SARI Program Information and Updates

The SARI program at Penn State is designed to offer graduate students comprehensive, multilevel training in the responsible conduct of research (RCR), through a two-part program: an online course to be completed in the first year of graduate study, followed by five hours of discussion-based RCR education prior to degree completion. Starting with the fall 2009 incoming class, graduate programs implemented their individually-designed SARI plans. No two SARI plans are the same, since each graduate program will address RCR issues faced by scholars and researchers in their unique discipline.

As we conclude the first year of this expansive program, graduate program administrators (who may be new to the program since its inception) will be preparing to submit participation records for tracking by the Office for Research Protections. This newsletter is designed to provide basic information and updates to help make the process go smoothly.

SARI Participation Records Due June 15

Each graduate program is asked to report annually on student participation in the SARI program. We have tried to make this as easy and straightforward as possible, by providing each program with a simple, customized tracking form (an Excel spreadsheet) to complete and return to ORP. Just follow these easy steps:

- Download your program’s unique SARI Tracking Form from the Angel site (www.angel.psu.edu). If you do not have access, please send an email to sari@psu.edu.

- Enter the names of ALL graduate students that entered your program during the 2009-2010 academic year. Add appropriate information for students that have completed part or all of the SARI requirements listed on the tracking form.

- Save a copy of the file, and upload it to the Angel site dropbox. We will post the updated form in your program’s SARI folder for future reference.

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One of the features of the SARI program that distinguishes it from existing programs at other institutions is the way that RCR training is designed to be discipline-specific. Instead of offering a one-size-fits-all program (that typically fits no one well), SARI training plans were designed by individual graduate programs to meet the needs of their students. No SARI programs fulfill their training requirements solely through ORP educational events. If programs wished to supplement their RCR activities with ORP offerings, a maximum of two hours was set.

Please keep in mind that audience size at ORP events is often limited. In order to preserve the quality of our offerings, students trying to fill participation requirements at the end of the semester may be turned away. Please review your program requirements and advise your students accordingly!

CITI Program Updates:

New RCR course for the Humanities

Online training using courses offered by CITI (Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative) is an integral part of the SARI program. Students with widely diverse backgrounds take one of the CITI courses during their first year of graduate training, giving all students a common understanding of the broad issues and history of RCR. They are then prepared with the necessary concepts and terminology to discuss discipline-specific issues as they further their training.

CITI courses are offered for students in Engineering, Physical Sciences, Biomedical Sciences, Social and Behavioral Sciences, and a new course, RCR for Scholars in the Humanities, became available in February 2010. All cover the same basic concepts, but are tailored with examples appropriate to the various fields. All of the courses fulfill SARI requirements.

IRB requirements and the SARI program

Students who need to take the online Human Subject Research course in order to meet Institutional Review Board (IRB) requirements do NOT need to take a separate RCR course to meet their online training requirement for SARI. Unless your program specifies that students need to take both Human Subjects and RCR courses, either one will be acceptable for SARI.

Please note that this does not work in the other direction: IRB requirements can ONLY be met by the Human Subjects course.
Frequently Asked Questions

A number of frequently asked questions are answered on our FAQ page at the SARI Resource Portal. As reporting time draws near, however, we’d like to address some additional questions.

• **Why don't I have access to the Angel site?**
  As program staff change, we must update our list of administrators with access to the SARI Angel site. Just email us and we’ll add you immediately.

• **My student attended an ORP event, but SARI participation certificates weren't available. What's up with that?**
  Not all ORP offerings fulfill SARI requirements. Some are not designed for graduate students, and some do not address RCR issues. Listserv announcements and the ORP website will state if an event will offer SARI participation credit. Please remind your students to check the announcements carefully.

• **How do I know a student has completed the CITI course?**
  Once a student has completed all the quizzes for their CITI course, they are given a link to a completion certificate, which they can download for forwarding to their program administrator. Please note that students must earn 80% overall for the CITI course to earn credit for SARI (some individual quiz scores may be less than 80%).

• **Can we make changes to our SARI Program Plan?**
  Absolutely! As your program’s needs and resources change, you may update or modify your SARI Program Plan, as long as it still meets the basic requirements of the SARI program. Simply call or email to discuss your changes in advance, and once the changes are finalized we will update your posted plan and tracking form as necessary.

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**THANK YOU!**

Training our students to be responsible researchers and scholars is vital to the mission of graduate training at Penn State. The SARI program is one of the first programs in the nation to address this goal in a comprehensive and discipline-specific way. Ultimately, the program will involve approximately 200 graduate programs and 9000 students.

The willing, often enthusiastic, participation of graduate program administrators and faculty has made the first year of this program very successful. Your hard work and patience are greatly appreciated!

Penn State’s program has attracted the attention of other universities, as the National Science Foundation and other agencies begin to require more comprehensive RCR training. Institutions such as the University of Chicago, the University of Kentucky, Florida State University, Vanderbilt University, and Clemson University have consulted with us for advice on implementing similar programs at their institutions, and we have been invited to speak about the SARI program at national meetings in Miami and Chicago.

**A program this ambitious and comprehensive couldn't happen without your support...thank you!!**

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**Useful Links:**

- **SARI Resource Portal:**
  [www.research.psu.edu/orp/sari/](http://www.research.psu.edu/orp/sari/)

- **CITI Online training**
  [www.citiprogram.org](http://www.citiprogram.org)

- **ANGEL Course Management System**
  [www.angel.psu.edu](http://www.angel.psu.edu)

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**Office for Research Protections**

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