Overview and Applicability

1) Who does the Georgia Tech RCR Academic Policy for Doctoral Students apply to?

Answer: The Policy applies to all doctoral students who have an admit date of Fall 2011 or later. It includes students who enrolled in a master’s program in Fall 2011 or later but who have since transitioned to a doctoral program.

2) Why does a student have to take RCR training if it is not required by the student’s source of funding?

Answer: As a premier technological university at the cutting edge of education, research, and innovation, Georgia Tech is committed to providing leadership in the realm of ethics and the responsible conduct of research (RCR). RCR training is central to Georgia Tech’s mission to ensure that students are prepared with the knowledge and skills necessary to conduct themselves professionally and with integrity.

3) Who does the Georgia Tech RCR Compliance Policy apply to?

Answer: The Compliance Policy applies to students (graduate and undergraduate) and postdoctoral researchers who are funded by a new NSF grant proposal that was submitted or due on or after January 4, 2010, by certain types of NIH grants, by USDA NIFA awards, or by PURA awards. For more information about the Compliance Policy and its applicability criteria refer to: http://www.osp.gatech.edu/forms/GT_RCR.pdf.

4) How does the Academic Policy for Doctoral Students differ from the requirements described in the Georgia Tech RCR Compliance Policy?

Answer: Under the Academic Policy, a graduate student’s source of funding is no longer relevant, and it does not cover undergraduates or postdoctoral researchers. Both policies require the same form of online training, a CITI RCR course, but doctoral students must satisfy the in-person training requirement of the Academic Policy if they meet the applicable criteria.

The Requirements of the RCR Academic Policy for Doctoral Students

5) What does this Policy require of doctoral students?

Answer: Applicable doctoral students must complete: (I) an online CITI RCR course (refer to Question 6) and (II) in-person RCR training (refer to Question 7).

6) What do doctoral students need to do to complete the online RCR training?

They must successfully complete an online CITI RCR course within the initial 90 days of their first full semester as a doctoral student. If a student goes past the 90 day time frame, a hold may be placed on course registration until the student completes the training. In order to ensure proper credit for the online course, trainees should affiliate
their CITI membership with GT and enter their 9-digit GTID. The CITI RCR course can be found here: rcr.gatech.edu/online-training/.

7) **What do doctoral students need to do to complete the in-person RCR training?**

Answer: Students covered by this Policy are required to successfully complete PHIL 6000 OR an academic program’s approved in-house RCR training approach. In general, applicable students who need to take PHIL 6000 will be expected to do so during the first summer session after they begin their doctoral program at Georgia Tech. Additional sections will be available during the fall and spring semesters for those students who would not be enrolled full time during the summer session. For more information, refer to: rcr.gatech.edu/rcr-courses.

8) **How much time will the RCR training require?**

Answer: The online CITI RCR course takes approximately 3-5 hours to complete. If students take PHIL 6000 in order to satisfy the in-person training requirement, it is a one credit course, and it is offered in a variety of formats (e.g., two hours per week for seven weeks).

- **In-House RCR Training Approaches**

9) **How does an academic program gain approval to implement its own in-house RCR training for its doctoral students?**

Answer: An academic program must submit a proposal to the GT RCR Advisory Committee by the first working day in December of the current academic year in order for the in-house proposal to be considered for the academic year that follows. A proposed in-house approach must include no less than eight instruction hours on the RCR core topic areas (refer to Question 10) in a for-credit course. Proposals must not only document the courses where material is taught but how it will be ensured that all applicable students will take the described course(s) (e.g., “this course is required for all doctoral students.”)

10) **What are the RCR core topic areas that must be covered during in-person training?**

Answer: An in-house approach to RCR training must include all of the following topic areas unless permission has been granted by the RCR Advisory Committee to exclude one or more of the topics: (1) Authorship and publication; (2) Collaborative research; (3) Conflict of interest; (4) Data acquisition, management, ownership, and sharing; (5) Laboratory safety; (6) Peer review; (7) Policies regarding the use of human subjects in research; (8) Policies regarding the use of vertebrate animals in research; (9) The responsibilities of mentors and mentees; (10) Research misconduct and policies for handling research misconduct; and (11) Science and engineering in society.

11) **What is the current list of in-house RCR training approaches for doctoral students?**

Answer: The current list of in-house training approaches can be found here: rcr.gatech.edu/inhouse-doctoral. Successfully completing one of the listed approaches replaces the need to take PHIL 6000.
• **Exceptions to this Policy and Other Applicability Issues**

12) *Are there doctoral students who are not required to complete the RCR training requirement?*

Answer: Yes, there are some. For example, doctoral students might be exempt if they enrolled prior to Fall 2011 AND they are not covered by the applicability criteria listed in the Georgia Tech RCR Compliance Policy (refer to Question 3).

13) *If a student is admitted to a Georgia Tech master’s program prior to Fall 2011 and then transitioned to a doctoral program in Fall 2011 or later, does the student have to complete RCR training?*

Answer: The student should be encouraged to complete RCR training. However, the Policy applies to students who enrolled Fall 2011 or later. A student who enrolled prior to Fall 2011 is not strictly required to complete the RCR training as long as the student is not covered by the applicability criteria listed in the Georgia Tech RCR Compliance Policy (refer to Question 3).

14) *If a student enrolled in a Georgia Tech master’s program during Fall 2011 or later and then transitions to a doctoral program, does the student have to complete RCR training?*

Answer: Yes. If a master’s student enrolled Fall 2011 or later and transitions to a doctoral program, the student is required to complete the RCR training described in the RCR Academic Policy for Doctoral Students. The student must complete an online CITI RCR course within the first 90 days of the semester after they officially have a change of level to a doctoral program. The in-person training should preferably be completed within one year of when they officially have a change of level to a doctoral program.

15) *Are there other categories of master’s students who are required to complete RCR training?*

Answer: Yes. Master’s students are required to complete RCR training if they are covered by the applicability criteria listed in the Georgia Tech RCR Compliance Policy (refer to Question 3). The Institutional Policy for master’s thesis students is still being finalized.

16) *If I am a graduate student and have completed my RCR training at Georgia Tech, will I have to receive RCR training again in the future?*

Answer: It depends on a variety factors including the policy of your future institutions and the policy of your future sources of funding. For example, if a student’s source of funding requires training at each major career stage or that the training be repeated after a given number of years, then the student will have to do so. However, this Policy does not currently require follow-up training.

17) *Are transfer students held to the same time period requirements described in the RCR Academic Policy?*

Answer: Yes.
18) Do I need to receive RCR training at Georgia Tech if I started my graduate degree at another institution and completed RCR training there?

Answer: Yes. As a Georgia Tech graduate student, you must receive RCR training here. However, if you have completed one of the CITI RCR courses that Georgia Tech uses, the online portion of the requirement may be satisfied. You must affiliate your CITI membership with Georgia Tech and send a CITI-generated document certifying completion to the Administrator of Graduate Research Ethics Programs for confirmation.

19) If I am enrolled in a joint degree program with another institution, do I need to complete my RCR training at Georgia Tech?

Answer: You must complete the online CITI RCR course if you have not already done so. However, the in-person training may occur at the partner institution as long as the student’s home department at Georgia Tech has received approval from the GT RCR Advisory Committee that such training is acceptable. The mechanism is similar to an academic program requesting permission to conduct RCR training on its own.

20) Do graduate students at GT-Lorraine or other international campuses have to complete RCR training?

Answer: Applicable graduate students (refer to Question 1) on Georgia Tech’s international campuses must complete an online CITI RCR course within the initial 90 days of their first full semester as a doctoral student. If a student goes past the 90 day time frame, a hold may be placed on course registration until the student completes the training. If these students enroll at Georgia Tech’s Atlanta campus for at least one semester, they should complete the in-person training component the first semester that they are present on the Atlanta campus.

- Administration of the RCR Academic Policy for Doctoral Students

21) How will the RCR Academic Policy for Doctoral Students be administered?

The Administrator of Graduate Research Ethics Programs monitors student adherence to the Policy. The Registrar will subsequently certify that these requirements have been satisfied when a petition to graduate is submitted.

22) Who should faculty and students contact if they have questions about RCR training?

Answer: Dr. Jason Borenstein, Director of Graduate Research Ethics Programs, at borenstein@gatech.edu or Judy Willis, Administrator of Graduate Research Ethics Programs, at judy.willis@gatech.edu.

23) Will it cost academic programs something?

Not at this time. The Office of the Executive Vice President for Research provided funds to train faculty to teach sections of PHIL 6000 during the summers of 2012 and 2013 in the hope that they will help to develop a customized RCR program for their home units. The Office of the Vice Provost for Graduate Education and Faculty Affairs will continue the RCR instructor program during the summer of 2014.