

Office of Research Compliance and Integrity
Responsible Conduct of Research (RCR) Policy

I. Introduction of RCR Policy

The policy contained herein describes Illinois Institute of Technology's (IIT's) approaches to compliance with federal responsible conduct of research (RCR) regulations. This policy reflects IIT's most current RCR policies.

II. RCR Policy Rationale

IIT strongly believes that ethical research practices require all student, staff and faculty researchers to build mentoring relationships based on integrity. In order to accomplish this, a culture of responsible research practices must be promoted through targeted and intentional instruction. All individuals must be challenged to think about and resolve ethical problems, and faculty must be able to help their research teams confront those challenges through positive mentoring experiences.

III. IIT Policy on Responsible Conduct of Research (RCR)

A. All undergraduate students, graduate students, postdoctoral researchers, faculty and other senior personnel (as listed on the grant notice of award) supported by funding from external sources (including federal and non-federal funding sources) are required to complete one CITI RCR training module prior to receiving funding. The Office of Research Compliance and Integrity shall be responsible for the management and oversight of this program.

CITI Program identifies education and training needs in the communities we serve and provides high quality, peer-reviewed, web-based educational materials to meet those needs.

B. The university shall offer training via a web-based program such as the CITI program, via ethical research lectures and workshops on various RCR topics in person or via a communication platform such as Zoom, Google Meets, Microsoft Teams, etc. Individuals receiving external funding are required complete CITI RCR training and to attend one lecture/workshop at least once in every career stage, or no less than every four years. Whenever possible, the lectures/workshops shall be recorded and distributed internally upon request.

C. Pursuant to the RCR Policy Rationale stated above, faculty mentor relationships are important for building a culture of ethical research practices at IIT. To further this goal and comply with federal RCR regulations, additional discussion on topics related to RCR and how the research group handles RCR issues in the lab is required. Faculty with externally funded students must complete all of the following:

- Within the first twelve calendar months of accepting an externally funded student, faculty must conduct at least one targeted, face-to-face RCR discussion session with their research team and submit documentation of instruction activities to the Office of Research Compliance and Integrity. Faculty may elect to conduct formal instruction sessions on RCR topics related to the research team, or instruction may be held informally as topics arise during the natural course of research activities. Instruction should involve substantive contact hours between the trainees/ fellows/ scholars/ participants and the participating faculty. Acceptable programs generally involve at least eight contact hours. A semester-long series of seminars/programs may be more effective than a single seminar or one-day workshop because it is expected that topics will then be considered in sufficient depth, learning will be better consolidated, and the subject matter will be synthesized within a broader conceptual framework.
- Pertinent RCR instruction topics include but are not limited to: conflicts of interest, mentor/mentee relationships, collaborative research, peer review, data acquisition, laboratory tools, and responsible authorship and publication, research security and the **Office of Research Compliance**.

In order to track compliance and assist faculty in fostering ethical mentoring relationships, the Office of Research Compliance and Integrity shall collaborate with appropriate individuals and offices to create reports which will record RCR training requirements. These reports and processes shall comprise appropriate documentation of satisfactory completion of RCR requirements as set forth in this policy. Additionally, the Office of Research Compliance and Integrity shall assist faculty by collecting documentation, when requested, of RCR instruction activities and providing guidance regarding best practices for effective instruction methods.

IIT policy requires participation in and successful completion of instruction in responsible conduct of research by individuals supported by any training/research education/fellowship/career award. Course attendance will be monitored, and a certificate or documentation of participation will be made available upon course completion. IIT maintains records sufficient to demonstrate that trainees, fellows, and scholars have received the required instruction.