Responsible Conduct of Research

Blair Lord
Eastern Illinois University
In recent years, federal agencies have emphasized the need for responsible conduct of research (RCR). According to a definition used by the National Institutes of Health, RCR is "the practice of scientific investigation with integrity."

Requirements of the National Science Foundation (NSF) have shaped Eastern’s current formal RCR policy. EIU students and postdocs who are supported by NSF funding are required to both take online training and discuss additional materials with a research advisor, who documents the discussion. NIH recently announced that some of its programs require RCR training as well.

While recognizing the responsibility of each individual faculty member, Eastern also accepts responsibility for encouraging an institutional climate that favors RCR. Accordingly, Eastern is initiating a new level of expectation of faculty members who conduct federally funded research.

Effective immediately, a newly revised version of Internal Governing Policy No. 48 requires RCR training of anyone who applies for federal funding for research. Important features of the policy include the following points:

- The requirement applies to anyone who is included as a PI, co-PI, or other senior personnel as described in the proposal;
- The requirement applies whether the funding will come to EIU directly from a federal agency or as flow-through money from another entity;
- The training must be completed before the application is submitted to the funding agency, and;
- The training consists of an on-line program that is available via a link on the website of the Office of Research and Sponsored Programs.

We expect that Eastern’s research climate will benefit from faculty mentors who are trained to the same formal level that some students are already receiving. Such mentors will be better positioned for thoughtful and informed discussions with their students.

Questions regarding this policy or the on-line training may be referred to the Director of the Office of Research and Sponsored Programs.