Responsible and Ethical Conduct of Research (RECR) Policy and Training Requirements

Whitman College is strongly committed to ensuring that all research conducted by Whitman faculty and/or students be held to the highest standards of ethics and safety. The Whitman College Faculty Handbook outlines the official College policy on faculty and student research.

Whitman College's Research Integrity Officer (RIO) is the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs. The Associate Dean has ultimate oversight on compliance with the College's research safety and ethics policies.

Many federal agencies, including the National Science Foundation and the National Institutes of Health, require grantees to certify that they have received training in the responsible and ethical conduct of research (RECR).

In accordance with the 2007 America COMPETES Act, updated as of 2023, NSF's RECR Policy requires institutions to have a plan to provide appropriate training and oversight in the responsible and ethical conduct of research to undergraduate students, graduate students, postdoctoral researchers, faculty, and other senior personnel who will be supported by NSF to conduct research. Such training must include mentor training and mentorship. An institutional certification to this effect is required for each proposal. While training plans are not required to be included in submitted proposals, institutions are advised that they are subject to review, upon request.

NIH's policies from 2009 and 2022 outline that agency's RECR training requirements.

To fulfill these requirements, all federally funded research students, postdoctoral researchers, faculty, and other senior personnel at Whitman College are required to take an online RECR tutorial provided by CITI-Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative. The CITI online curriculum should be supplemented by in-person instruction on aspects of ethical research conduct appropriate to the specific project. All PIs on federal grants are responsible for ensuring that students working with them have completed the online curriculum and have received face-to-face instruction.

To access the CITI training module, students must register as a new user, affiliate themselves with "Whitman College" and then complete the appropriate RECR course (the student's faculty mentor should help determine which course is most appropriate for them). It is recommended that the student's supervisor also discuss the issues involved in the responsible conduct of research with the students and reinforce the ethical concepts taught in the modules.

Once the course is completed, the student must print out the certificate of completion and submit it to the Office of Grants & Foundation Relations (grantsmgmt@whitman.edu). This office is responsible for tracking compliance with the RCR training requirement.

Each spring, the Office of Grants & Foundation Relations will generate a list of federally-funded student researchers. Students who have not undergone RECR training will be sent a message informing them that they will need to complete the RECR course *before they start work*. The students' faculty mentors will also be informed that their students must fulfill this requirement. It is estimated that the on-line training will take about 2 hours to complete. A student does not have to

complete the training in one sitting. Once a student has taken the RECR training course, the certification will be valid until graduation. Faculty are required to refresh their training every four years.