



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

November 2022

Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center (MSK), The Rockefeller University (RU), Weill Cornell Medicine (WCM), and the Hospital for Special Surgery (HSS) sponsor a multi-Institutional course in the **Responsible Conduct of Research (RCR)** 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 Corporate Compliance & Internal Audit 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 three face-to-face sessions for a total of six classroom hours, and complete a 2-hour workshop on Rigor and Transparency for a total of 8 hours. Research trainees attend an Orientation and are placed into small working groups for face-to-face case study discussions and processing exercises with 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, Weill Cornell Graduate School, and Hospital for Special Surgery graduate students and MD-PhD candidates.
- All 1st year MSK, WCM, and HSS postdoctoral researchers (regardless of rank) and participants in clinical fellowship programs, at the discretion of the program director.
- 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
- 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, 6 hours of in-person learning, plus Rigor and Transparency Workshop) or serve as a facilitator 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. **Awareness:** heighten the awareness of trainees to ethical considerations relevant to the conduct of research

2. **Knowledge:** inform trainees of federal, state, and institutional policies, regulations, and procedures applicable to the ethical conduct of research
3. **Skills:** provide participants with critical analysis and problem-solving skills for ethical decision making

The small group sessions are composed of approximately twenty – thirty trainees. There is a course director, coordinator, and a multi-Institutional 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 these topics:

- Conflict of interest – personal, professional, and financial – and conflict of commitment, in allocating time, effort, or other research resources
- Policies regarding human subjects, live vertebrate animal subjects in research, and safe laboratory practices
- Mentor/mentee responsibilities and relationships
- Safe research environments (e.g., those that promote inclusion and are free of sexual, racial, ethnic, disability, and other forms of discriminatory harassment)
- Collaborative research, including collaborations with industry and investigators and institutions in other countries
- Peer review, including the responsibility for maintaining confidentiality and security in peer review
- Data acquisition and analysis; laboratory tools (e.g., tools for analyzing data and creating or working with digital images); recordkeeping practices, including methods such as electronic laboratory notebooks
- Secure and ethical data use; data confidentiality, management, sharing, and ownership
- Research misconduct and policies for handling misconduct
- Responsible authorship and publication
- The scientist as a responsible member of society, contemporary ethical issues in biomedical research, and the environmental and societal impacts of scientific research

Various resources (e.g., articles, cases, videos) on equality, diversity, and inclusion are shared with the trainees during the Orientation session, and these themes are embedded in the online course curriculum and in the small group discussions of highlighted case studies.

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 trainees in their laboratories to provide heightened awareness and sensitivity to these important issues. Course leadership presents 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 partner institutions' research community (e.g., Rigor and Reproducibility, Data 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>