



Responsible Conduct of Research Policy (RCR)

Current version effective date: 8/1/2024

Prior version date: 7/31/2023

POLICY

Preamble:

Olin College has long had in place processes for ensuring that students and faculty are mentored and trained in the responsible and ethical conduct of research (RCR). Mentorship and training include coverage of ethical obligations, issues relating to human subjects, and other relevant topics. These topics are covered in required and specialized courses as well as in supplemental training by PIs of students involved in NSF-sponsored and other research projects. For faculty, these topics are covered in mentor/mentee relationships. While this approach may satisfy Olin's obligations to provide RCR training, it does not include an easily managed audit trail. Further standardization of key aspects of RCR training and centralization of the record-keeping effort will ensure Olin's continued compliance with NSF and NIH regulations. The plan below is intended to document, augment, and increase the verifiability of Olin's RCR training activities.

Olin's Grants and Sponsored Programs Office (OGSP) requires all PIs to complete a *Proposal Transmittal Form*, which includes a statement regarding the PIs responsibility to support and comply with the RCR training (if an award is made). By signing this certification, PIs will explicitly acknowledge this obligation. The Principal Investigator is responsible for ensuring that they and their research staff complete the training. Olin College has a separate policy that specifically pertains to human subject research, as guided by the directives of the federal Office of Human Research Protections (OHRP). This policy, as well as the RCR policy, is located on our Olin College website.

Olin's Grants and Sponsored Programs Office will maintain documentation of compliance with this requirement and will make it available to NSF and NIH upon request.

Training for RCR

- 1) Olin will continue to include RCR topics in required classes.
- 2) Individual PIs will continue to provide specialized RCR training to their students and post-docs, augmenting the standardized training provided to all Olin students, and ensuring that these individuals connect broad RCR issues with the specifics of their individual research projects.

- 3) New faculty members will continue to participate in Olin's faculty mentorship programs, such as Connected Colleagues, in which they can discuss RCR topics and issues with their mentors.
- 4) Olin will supplement existing RCR training mechanisms through the use of a standardized and centrally certifiable tool, the Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative (CITI) Responsible Conduct of Research (RCR) Module. **All faculty, students, post-docs, and staff paid from NSF grants or NIH training grants submitted on or after July 31, 2023 will be required to complete the RCR module in the CITI system.** As of July 2023, CITI RCR will include Mentoring and Healthy Research Environments (RCR-Basic) (ID 20983) – This module covers the roles and responsibilities of mentors and mentees, challenges that can disrupt or undermine a mentoring relationship, practices and strategies that support high-quality mentoring relationships and help prevent or manage conflicts between mentors and mentees, and leadership behaviors that cultivate a psychologically healthy and supportive work environment. Upon the successful completion of the online training, the CITI system generates a certification of the training.

CITI RCR Training Record Keeping

OGSP staff monitor and are automatically notified when faculty, staff, or students have completed CITI training. The OGSP will assist with keeping track of the completion of RCR training to meet NSF and NIH requirements.

- 1) **Tracking PI/CO-PI Training:** When a new NSF grant or NIH training grant is awarded, OGSP Post-Award staff will check that the PI and Co-PIs have completed CITI RCR training and notify any investigators who need to complete the training. PI/Co-PI training will be tracked in the post-award grants database.
- 2) **Tracking Student Training:** Each semester and summer, OGSP and Human Resources (HR) will send a reminder about the CITI RCR training requirement for students paid from NSF grants or NIH Training grants. OGSP staff will review the HR student hiring list and confirm that students have completed training. Training completion will be tracked in the HR student hiring list and will be downloaded for record keeping once each semester and summer.