

Responsible Conduct of Research (RCR) Plan

National Science Foundation Background

The responsible and ethical conduct of research (RCR) is critical for excellence, as well as public trust, in science and engineering. Consequently, education in RCR is considered essential in the preparation of future scientists and engineers. Section 7009 of the America Creating Opportunities to Meaningfully Promote Excellence in Technology, Education, and Science (COMPETES) Act (42 USC 1862o–1) requires that “each institution that applies for financial assistance from the Foundation for science and engineering research or education describe in its grant proposal a plan to provide appropriate training and oversight in the responsible and ethical conduct of research to undergraduate students, graduate students, and postdoctoral researchers participating in the proposed research project.”

The language specified below provides NSF’s implementation of Section 7009.

Institutional Responsibilities

An institution must have a plan in place to provide appropriate training and oversight in the responsible and ethical conduct of research to undergraduates, graduate students, and postdoctoral researchers who will be supported by NSF to conduct research. Institutional certification to this effect is required for each proposal.

While training plans are not required to be included in proposals submitted to NSF, institutions are advised that they are subject to review, upon request.

An institution must designate one or more persons to oversee compliance with the RCR training requirement.

Institutions are responsible for verifying that undergraduate students, graduate students, and postdoctoral researchers supported by NSF to conduct research have received training in the responsible and ethical conduct of research.

Source: https://www.nsf.gov/pubs/policydocs/pappg17_1/pappg_9.jsp

Moravian College Responsible Conduct of Research (RCR) Training Program

Moravian College takes seriously the obligation to implement and support best practices in research. The Human Subjects Internal Review Board (HSIRB) provides guidance and support for the implementation of training for Responsible Conduct of Research (RCR). This RCR Plan has been developed to provide appropriate training and oversight in the responsible and ethical conduct of research. RCR training is available to everyone at Moravian College and faculty and students involved in human subjects research are encouraged to use the training. However, RCR training is mandatory for all faculty and students working on federally funded grants (receiving pay, academic credit, volunteer hours, or working with federally funded research instrumentation). Faculty Principal Investigators (PIs) have the responsibility for training the undergraduate and graduate students.

Moravian College has partnered with the Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative (CITI) online program to provide faculty and students the opportunity to participate in online research ethics and education. Faculty and students doing research with human subjects should use the Human Subjects Research RCR modules found through CITI at www.citiprogram.org. Faculty can register through a link on <https://lvaic.org/for-faculty/faculty-development-conferences/>. In the top paragraphs, you will see a link for CITI that says register for an account here. Once you click on that just follow the directions to register yourself. Faculty and students must successfully complete the appropriate CITI module of RCR training before beginning their projects.

CITI training modules include:

Biomedical RCR
Social and Behavioral RCR
Physical Science RCR
Humanities RCR
Research, Ethics, and Society (RCR-Interdisciplinary)
Human Subjects Research RCR

Monitoring Compliance

RCR training should be completed prior to the faculty and student starting work on the project. In order to document that the College is providing the necessary oversight, researchers are responsible for ensuring that a certification form, including the titles of the CITI training modules that the faculty and students have completed and signed by the faculty member and the student, be submitted to:

Dr. Robert Breckinridge, Director of Foundation Relations, for all federally-funded grants (NSF, NIH)

Dr. Jean DesJardin, Chair of Human Subjects Internal Review Board, for all other faculty-student projects

For more information, please contact:

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