Northwestern | OFFICE FOR RESEARCH INTEGRITY

NEWS

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IN THIS ISSUE

McCormick's Steps to Improve RCR Training Compliance

The world we live in today is greatly influenced by information and technologies shaped by research. Given this important influence and the public's trust in work being performed, it is all the more important to ensure that research is being conducted in the most responsible and ethical manner possible. Though Responsible Conduct of Research (RCR) norms may vary across disciplines, the fundamental concepts of reporting research honestly, correctly, and objectively are at the core of all RCR training programs. The National Institutes of Health (NIH) and the National Science Foundation (NSF) have RCR requirements for trainees involved in federally funded research, though no other centrally mandated RCR training requirements exist at this time. Individual schools and departments at Northwestern are encouraged to build upon these requirements and, as a best practice, many have implemented RCR training requirements for all trainees, regardless of funding.

Notably, the McCormick School of Engineering recognizes that RCR training is a critical component of scholarly work and career development and established the school's RCR policy in Fall 2010 to reflect the value it places on RCR training. The policy, which can be found on McCormick's new RCR webpage, requires that all PhD students and postdoctoral researchers in McCormick, regardless of funding, complete RCR training. Training includes two components, web-based RCR training through the CITI program and instructor-led training, both of which must be completed within the first year of joining McCormick.

To assist with tracking RCR training compliance, McCormick recently began to utilize Northwestern's training management system, Learn@Northwestern. Similar to the way that the system has tracked NSF RCR training compliance since it went live in September 2015 (see the Summer 2015 issue of ORI's newsletter for more details), applicable trainees receive emails from the system to communicate training assignments and reflect successful course completions. "We were thrilled to be able to partner with the Office for Research to utilize this tracking mechanism," explains Paula Straaton, a Business Administrator in McCormick who coordinates RCR training for the School. "It helps us easily identify information in a way that could not have been done prior to the system and helps me better target which trainees I need to support or track down." All PhD students and postdoctoral researchers in McCormick should watch for the email notifications from the Learn@Northwestern system about training requirements and can contact Paula with any questions or concerns. NSF funded trainees will receive separate training assignments, but the same courses used to meet McCormick's requirements will also meet NSF requirements.

Though McCormick has taken the lead with creating an internal mandatory RCR policy and using Learn@Northwestern for compliance tracking, ORI recognizes that many other departments throughout the University also require RCR training for non-federally funded trainees. The training management system is a great way to track training compliance and any departments interested in utilizing the system are encouraged to contact ORI to initiate the process!

New RCR Resources Available!

Though training in the Responsible Conduct of Research (RCR) is often thought of as something specifically applicable to research trainees, anyone engaged in research or research administration can benefit from the new RCR-related resources available on ORI's website and through the University's training management system, Learn@ Northwestern. Whether you are interested in completing web-based training, or looking for a good source of RCR-related news/publications, the repository of resources at Northwestern is continuing to expand!

First, four RCR-focused web-based modules, developed by Northwestern University Clinical and Translational Sciences (NUCATS) Institute as a supplement to the Taking Responsibility for the Responsible Conduct of Research RCR course, are now available for completion in Learn@Northwestern. In addition to Northwestern specific information, the modules outline general ethical and compliance considerations respective to each topic and have been used very effectively in the past to facilitate discussions when completed prior to RCR instructor-led training courses.

QUOTE CORNER

"In looking for people to hire, you look for three qualities: integrity, intelligence, and energy. And if they don't have the first, the other two will kill you."

-Warren Buffett

Additionally, a "[Featured Articles]" page which includes news and articles about research integrity, research misconduct, and the responsible conduct of research, has recently been added to ORI's website. Be sure to check this site frequently as more articles continue to be added!

Anyone with a Northwestern NetID can easily access the modules!

-First, [log-in] to the Learn@Northwestern system and use the search tool located in the right corner of the screen.

-Next, choose the module, then select the "enroll" button. Selecting enroll will automatically start the module and a successful completion will be marked on the learner's training profile once the module is completed.

RCR Modules in Learn@Northwestern

1. Financial Conflict of Interest Module
2. Human Subjects Protections Module
3. Research Misconduct Module
4. Research with Genetic Material Module

Innovative Research Portal Enhances Research Administration

Goodbye to the days when you had to search for and analyze multiple reports to answer simple questions like 'what is the balance left on my award' or 'do we have enough money left to hire an extra graduate student,' and hello to intuitive, self-service research administration! Born out of faculty and research administrator feedback, Northwestern's new Research Portal is designed to be a one-stop-shop to support investigators and research administrators managing research projects.

The first phase of the Research Portal release was launched in August 2016 and includes financial data for sponsored and non-sponsored research accounts. It has already gained great momentum across both campuses with tremendous positive feedback from faculty and staff alike! Prior to the implementation of the Research Portal, administrators had to run numerous reports in Cognos in order to determine information about the progress of awards. "The process was tedious and information available was not always displayed in the most user friendly of ways," explains the project's lead, Lora Ferraro, Senior Project Management Specialist in the Project Management Office of NUIT Administrative Systems. The Research Portal is the equivalent of running numerous reports at one time and merging that information together in one place at the click of a button. For instance, "one aspect of the portal that has been most appreciated by users is that it will pull information for all months of the project into one view, rather than having to compare them side-by-side or on multiple screens. The information is also downloadable and will give information such as the start date of the award, itemized monthly expenses including both direct and indirect costs, and cost sharing details," explains Ferraro. The portal also allows users to create and save projected expenses, which is helpful when determining the impact of an unexpected expense or if there are funds available to hire additional staff.

There has been growing excitement for the effectiveness of the portal by faculty and staff in multiple departments on both the Evanston and Chicago campuses. Faculty now have greater access to all active projects that they have a key role in and improved transparency on financial information. It even enables them to add their own projections to see an updated balance and allows investigators to quickly notify OSR of proposals that will not be funded. Staff also have expanded access to sponsored research information for all investigators at the University.

Watch for additional administrative tools for managing research-related training compliance, salaries, subcontracts, effort reporting and biosketch support in future releases. If you want to learn more about the Research Portal or have questions, contact [Lora Ferraro] or check-out the [Northwestern Research Portal] webpage!

Did You Know?

The Office for Sponsored Research now publishes real time metrics on it's website that shows the cumulative year-to-date of award amounts over time, as well as details about proposals and contracts, such as the number in workflow or review time.

On September 16, 2016, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services issued a 'final rule' that details requirements for registering certain clinical trials and submitting information about summary results in ClinicalTrials.gov. NIH issued a complementary policy, applicable to *all* NIH-funded trials, in an effort to make clinical trials information more freely available to the public. Learn more about these changes here.

The next Effort 101 class will take place on Friday, January 13th, 2017 on the Chicago Campus in Weinberg Lab 1-730 from 9:00am-12:00pm. The class covers the fundamentals of Effort Reporting concepts and procedures, and is required to gain access to the Effort Reporting System (ERS). Contact the Office of Cost Studies for more information or to register.

Introducing Paula Straaton

1. What is your title at Northwestern?
Business Administrator

2. What does that mean?
I manage the business functions of the Office of Graduate Studies and Research in the McCormick School of Engineering.

3. What is one thing you want people to know about what you do here?
As the University is becoming more aware about the importance of managing RCR, I work to educate McCormick's population about what RCR is. To not just know how to manage and track compliance, but understand why this training is important to ensure the integrity of McCormick's research and help researchers internalize the important concepts covered in RCR training.

4. How long have you been at Northwestern?
6 years

5. What did you do before you came to Northwestern?
I helped run a small family business and before that was a Vice President at Harris Bank

6. Where is your home town?
Chicago

7. What is your favorite ice cream flavor?
Starbucks java chip, but they no longer make it :(

8. What is your favorite thing to do outside of work?
Spending as much time as possible outdoors

9. What Chicago event are you most looking forward to experiencing?
The Christkindlmarket

Research Administration Training Seminar

This four-session seminar is geared toward research administrators, staff involved in research administration, and anyone who wants to learn about Northwestern's research administration process, policies, and procedures. The seminar serves as an introduction to Northwestern's research enterprise and the extensive systems involved.

It is a great networking and educational opportunity for staff new to research or experienced staff who would like a refresher in certain areas. Representatives from offices throughout Northwestern will be on hand to present and answer questions.

The next seminar will take place January 23rd, 25th, 30th and February 1st on the Chicago campus from 1:00pm-4:30pm, in McGaw, Daniel Hale Williams Auditorium.

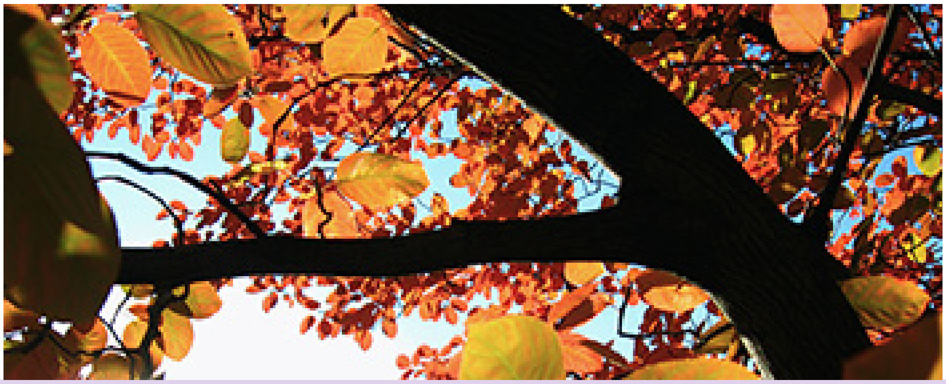
Registration can now be completed through Northwestern University's new training management system, Learn@Northwestern. Simply log-in using your NetID and password, then use the search tool in the top right-hand corner to find the Research Administration Training Seminar class. When you select "enroll," you will be registered for all four days of the seminar. If you experience difficulties registering or have any questions, please email Beth Irwin for support.

Accreditation within Sight

Northwestern University recently completed one of the final steps in the long and important process of earning accreditation through the Association for Accreditation of Human Research Protection Programs (AAHRPP). The on-site evaluation, which took place in October 2016, followed a rigorous application process which included substantial organizational overview, an exhaustive human research protection program assessment, several hundred pages of supporting documentation, and detailing of Institutional Review Board (IRB) policies. The primary purpose of having AAHRPP accreditation is to strengthen protections for human research participants and "funding agencies look at AAHRP as the gold standard for institutions they want to invest in," explains IRB manager, Michelle Brown. "Additionally, as we move to models of single IRB review for multi-site studies through the National Institutes of Health, this accreditation will be a criteria to participate."

Under Brown's guidance, the IRB Office staff seamlessly coordinated the massive efforts needed for the site visit. According to those involved, the on-site evaluation could not have gone more smoothly and demonstrated the true commitment of Northwestern's research community to this process. AAHRP selected who it wanted to interview based on information in the initial application and this included 115 different individuals across the University, including research coordinators, principal investigators, institutional officials, IRB Office staff, IRB board members, and various related Office for Research representatives. Interviews were targeted to ensure human research protections are in place, such as asking the Office for Sponsored Research about contract language, asking IRB board members about their decision making process, or asking investigators about turnaround times and how the IRB serves their needs.

Following the evaluation, Northwestern received feedback from AAHRP identifying a few areas of potential improvement and now has until November 25th to respond with an action plan. Northwestern's application and response will then be taken to the AAHRP counsel to determine if accreditation will be granted. The IRB Office is hopeful to make the December review, otherwise the review will occur in March of 2017. Stay tuned for the final AAHRPP accreditation decision and other IRB Office developments!



EthicsPoint is a third party vendor that allows you to confidentially raise ethical concerns, ask questions, and/or report activities that may involve misconduct or violations of Northwestern University policy.

For more information visit the website here.

ORI MISSION

Identifying compliance risks in our research practices and communicating those risks to the research community;

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Partnering with the research community in innovative and effective ways to minimize and manage research risks;

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Educating the research community with respect to appropriate business practices related to the conduct of research at Northwestern University; and

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Monitoring and correcting non-compliance in accordance with University and federal guidelines.

Northwestern | OFFICE FOR RESEARCH INTEGRITY

750 N Lake Shore Drive
Rubloff, 7th floor
Chicago, IL 60611
phone 312.503.0054
nu-ori@northwestern.edu

Lauran Qualkenbush, Director, Research Integrity Officer
Krista Harnish, Senior Compliance Specialist
Samantha Hugghis, Administrative Assistant III
Beth Irwin, Research Training Manager
Michelle Stalilonis, Senior Compliance Specialist