

Responsible and Ethical Conduct of Research Policy

The responsible and ethical conduct of research (RECR) is critical to ensuring the highest level of excellence in the research enterprise. Given the centrality of research at The College of Wooster and its commitment to providing an environment that encourages all members of its community to be ethical and responsible researchers, the College has established both institutional structures and policies that engender a robust culture of ethical, accountable, and thoughtful research practices.

The College of Wooster's Responsible and Ethical Conduct of Research Policy addresses current funder requirements and may be amended by the College, as needed, to address any future agency requirements.

Who is Governed by this Policy

All principal investigators (PIs), senior personnel, post-doctoral researchers, graduate students, and undergraduates who participate in research funded by the National Science Foundation (NSF) or the National Institutes of Health (NIH) are governed by this policy.

Currently this policy is not required for grants whose funding is not provided by the NSF or NIH, but these trainings can be relevant, and PIs are encouraged to review training opportunities for themselves and their students.

Policy Background

Since January 4, 2010, the NSF has required that all institutions have in place plans to ensure the responsible and ethical conduct of research (RECR) and provide appropriate training for all individuals who will be supported by NSF to conduct research. With the implementation of the updated Proposal and Awards Policy and Procedures Guide (PAPPG), the NSF added a requirement that principal investigators (PIs) and other senior personnel also receive training in RECR and that this training must include a segment on mentorship. Training plans do not have to be included in proposals submitted to the NSF, but they are subject to review upon request once the grant has been awarded.

NIH also requires RECR training for all trainees, fellows, participants, and scholars receiving support from NIH grant programs that include a training component and that require RECR instruction in the Funding Opportunity Announcement (FOA). This requirement applies to all new and renewal applications submitted on or after January 25, 2010. Updated in 2022, this requirement was expanded to encourage alternate formats of instruction and the frequency of that instruction.

Training in Responsible Conduct of Research

This policy specifically addresses the RCR/RECR training requirements for research supported by grants from the National Science Foundation (NSF) and the National Institutes of Health (NIH). Both funders require written plans regarding training and compliance. All team members, including PIs/Co-PIs, undergraduate students, graduate students, and postdoctoral researchers must receive documented training, including training that is specific to grant work and/or research. This training may include both virtual and in-person training but cannot be exclusively virtual. The College of Wooster offers access to several online training courses via the CITI Program. Training must be completed at least once every 4 years, even if the individual is still in the period of performance for the same grant.

The College's responsible research policy for students consists of a three-pronged approach: integrating research ethics discussions throughout the curriculum; implementing a targeted face-to-face workshop for students engaged in summer research, including research supported by federal grants; and requiring all students engaged in federally funded research to complete on-line tutorials. Thus:

- Research ethics and principles of responsible research are woven throughout The College of Wooster's curriculum as students prepare for their Independent Study projects.
- All students who perform or assist with research in faculty laboratories are mentored one-on-one by professors who demonstrate responsible conduct of research.
- All students who participate in research funded by federal grants will successfully complete specific courses in their area of research which cover the responsible conduct of research and complete the online course on responsible conduct of research run by the National Research Ethics Core (<http://nationalethicscenter.org/>).
- Principal Investigators are required to verify that all undergraduate students, graduate students, postdoctoral researchers, and other research staff working under them have received adequate training in the responsible conduct of research by successfully completing the CITI/Ethics Core training and/or in-person training on our campus. Verification of this training must be provided to The College of Wooster's Sponsored Research Office and will be maintained up until five years after the end date of the federal grant in question.

Through these means researchers are trained on such issues as:

- Research Misconduct
- Data Management

- Conflicts of Interest
- Safe Research Environments
- Responsible Authorship and Publication
- Mentor/Mentee Relationships and Responsibilities
- Peer Review
- Research utilizing Animals (IACUC)
- Research utilizing Human Subjects (IRB)

Principal Investigators will anticipate emerging issues regarding responsible conduct of research as part of their own professional development and will supplement the training of students working under them accordingly.

The Provost's Office may also assist in coordinating in-person training opportunities as needed.

Who is Responsible for Compliance?

PIs/Co-PIs are responsible for completing the RECR Grant-Specific Plan. This form must be submitted, and all training must be completed after the grant is awarded but before research begins.

The PI will also be responsible for ensuring that all researchers complete their online training and submit their certificates to the Sponsored Research Office. The SRO will retain the certificates and the Grant Specific Plan and document completion to the funder if requested. This policy will also be reinforced by the college's Research Misconduct Policy. The Associate Director of Sponsored Research is responsible for implementing and enforcing this policy.

Responsible and Ethical Conduct of Research Grant-Specific Plan

Please complete the form below to document your research and ethics training plan. This plan and all training certificates must be completed and sent to the College's Sponsored Research Office (3rd floor, Galpin Hall) before research begins. The College is required to retain your completed RECR plan and certificates so they can be sent to your grant funder if requested. This plan must also be updated as timing, team members, procedures and other details change over the course of the grant period. Please send all updates to the SRO as soon as possible.

This form must be completed for all National Science Foundation (NSF) and National Institution of Health (NIH) proposals.



Plan Information

Contact the Sponsored Research Office (SRO) with questions about your plan and any information below that is unknown.

Funder/Program Name:

Project Title:

College Account Number: _____ - _____ - _____ - _____

Period of Performance:

Expected Start Date:

Name of Principal Investigator (PI):

Names of Co-PI(s):

Names of Key Personnel:

Name(s) of Student Researchers:

(if names are unknown, please list position titles, # of students, and length of employment)

All participants in the research project will be required to share completion certificates of Research and Ethics training. While not required at time of submission, these documents will need to be provided to the SRO before the grant start date.

Possible General Training Topics:

- Mentor/Mentee responsibilities and relationships (Required for PIs with student researchers)
- Conflicts of Interest
- Safe research environments (discrimination, harassment)
- Peer review
- Data acquisition and analysis
- Secure and ethical data use and confidentiality
- Research misconduct
- Responsible authorship and publication

Information Regarding the Specifics Circumstances of this Project:

___ IRB review for human subject research and related policies and procedures

___ IACUC review for animal research and related policies and procedures

___ Off-campus/off-site research subject to the College's Safe and Inclusive Working Environments for Off-Campus and Off-Site Research Policy dated _____.

___ Safe lab practices

___ Lab tools for analyzing data or working with digital images

___ Collaborative research

For each of the special circumstances indicated above, provide information on the type, date, and duration of training provided, and the names of the attendees. For other general topics, please include certificates of completion.