



ICTS 2025-2026 Responsible Conduct of Research (RCR) Course Course Syllabus

COURSE BACKGROUND

Eligibility

This course is sponsored by the Institute for Clinical and Translational Science (ICTS) at Washington University in St. Louis. The course is offered at no charge to trainees and scholars who are members of the Washington University Institute for Clinical and Translational Sciences (ICTS) and are enrolled in the 8-hour course. (Individuals needing fewer than 8 hours of RCR instruction are encouraged to contact the [Office of the Vice Chancellor of Research](#) to find a suitable RCR program that can meet their training needs). Students, faculty, and scholars at Washington University may join the ICTS at no cost online: [Join the ICTS here](#).

Registration

To track completion of course requirements, scholars must register for (a) the course ([register here](#)), and (b) each individual session using links provided in the [RCR Course Calendar](#). Attendance will be taken at each individual session. Completion of the course requires 8 hours of attendance (see Course Requirements below for details).

For **in-person sessions**, participants must plan to arrive prior to the start time of each session to sign in to document their attendance. Participants will not be admitted after a session has begun. Leaving prior to the conclusion of a session will result in loss of credit for the session.

For **remotely delivered sessions**, scholars will be placed in a Zoom waiting room and admitted at the session's start. On-time attendance is required; scholars will not be permitted to join a session late or leave early. (See **Late Arrival and Early Departure Policy** on page 3.)

Prerequisite

Prior to attending the first session, course participants are expected to complete the [Program for the Ethical and Responsible Conduct of Science and Scholarship Core Curriculum](#), a 90-minute WEB-BASED course, consisting of eight (8) learning modules. Completion of the course is documented in the WUSTL Learn@Work system and will be verified by the RCR Course Program Coordinator.

The prerequisite serves several purposes:

- It provides baseline knowledge required to participate meaningfully in the ICTS RCR Course.
- Whereas participants in the ICTS RCR Course have some flexibility to select topics according to their interests, the PERCSS program ensures exposure to seven core areas of RCR instruction: authorship and publication; collaborative research; conflict of interest; data ownership, acquisition, sharing, and management; mentor-trainee relationships; peer review; and research integrity.
- The PERCSS modules link to relevant WUSTL policies and resources, which will assist scholars in complying with the expectations of all research faculty and trainees at WUSTL.

COURSE MASTERS AND CONTACT INFORMATION

Alison Antes, PhD, Associate Professor of Medicine, Division of General Medicine and Geriatrics, Director of Education, Bioethics Research Center, ICTS RCR Course Co-Director

Jessica Mozersky, PhD, MBE, Assistant Professor of Medicine, Division of General Medicine and Geriatrics, Director of Consultation, Bioethics Research Center, ICTS RCR Course Co-Director

Instructors: Please see the [RCR Course Calendar](#) to identify the instructors for individual sessions. All instructors are WUSTL faculty and most have active research programs and mentoring experience.

For questions regarding the syllabus or sessions, please contact, Emily Schenk, the Education Program Manager, at brc@wustl.edu.

COURSE DESCRIPTION AND OBJECTIVES

The ICTS RCR Course consists of a 2-hour in-person foundations session, which presents professional decision-making strategies and applies them to research scenarios, and a series of 1-hour seminars via Zoom on diverse topics pertaining to the responsible conduct of research (RCR). All seminars that fulfill course requirements will address one or more of the following RCR topics: animal welfare; collaborative research, conflicts of interest; contemporary ethical issues in biomedical research, e.g., genetics, diversity; human subjects protections; mentor/mentee responsibilities and relationships; peer review; research misconduct; reproducibility; responsible data management; responsible authorship and publication; safe research environment; and societal impacts of scientific research.

We encourage scholars to select sessions in dialogue with their research mentors to ensure that a variety of topics are addressed and that individual needs are met.

Course Format: The sessions encourage active participation through methods such as small and large group discussion, case scenario analysis, writing exercises, and brief brainstorming activities. Scholars are expected to participate actively in all course sessions. The sessions also frequently draw upon SMART Strategies for Professional Decision-Making.TM These strategies were originally developed for the Professionalism and Integrity in Research Program (P.I. Program) and are appended to the syllabus.

The **objectives** of the program are to foster:

- Sensitivity to ethical issues, institutional policies, and regulatory requirements in research
- Good professional decision-making skills in research
- Awareness of resources at WUSTL and elsewhere that support the responsible conduct of research
- Respectful, constructive discourse on ethics topics among scholars in the WUSTL community

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

It is strongly recommended that you attend the SMART Strategies for Professional Decision Making in Research (2 hour IN-PERSON session) prior to attending any of the other sessions. The Foundations session is the only specific session that must be completed; all other sessions are “selectives.” Two in-person SMART Strategy sessions are offered each year (January and August). Scholars must attend and complete evaluations for a minimum of 1 Foundations session and 6 additional 1-hour sessions to complete the course for a total of 8 hours of “face-to-face” instruction. Each session on a particular topic will only count once towards completion of the course, so scholars should ensure that they attend 6 **different** sessions in addition to the foundations session. Scholars are welcomed and encouraged to attend additional sessions beyond the required 8 hours.

Late Arrival and Early Departure Policy. For both in-person and online sessions, course participants must plan to arrive prior to or at the start time of each session. Scholars are required to sign in to document their attendance at the in-person session. Attendance will be taken at the start of and throughout the online sessions. **Participants will not be permitted to join a session late.**

Leaving prior to the conclusion of a session will result in loss of credit for the session.

This policy ensures the integrity and accuracy of our documentation of participation in the RCR course, as trainees participate in these sessions to fulfill NIH training requirements. The course completion certificate verifies 8 full hours of instruction. To ensure that the curricular goals approved by NIH are met within our ICTS RCR program, **we only recognize events listed on the [RCR Course Calendar](#) towards course completion.**

Documentation of Course Completion. Once the Program Education Manager verifies satisfaction of attendance requirements, scholars will be emailed a certificate of completion.

COURSE CALENDAR

All course sessions are listed on the [RCR Course Calendar](#).

Ordinarily, at least one session will be offered each month, and sessions will be posted at least 3 months in advance to allow scholars to plan their schedules accordingly.

EVALUATION

All scholars must complete an evaluation of individual sessions before the end of the session, which counts towards completion of the session.

COMPLIANCE WITH NIH AND NSF INSTRUCTION REQUIREMENTS

The RCR course is designed to satisfy the [NIH Requirement for Instruction in the Responsible Conduct of Research](#). It may also be incorporated into plans to satisfy [NSF RCR training requirements](#).

LINKS TO RCR RESOURCES

WUSTL Bioethics Research Center

<https://bioethicsresearch.org/>

National Ethics Center

<https://www.nationalethicscenter.org/>

The US Office of Research Integrity

<https://ori.hhs.gov/>

NIH Office of the Director, RCR Resources

<https://oir.nih.gov/sourcebook/ethical-conduct/responsible-conduct-research-training>

Strategies for Professional Decision Making: The SMART Approach

STRATEGY	SAMPLE REFLECTION QUESTIONS
<u>SEEK</u> Help	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Where might I seek additional information or an unbiased, objective opinion? • Would it help to involve a mediator or consultant? • Do I welcome correction or input from others, including subordinates?
<u>MANAGE</u> Your Emotions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are my emotional reactions to this situation? Am I anxious, frustrated, or depressed? • How might my emotions influence my decision-making? • Would taking a “time out” or deep breath help?
<u>ANTICIPATE</u> Consequences	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are the likely short-term and long-term outcomes of various choices? • Who will be affected by my decisions and how? • How might this decision impact my career and me?
<u>RECOGNIZE</u> Rules and Context	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are the causes of the problems in this situation? Which causes can I change? • What ethical principles, laws, or regulations apply in this situation? • Does anyone have the power to control outcomes? If so, who and how?
<u>TEST</u> Your Assumptions and Motives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Am I making faulty assumptions about the causes of the situation, alternatives, or others’ intentions? How can I find out? • What are my motives? Are they the same as the people I serve? • How will others view my choices?

NOTE: The strategies often overlap, e.g., testing assumptions is often a good way to manage emotions and it can lead to seeking help. Want to be SMARTER? Add “Evaluate” outcomes of your actions, and “Revise” your approach based on outcomes.



<http://integrityprogram.org>