



Responsible Conduct of Research (RCR) Tri-Institutional Training Policy

October 2020

Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center (MSK), The Rockefeller University (RU), and Weill Cornell Medicine (WCM) sponsor a Tri-Institutional course in the **Responsible Conduct of Research** twice a year to provide formal training in the various subject areas connected to issues of Research Integrity. The course is directed and coordinated by MSK's office of Research Outreach and Compliance in the Research and Technology Management division.

Any research trainee who falls into one of the categories listed below is required to complete the online course curriculum, attend a minimum of four face-to-face sessions for a total of eight classroom hours and complete a 2-hour workshop on Rigor and Transparency. Research trainees are placed into small working groups and required to respond to various assignments electronically in addition to coming together for the face-to-face discussions and processing exercises with Tri-I faculty facilitators. The sessions are held monthly during both the fall and spring term and will be repeated on an annual basis with all new appointees being required to participate.

- All 1st year Gerstner Sloan-Kettering, The Rockefeller University (RU), and Weill Cornell Graduate School (WCGS) graduate students and MD-PhD candidates.
- All 1st year MSK and WCM postdoctoral researchers (regardless of rank) and participants in clinical fellowship programs, at the discretion of the program director.
- Tri-I Individuals appointed to NIH-funded National Research Service Award Institutional Training Programs (e.g., NRSA T32, T34, R25) and other Career Development awards (e.g., F, K). See [NIH Guidelines](#) for full list of applicable awards.
- Individuals appointed to NSF-funded projects under the America Creating Opportunities to Meaningfully Promote Excellence in Technology, Education, and Science (COMPETES) Act (August 2007).
- Individuals funded by any other agency that requires RCR training (e.g., DOD, NYSTEM).
- Anyone who was supposed to take the course in the previous year/semester and had to defer due to severe scheduling conflicts.
- Anyone who took RCR training more than four years ago and must now take a refresher course. Individuals who take the refresher course can either repeat the course in its entirety (online modules, 8 hours of in-person learning, plus Rigor and Transparency Workshop) or serve as a facilitator for 8 hours during small group sessions.
- An abbreviated summer RCR Course is offered to medical students and others studying at MSK through an R25 award or similar short-term program.

The goals of this course are to:

1. heighten the awareness of trainees to ethical considerations relevant to the conduct of research;

2. inform trainees of federal, state, and institutional policies, regulations and procedures applicable to the ethical conduct of research; and
3. provide trainees with the opportunity to discuss, in a relatively informal setting, with senior faculty and among their peers, the implications of these policies and procedures for their own behavior in a research environment.

The small group sessions are composed of approximately twenty – thirty trainees. There is a course director, coordinator, and a Tri-I committee of faculty and institutional advisors to lend support. Each year, approximately 50 different faculty members/mentors from a diverse range of departments serve as small group facilitators. The course work is based on eleven different topics (presented in nine modules):

1. Research Misconduct (with Whistleblowing and Dispute Resolution)
2. Data Acquisition, Management, Sharing, and Ownership (including Rigor and Reproducibility) and Safe Laboratory Practices
3. Animal Welfare
4. Use of Human Subjects
5. Conflicts of Interest and Commitment
6. Authorship and Responsible Publication Practices
7. Peer Review
8. Collaboration and Mentoring
9. The Scientist and Social Responsibility (including DURC, Export Control, and Science and Security)

Each subject is highlighted by case studies and vignettes, and the Office of Research Integrity's interactive movie, "The Lab: Avoiding Research Misconduct" is showcased at the course orientation.

In addition, various resources (e.g., articles, cases, videos) on equality, diversity, and inclusion have been added to the web-based course site and the orientation lecture, and these themes are being embedded in the small group discussions of historical case studies (e.g., HeLa, Tuskegee, Guatemala, etc.).

It is felt that training toward responsible conduct of research is more effective as an ongoing activity integrated into the trainees' regular research activities. We, therefore, encourage the faculty mentors to continue to discuss and emphasize these issues in their daily contact with the trainee in their laboratories. The course director will discuss these issues with the faculty mentors on a regular basis to provide heightened awareness and sensitivity to these issues and assure that they continue to be discussed with the trainees. The Course Director and invited guest lecturers also present on RCR topics to individual labs and departments upon request. A faculty orientation is held prior to the start of the course and RCR-related educational seminars are offered throughout the year and open to the entire MSK and Tri-I research community (e.g., Rigor and Reproducibility, Intellectual Property Management, Financial Conflicts of Interest in Research, Publishing and Authorship Guidelines, Animal Welfare, Ethical Human Subject Research, Institutional Biosafety, RCR for Research Administrators, Science and Social Responsibility, etc.).

Visit the RCR course website for more information: <https://www.mskcc.org/rcr>