Overview

Responsible conduct in research (RCR) is simply good citizenship applied to professional life. Researchers who report their work honestly, accurately, efficiently, and objectively are on the right road when it comes to responsible conduct. RCR topics commonly include:

- Mentor/mentee responsibilities and relationships
- Data acquisition and laboratory tools; management, sharing and ownership
- Research misconduct and policies for handling misconduct
- Responsible authorship and publication
- Conflict of interest – personal, professional, and financial
- Policies regarding human subjects, live vertebrate animal subjects in research, and safe laboratory practices
- Collaborative research including collaborations with industry
- Peer review
- The scientist as a responsible member of society, contemporary ethical issues in biomedical research, and the environmental and societal impacts of scientific research

Covered Individuals

All graduate students matriculating in the fall of 2014 and after and in majors with a research thesis or dissertation are required to complete RCR education. In addition, certain granting agencies require individuals to complete RCR education. Granting agencies require the following individuals to complete RCR education:

- **National Science Foundation**
  The National Science Foundation (NSF) requires undergraduates, graduate students, and postdoctoral researchers who participate in NSF funded projects receive instruction and oversight in the responsible and ethical conduct of research.

- **National Institutes of Health**
  The National Institutes of Health (NIH) requires that all trainees, fellows, participants, and scholars receiving support through any NIH training, career development award (individual or institutional), research education grant, and dissertation research grant must receive instruction in responsible conduct of research. NIH requires a minimum of eight contact hours of discussion based education.

- **United States Department of Agriculture**
  The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA) has mandated that program directors, faculty, undergraduate students, graduate students, postdoctoral researchers, and any staff participating in the research project receive appropriate training and oversight in the responsible and ethical conduct of research.
Responsibilities

University of Rhode Island (URI) is responsible for:

1. Developing a plan to provide appropriate education and oversight in the responsible and ethical conduct of research to covered individuals. Institutional certification to this effect is required for each research proposal.
2. Providing educational plans to appropriate agency upon request.
3. Designating the Office of Research Integrity (ORI) as the office responsible for overseeing compliance with this plan.
4. Verifying that RCR education has been completed by required graduate students and other covered individuals paid from an applicable NSF, NIH, or USDA award or individuals identified by the PI of the an award as being required to complete the education.

The Principal Investigator (PI) of an applicable NSF, NIH, or USDA award is responsible for ensuring compliance with requirements of the award, which includes facilitation of the education completion process and ensuring that all covered individuals are notified of the requirement. The PI will notify ORI of any individuals who are "supported" under their NSF or NIH award or "participating in” a USDA award but may not be paid directly from the award.

Education Requirements

The RCR education program is flexible, allowing covered individuals three methods to complete the required education, including:

1. Completion of an approved research ethics course – Successfully completing an approved credited research ethics course. Courses that are currently approved to complete this requirement are: BIO 500, NEU 504, CHM 500, and EDC 586X
2. Attendance and participation in a minimum of three RCR Seminars – Attending three (3) or more ORI sponsored RCR seminars. Participation Certificates are awarded following each seminar.
3. Completion of the online RCR education program – Successfully completing the online RCR education program provided by the Collaborative Institutional Education Initiative (CITI). If you are not registered with CITI, visit the URI CITI registration information page.

Custom-designed workshops, forums, and classes, or existing classes and seminars offered by the college or department may supplement or potentially replace the RCR education requirement if approved by ORI.

For covered individuals of applicable NIH grants, NIH requires covered individuals to engage in an 8 contact hours of discussion-based RCR education. These discussions will encompass both general and discipline-specific material. The contact hours may include a variety of activities determined by the PI to be effective and engaging.

The table below specifies the methods available to complete the required RCR education.
Deadline
Completion of the requirement is required before covered graduate students submit their dissertation/thesis proposal approval form to the Graduate School for approval. For covered individuals funded by NSF, NIH, or USDA, this requirement must be completed prior to the completion of their support/employment/participation on the award (or earlier, at the discretion of the PI).

Verification Process
1. ORI will broadly announce the RCR education requirement to the University community. Additionally, the RCR education requirement is listed within the Graduate Student Manual.
2. ORI will notify the PI upon receipt of an applicable NSF, NIH or USDA award of the RCR education requirements.
3. The PI will direct students, postdoctoral researchers, and staff to complete the required education.
4. The PI will notify ORI of any additional individuals that are not directly paid from an applicable award but require the RCR education.
5. For graduate students, ORI will verify compliance through an RCR education approval on the dissertation/thesis proposal approval forms. ORI will verify successful completion of the requirement prior to submission to the Graduate School.
6. To verify compliance for non-graduate students, ORI will identify all individuals that receive support from applicable projects or have been identified by the PI as supported by or participating in applicable projects. This information will be generated through cooperation with the Office of Controller twice per year.

Individuals that have not completed the required education will be sent email reminders that are copied to the PI of the related grant and applicable authorities. If education requirements are not met, the issue will be referred to the department Chair and/or Dean for resolution.