

The Georgia Institute of Technology Responsible Conduct of Research (RCR) Academic Policy for Doctoral Students

Last Updated February 25, 2014

Background

The responsible conduct of research (RCR) is an increasingly significant component of the education and training of researchers. Policies from federal agencies have contributed to this change. In 2009, the National Institutes of Health (NIH) updated its RCR policy, adding emphasis to the importance of in-person training. That same year, the National Science Foundation (NSF) released a new RCR training policy; it covers trainees, including postdoctoral researchers, funded by new proposals submitted or due on or after January 4, 2010.

As a premier technological university at the cutting edge of education, research, and innovation, the Georgia Institute of Technology (Georgia Tech) is committed to providing leadership in the realm of ethics and 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. Consequently, Georgia Tech has enacted the Academic Policy for Doctoral Students described here.

Applicability Criteria

The **RCR Academic Policy for Doctoral Students** 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.

Doctoral students who are not covered by this Policy should refer to the applicability criteria listed in the **Georgia Tech RCR Compliance Policy** to determine if their source of funding requires RCR training: http://www.osp.gatech.edu/forms/GT_RCR.pdf.

This Academic Policy does not affect undergraduate students and postdoctoral researchers. However, they are still subject to grant compliance requirements.

The Requirements of the RCR Academic Policy for Doctoral Students

As part of their degree requirements, doctoral students admitted Fall 2011 or later must complete:

- (1) a **CITI RCR online course** and (2) **in-person RCR training**

(1) The Online Requirement

The online portion of the requirement, a CITI RCR course, must be successfully completed within 90 days of when applicable students begin the first full semester in their doctoral program. Information about the CITI RCR course can be found here: rcr.gatech.edu/online-training/.

If a student goes past the 90 day time frame, a hold may be placed on course registration until the student completes the online training.

(2) The In-Person Requirement

Students covered by this Policy are required to complete successfully PHIL 6000 OR an academic program's in-house RCR training approach. The in-house approach must be formally approved by the GT RCR Advisory Committee. Students are strongly encouraged to complete in-person training within the first 12 months of their doctoral program. 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.

RCR Core Topics Areas and the Criteria for In-House Training Approaches

A proposed in-house approach must include no less than eight instruction hours on the RCR core topic areas in a credit course. The RCR core topic areas are as follows:

- (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.

An in-house approach to RCR training must include all of the above topic areas unless permission has been granted by the GT RCR Advisory Committee to exclude one or more of the topics.

Approved In-House RCR Training Approaches

Students covered by this Policy are required to successfully complete PHIL 6000 OR an academic program's in-house RCR training approach. Many of the in-house approaches are specific to a particular graduate program. Some utilize a single course; others utilize a combination of courses. The list of in-house RCR approaches is maintained at: <http://rcr.gatech.edu/inhouse-doctoral>.

A graduate 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.

Relevance to Compliance

The Academic Policy for Doctoral Students is designed to also satisfy compliance requirements for RCR training. However, completion of an in-person training method listed in the GT RCR Compliance Policy does not exempt a student from the in-person training requirement of the Academic Policy. 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**.

Joint Graduate Programs

Doctoral students covered by this Policy who are part of a joint program must complete a CITI RCR online course within the initial 90 days of their first full semester as a doctoral student. These students are also subject to the in-person training requirement if they are enrolled and present at Georgia Tech's Atlanta campus. Joint programs may submit a proposal to the GT RCR Advisory Committee for approval of the in-person coursework at the partner institution. The GT RCR Advisory Committee will apply the same evaluation criteria to such proposals as it does to a proposal for in-house training conducted at Georgia Tech.

Georgia Tech Graduate Students on International Campuses

Doctoral students covered by this Policy who are on Georgia Tech's international campuses must complete a CITI RCR online 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 RCR training component the first semester that they are present on the Atlanta campus.

Tracking and Monitoring

The Administrator of Graduate Research Ethics Programs monitors student adherence to this Policy. However, doctoral programs must inform their students about this Policy.

The Office of Sponsored Programs in conjunction with the Administrator of Graduate Research Ethics Programs is responsible for tracking compliance for students who require RCR training due to their source of funding.

For more information, refer to the Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) document accompanying this Policy.