

VASSAR COLLEGE

Responsible Conduct of Research

Vassar College has long affirmed that sound research is critical to advancing knowledge. Thus, we are obliged to provide training in the responsible conduct of research (RCR) so students and others begin to learn appropriate methodologies and receive guidance and mentoring in the ethical standards for research and publication. Furthermore, federal regulations* require that each institution that applies for financial assistance from the National Science Foundation (NSF) for science and engineering research have in place “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”.

To this end, Vassar College initiated the annual **Undergraduate Research Summer Institute (URSI) Responsible Research Workshop**, led by Vassar faculty members and defined by in-depth discussion and analysis of real-life case studies to explore the principles of responsible research.

To supplement the Responsible Research workshop, or to meet the needs of those who cannot attend, there are **online, interactive training modules* in responsible research** available on the **Collaborative Institutional Training Program Initiative (CITI)** website at **citiprogram.org** . (See the attached document for instructions on accessing the tutorials. Note that the CITI website offers numerous resources worthy of exploration and study.)

All Vassar students or post-doctorates working as research assistants (whether they receive pay, academic credit, or work as volunteers) for Vassar College faculty doing research funded, in whole or in part, by NSF or other Federal funds must complete these interactive RCR tutorials or attend the Responsible Research Workshop. For the broadest possible exposure to the principles of responsible and ethical research conduct, however, participants are strongly encouraged to do both. These activities are readily complemented by other options and resources regarding responsible and safe research, including, but not limited to, discussion with faculty mentors, professors and fellow students as well as departmental dialogue on the subject. Combined, these activities should inspire an ongoing commitment to grasp the principles of ethical conduct and scientific integrity and to pursue responsible and safe research in the undergraduate years and beyond.

The Grants Office is designated as the RCR record-keeper; can monitor each participant’s successful completion through the CITI online system; and will keep records of attendance at the annual workshop.

Questions and suggestions should be directed to the Grants Office at 845-437-5490 or grants@vassar.edu.

*Section 7009 of the America Creating Opportunities to Meaningfully Promote Excellence in Technology, Education, and Science (COMPETES) Act (42 U.S.C.18620-1). See subsequent page.

** These tutorials were developed and originally hosted by The Center on Materials and Devices for Information Technology Research (CMDITR), a National Science Foundation-funded Science and Technology Center headed at University of Washington. Ethics CORE is hosted by University of Illinois.

Institutional Responsibilities

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. The language specified below provides the National Science Foundation's implementation of Section 7009:

- a. 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 National Science Foundation (NSF) to conduct research. As noted in the Grant Proposal Guide (GPG) Chapter II.C.1.e, institutional certification to this effect is required for each proposal.
- b. 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.
- c. An institution must designate one or more persons to oversee compliance with the RCR training requirement.
- d. 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

How to Access the Online Tutorials in Responsible Research

Vassar College has long affirmed that sound research is critical to advancing knowledge. Thus, we are obliged to provide training in the responsible conduct of research (RCR) so students and others begin to learn appropriate methodologies and receive guidance and mentoring in the ethical standards for research and publication. Federal regulations require that institutions seeking financial assistance from agencies such as the National Science Foundation (NSF) have in place “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”.*

Undergraduates, graduate students, and postdoctoral researchers are urged to complete the online, interactive modules in responsible research at

citiprogram.org

- 1) **Point your web browser to CITI: citiprogram.org**
- 2) **Click** on the “**Register**” button at the top-right corner
- 3) **Select** Organization Affiliation by entering, then selecting “Vassar College” (here you will be asked to “Agree” and “Affirm”)
- 4) **Continue** to Personal Information; enter name and email address
- 5) **Continue to Step 3**; follow guidance to create your Username and Password (be sure to make note of these for future reference!)
- 6) **Continue to Step 4**; enter country of residence
- 7) **Continue to Step 5**; complete optional items per your preferences
- 8) **Continue to Step 6**; enter requested information (including address and other identifiers)
- 9) **Continue to Step 7**; scroll down to view and select “**Responsible Conduct of Research**”. Choose the option that best suits your discipline.
- 10) **Click “Complete Registration”, then “Finalize Registration”**

Now, you may select and proceed with the required modules!

Questions? Suggestions?

Write to grants@vassar.edu or call x5490

*All Vassar students, graduate students or post-doctorates working as research assistants (whether they receive pay, academic credit, or work as volunteers) for Vassar College faculty doing research funded, in whole or in part, by Federal funds (NSF, NIH, etc.) **must** at a minimum complete the required modules and/or attend the annual Responsible Research Workshop, offered during the Undergraduate Research Summer Institute (URSI) program. Completing the supplemental modules as well is strongly recommended. Note that the CITI site offers numerous other resources on RCR that are worthy of exploration and study.

These instructions and additional information can be found online at grants.vassar.edu.