the National Science Foundation (NSF) will require St. John's University to certify that it has a plan to provide training and oversight in the responsible and ethical conduct of research (RCR) to undergraduates, graduate students, and postdoctoral researchers who will be supported by NSF to conduct research. In additional, the institution is responsible for verifying that the RCR training requirement is met by individuals supported by NSF grants. 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.

NSF Federal Register Notice on RCR Implementation (Full Text):
http://edocket.access.gpo.gov/2009/E9-19930.htm
U.S. DHHS Office of Research Integrity (ORI): http://ori.dhhs.gov/

Applicability of the NSF Requirement
The NSF RCR training is required for undergraduate students, graduate students and postdoctoral researchers supported by NSF. The term "support" includes direct benefits such as salary/payment, in addition to indirect benefits such as the use of equipment or laboratory supplies paid for by the NSF grant.

St. John's Plan to Meet the NSF Training Requirement for RCR
St. John's University is a registered member of an online RCR training system developed by the Center for Materials and Devices for Informational Technology Research (CMDITR). St. John's is requiring all individuals who meet the above stated applicability criteria to register and successfully complete the following three online RCR training modules using the CMDITR system: 1) Rights and Obligations, 2). Collaboration, Communication and Grants Management, 3). Intellectual Property. The modules can be accessed through the CMDITR website: http://responsibleresearch.org/. The training requirement must be fulfilled within the first 6 weeks after an award has been made. For continuing projects, training will be required 6 weeks after each new student is added to the project.

Responsibilities
The Office of Grants and Sponsored Research (OGSR), will be responsible for notifying the PI of the NSF RCR training requirements so that the training process can be completed within 6 weeks after the award has been made. The OGSR is also responsible for verifying and certifying that the RCR training has been completed by covered individuals paid from an NSF award or individuals identified by the PI of the NSF award as being required to complete the training.

The PI of the NSF award is responsible for ensuring compliance with requirements of the award, which includes facilitation of the training completion process and ensuring that all applicable students are notified of the requirement. The PI will notify OGSR of any individuals who are "supported" under their NSF award but may not be paid directly from the NSF project. The PI is responsible for notifying the students early enough to complete the training requirement within the first 6 weeks after an award has been made or, for continuing projects, within 6 weeks after each new student is added to the project.

Procedures
Step 1: Notification

For new proposals that are submitted after 1/4/2010 to NSF and are subsequently awarded, the OGSR will notify the PI of the NSF RCR training requirement directly after the award letter is sent. The PI will work with the OGSR to identify all persons who require training. The PI will notify those identified and send them instructions on how to complete the training.

Step 2: Student/post doctoral researcher registration and completion of RCR training modules

Students/post doctoral researchers will need to register themselves by filling in and submitting an online registration form found on the CMDITR website. Trainees will receive an e-mail with their login username and password. They will then be able to login and start completing their online training modules. The online system will save their progress, allowing them to leave and return to the system at anytime. Total approximate time to complete all three modules is 3 hours.

Step 3: Verification and certification of completion

Once all three modules are completed, the trainee will notify the responsible PI. The PI will then notify the OGSR. The OGSR will login to the system and certify that all three modules have been completed. An e-mail will then be sent to the PI from the Office of Grants and Sponsored Research acknowledging the trainee's completion and a printout of the 'Certificate of Completion' will be kept on file in the grants office.

The OGSR will send out reminder e-mails to the PI if the office has not received any notification of RCR completion within one month of the initial notification. If, after being notified and reminded, the NSF training requirements are not met after the allotted 6 week time period the issue will be referred to he department Chair and/or Dean for resolution.