Vassar College has long affirmed that sound research is critical to advancing knowledge. Thus, we are obliged to provide training in the responsible conduct of research (RCR) so students and others begin to learn appropriate methodologies and receive guidance and mentoring in the ethical standards for research and publication. Furthermore, federal regulations* require that each institution that applies for financial assistance from the National Science Foundation (NSF) for science and engineering research have in place “a plan to provide appropriate training and oversight in the responsible and ethical conduct of research to undergraduate students, graduate students, and postdoctoral researchers participating in the proposed research project”.

To this end, Vassar College initiated the annual Undergraduate Research Summer Institute (URSI) Responsible Research Workshop, led by Vassar faculty members and defined by in-depth discussion and analysis of real-life case studies to explore the principles of responsible research.

For those who cannot attend the Responsible Research Workshop, there are free, online, interactive training modules* in responsible research available on the Ethics CORE website at https://nationalethicscenter.org. The tutorials need not be completed in one sitting; each of the three modules requires about one hour. (See the attached document for instructions on accessing the tutorials. Note that the Ethics Core website offers numerous resources worthy of exploration and study.)

All Vassar students or post-doctorates working as research assistants (whether they receive pay, academic credit, or work as volunteers) for Vassar College faculty doing research funded, in whole or in part, by NSF must complete these interactive RCR tutorials or attend the Responsible Research Workshop. For the broadest possible exposure to the principles of responsible and ethical research conduct, however, participants are strongly encouraged to do both. These activities are readily complemented by other options and resources regarding responsible and safe research, including, but not limited to, discussion with faculty mentors, professors and fellow students as well as departmental dialogue on the subject. Combined, these activities should inspire an ongoing commitment to grasp the principles of ethical conduct and scientific integrity and to pursue responsible and safe research in the undergraduate years and beyond.

The Office of Corporate, Foundation & Government Relations is designated on the Ethics CORE website as the College’s Group Administrator and can monitor each participant’s successful completion through the online system and will keep records of attendance at the annual RRW.

Questions and suggestions should be directed to the Office of Corporate, Foundation & Government Relations (Gary Hohenberger) at 845-437-7092 or gahohenberger@vassar.edu.


** These tutorials were developed and originally hosted by The Center on Materials and Devices for Information Technology Research (CMDITR), a National Science Foundation-funded Science and Technology Center headed at University of Washington. Ethics CORE is hosted by University of Illinois.
Institutional Responsibilities

The responsible and ethical conduct of research (RCR) is critical for excellence, as well as public trust, in science and engineering. Consequently, education in RCR is considered essential in the preparation of future scientists and engineers. The language specified below provides the National Science Foundation’s implementation of Section 7009:

a. An institution must have a plan in place to provide appropriate training and oversight in the responsible and ethical conduct of research to undergraduates, graduate students, and postdoctoral researchers who will be supported by National Science Foundation (NSF) to conduct research. As noted in the Grant Proposal Guide (GPG) Chapter II.C.1.e, institutional certification to this effect is required for each proposal.

b. While training plans are not required to be included in proposals submitted to NSF, institutions are advised that they are subject to review, upon request.

c. An institution must designate one or more persons to oversee compliance with the RCR training requirement.

d. Institutions are responsible for verifying that undergraduate students, graduate students, and postdoctoral researchers supported by NSF to conduct research have received training in the responsible and ethical conduct of research.
How to Access the Online Tutorials in Responsible Research

Vassar College has long affirmed that sound research is critical to advancing knowledge. Thus, we are obliged to provide training in the responsible conduct of research (RCR) so students and others begin to learn appropriate methodologies and receive guidance and mentoring in the ethical standards for research and publication. Federal regulations require that each institution that applies for financial assistance from the National Science Foundation (NSF) for science and engineering research have in place “a plan to provide appropriate training and oversight in the responsible and ethical conduct of research to undergraduate students, graduate students, and postdoctoral researchers participating in the proposed research project”.

Undergraduates, graduate students, and postdoctoral researchers are strongly urged* to complete the online, interactive modules in responsible research at:

nationalethicscenter.org

1) **Point** your browser to [https://nationalethicscenter.org/register](https://nationalethicscenter.org/register)
2) **Enter** the requested information to **Create New Account** (be sure to make note of your username and password!)
3) **Click** on the **Create Account** button
4) **Retrieve** the confirmation email from your Inbox and **Click on the link**
5) In the new window, **Enter** your Username and Password in the appropriate boxes
6) Once you’re logged in (“My Ethics CORE” and your name will appear at the top of the window), **Select “RCR User account registration”** from the dropdown menu under **RCR Modules from CMDITR**
7) In the dropdown menu under “What Group are you affiliated with?” **Scroll down** and **Select “Vassar Undergraduate Research”** to access the tutorials.

The tutorials need not be completed in one sitting. Each module can be completed in less than one hour. Note that the Ethics Core site offers numerous other resources on RCR that are worthy of exploration and study.

*Questions? Suggestions? Contact Gary Hohenberger at gahohenberger@vassar.edu or x7092.

*All Vassar students, graduate students or post-doctorates working as research assistants (whether they receive pay, academic credit, or work as volunteers) for Vassar College faculty doing research funded, in whole or in part, by NSF must complete these interactive RCR tutorials or attend the annual Responsible Research Workshop, offered during the Undergraduate Research Summer Institute (URSI) program. For the broadest possible exposure to the principles of responsible and ethical research conduct, however, participants are encouraged to do both.*