

PRESS RELEASE

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Report Highlights Needs in Graduate Education for Research Integrity, Offers Best Practice Models for Institutions

The Council of Graduate Schools has released a new report highlighting the need for a more comprehensive approach to graduate education in research integrity. The report, *Research and Scholarly Integrity in Graduate Education*, provides recommendations for U.S. universities based on best practice research as well as data collected through a multi-year CGS initiative, The Project for Scholarly Integrity (PSI), supported by the U.S. Office of Research Integrity.

Through the project, CGS worked collaboratively with six institutions that received funding for pilot projects: Columbia University, Emory University, Michigan State University, Pennsylvania State University, the University of Alabama at Birmingham, and the University of Arizona. In each, the graduate school led the development of model programs by coordinating campus activities, assessing current policies and practices, and engaging the community in enhancing programs and resources for graduate students. An additional 13 institutions participated in the project as affiliates.

Data and Findings

A unique feature of The Project for Scholarly Integrity was the common assessment of two aspects of graduate students' educational and research environments. Graduate schools surveyed programs to learn how students accessed instruction in the responsible conduct of research (RCR) prior to participation in the project, and used this information to inform project activities. Through a version of a national organizational climate survey, they also surveyed students and faculty about their perceptions concerning fairness, the adequacy of policies and resources, and their degree of confidence in handling situations involving ethical misconduct or misbehavior. Data from these surveys are accessible through a companion online, interactive tool: the [PSI Data Dashboard](#).

One of the key findings of the project is that graduate students currently depend to a large degree on the instruction they receive—or do not receive—from their research supervisors or mentors. On average, between 74% and 80% of faculty respondents from graduate programs reported that students received information about a full range of RCR topics from their advisors or mentors. However, students were much less likely to have access to information about RCR through courses or classroom instruction, workshops, print materials, or web-based instruction (see Dashboard and p. 70 of report).

Although the best RCR programs draw on experts and a variety of activities to inform students about a full range of RCR issues, survey responses suggest that many students did not participate in activities that might supplement the information they receive from their advisors.

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These data suggest the need for a heightened focus on the quality of education in the mentoring and advising relationship, and for broader adoption of a comprehensive approach to graduate education in research integrity that gives students multiple avenues and opportunities for exposure to RCR.

Best Practice Models

The survey data informed each institution's strategies for developing more comprehensive programs to educate graduate students in research and scholarly integrity. Practices that proved effective across all projects are highlighted, for example, in the areas of leadership and communication strategy, cultivating faculty participation, and assessing student needs. The report also notes where the effectiveness of strategies may have differed depending on the size and type of institution.

CGS President Debra W. Stewart commented, "Since 2003, CGS has worked with U.S. graduate schools to provide high quality research integrity education during the formative stages of graduate students' professional development. I believe the strategies and practices described in this publication will help graduate deans and others looking for practical models for initiating new or improving existing RCR programs."

The PSI Data Dashboard allows institutions to compare their own survey data with the aggregated data of institutions that participated in the project. President Stewart added, "This report and the companion online tool should catalyze enriched campus discussions around the needs and professional development of graduate students, as well as those of faculty and staff, which are especially needed in the area of mentoring and advising."

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The Council of Graduate Schools (CGS) is an organization of over 500 institutions of higher education in the United States and Canada engaged in graduate education, research, and the preparation of candidates for advanced degrees. Among U.S. institutions, CGS members award 92% of the doctoral degrees and 77% of the master's degrees. The organization's mission is to improve and advance graduate education, which it accomplishes through advocacy in the federal policy arena, research, and the development and dissemination of best practices.*

** Based on data from the 2010 CGS/GRE Survey of Graduate Enrollment and Degrees*