FAQs for PET-RCR Training

Who must complete the workshop?

- All students who started their current degree programs after the end of the 2009-10 academic term and are qualifying GAs must take the training
- Students (undergraduate, graduate, or post-doc) funded by NSF must take the training, regardless of program start date.
- Students who began their current degree programs before Fall 2010 and who are not funded by NSF may still take the training, but it is not a requirement for them at this time.

What is a qualifying GA?

- To be eligible for the Qualifying Graduate Assistant (QGA) tuition waiver, a student must have an appointment total of at least .50 FTE for the full semester and be enrolled full time. More information about graduate assistantships can be found on the Graduate College website.

What is "supported"?

- Anyone who is receiving NSF funding over a semester or more should take the training. One-time participants or persons taking part in one- or two-week programs are not required to take this training.

Must students complete the workshop before they can hold a position or qualify for a tuition waiver?

- No. Students may begin their assistantships and receive initial tuition waivers before they have completed the training.

How long is the training?

- The training is offered over a two-day period (16 hours total). Each day consists of 8 hours with a lunch break.
- Plan to arrive no later than 8:30 a.m. This is to allow you time to identify the training location and sign in. Training will begin promptly at 9:00 a.m.
- The sessions will conclude between 5:00 each day.

When is the training offered?

- The training is typically offered before each semester and one weekend each month.
- Check the Graduate College website for official dates and opportunities to sign up.

Where is the training offered?

- Training is usually offered on the South Research Campus in the National Weather Center or in Stephenson Research and Life Sciences Center.

Should I bring anything to the training?

- A packet will be emailed to registered participants approximately one week before training. Participants should print the packet out, fill out the introductory materials before coming to class, and bring it to class. Participants should also bring writing materials and their OU ID.

What is the cancellation policy?

- Students must contact the Graduate College at least three full working days before the start of the first day's training in order to cancel registration.
- Any student failing to contact the Graduate College before the cancellation deadline will have the $150 training fee applied to his/her bursar account.

What happens if I miss the second day?

- Students must attend the training over two consecutive days. If a student has attended the first day of training for a session, he or she cannot complete the training by attending the second day of another scheduled training session.
- Only students completing both days of training will receive completion credit for PET/RCR certification.

Do I get some proof of attendance?

- Yes, certificates of completion are made available to participants who complete the 2-day training as proof of attendance.
- Each academic unit is provided a list of the students from that unit who have completed the training.
- The Office of Research Services also is provided a list of the students who have completed the training.

Is there a lunch break? Should I bring my own food?

- There is a one-hour lunch break, and participants may also bring their own snacks.

I'm registered for a particular date. I need to cancel or reschedule. What do I do?

- Changes of registration should be sent via email to prof.ethics.training@ou.edu with the name, OU ID (not 4x4) and the requested registration date change.

What is the deadline for completing the workshop?

- Students are encouraged to complete the training as early as possible but must complete the training before the start of the third semester of enrollment. Those who do not complete the training may continue to serve as a graduate assistant but will not be eligible for tuition waivers.

What is covered in this training?

- This training emphasizes the development of critical thinking skills specific to dealing with ethical dilemmas.

What is the foundation of the training?

- This project is the outgrowth of NIH and NSF grants that funded basic research on ethical decision-making. Based on this research, the course was developed by a group of researchers with expertise in organizational ethics.

Who conducts the training?

- Trainers are faculty as well as senior graduate students.
- The graduate student trainers have worked closely with OU's faculty in developing their own expertise in organizational decision-making.
- While there are some faculty trainers, they typically are only available for classes taking place before the beginning of the academic year because of time constraints.

What are the differences between day 1 and day 2?

- The day 2 material is very different than day 1. During day 2, trainees learn how to integrate critical information for ethical decision-making, as well as how to apply the decision-making strategies in real-world contexts. Some aspects of day 1 are reviewed, but only to the extent that it uses the previous day's material as a basis for introducing new material.

Why is my academic unit's training not sufficient to meet this requirement?

- Academic unit's training usually covers field-specific rules and guidelines but does not typically focus on the complexities involved in making ethical-decisions, how to make an ethical decision, or decision-making strategies.

I am an ethical person, so why do I need this training?

- Many unethical events have been caused by well-meaning, ethical people.
- Even the most upstanding researchers are faced with (if not accused of) unethical behavior, and everyone should learn how best to deal with these issues.

Can you really teach ethics?

- Training can provide individuals with an awareness of important ethical issues and strategies for thinking through problems, which can help in making better decisions.

Must students who already have taken the training during a master's degree program retake the training when beginning a Ph.D. or a second master's degree program?

- No. Students need to complete the PET-RCR training only one time to meet the Graduate College's training requirement. Some NIH-funded students may need to take the training a second time due to agency requirements for periodic retraining.

How did this training develop?

- The PET-RCR Program began in 2005 and was developed by NIH- and NSF-funded researchers in OU's Center for Applied Social Research (CASR). The training seminars have been offered to the general graduate student population since 2007. In 2009-10, participation in the program became mandatory for students and post-doctoral researchers funded by NSF.
- This PET/RCR training is recommended for all graduate students but is particularly appropriate for GAs. The university reasonably expects all students appointed to GA positions to perform their duties to the highest standards of professional ethical conduct and supports this goal by providing and requiring formal training in professional ethical conduct.
- Rather than focusing on rules and principles, OU's ethics training program looks at how people try to make sense of ethical issues. The training seeks to provide graduate students with realistic, work-based strategies for identifying and resolving complex ethical dilemmas. OU has been recognized nationally as a leader in developing and implementing these professional integrity training programs. This positive recognition not only enhances the reputation of the university, but also imparts a valuable professional credential and additional value for the students pursuing advanced study at OU.

Where can I get more information about ethics training?

- "Fabricating data is a heinous scientific sin. It steers people down paths that do not lead anywhere and discourages them from following those that do." See the article from the Economist: "Fraud in Science: Liar, Liar!", June 4th 2009.
- Kligyte, V., R. T Marcy, E. P Waples, S. T Sevier, E. S Godfrey, M. D Mumford, and D. F Hougen. 2008. Application of a sensemaking approach to ethics training in the physical sciences and engineering. *Science and Engineering Ethics* 14, no. 2: 251–278.
- Martinson, B. C, M. S Anderson, and R. De Vries. 2005. Scientists behaving badly. *Nature* 435: 737–738.

If I have questions or comments, to whom should I address these?

- Contact Diana Beal at prof.ethics.training@ou.edu.