



Mass General Brigham RCR Program Description for NIH Training Fellowship and Career Award Applications

December 2023

NIH Institutional Training Grant, Fellowship, and Career Award applications must include a plan for education in the Responsible Conduct of Research (RCR) that addresses the five required instructional components outlined in the NIH policy: format, subject matter, faculty participation, duration of instruction and frequency.

The NIH will not accept a plan limited to online self-paced instruction. The required format must include at least eight (8) hours of face-to-face lectures, coursework, and/or real-time discussion groups.

Below is a description of the Mass General Brigham (MGB) RCR program. PIs are encouraged to develop RCR training at the department or training grant level to supplement the MGB program and to include this information in their RCR plan.

Format

All trainees, fellows, and scholars receiving support from a NIH training grant (institutional or individual), career development award, fellowship, research education grant, or dissertation research grant are required to enroll in the MGB Responsible Conduct of Research (RCR) Program administered by the MGB Research Compliance Office. The Program consists of eight (8) hours of face-to-face instruction.

Trainees fulfill the face-to-face instruction requirement by attending eight hours of courses, lectures or discussion groups, collectively "courses," that are deemed "RCR eligible."

Subject Matter

MGB RCR courses include faculty presentations and discussions on authorship, data management, documentation and integrity; conflict of interest and interactions with industry; research misconduct; post-award financial management; basic regulatory and institutional requirements for research involving human subjects, stem cells, animals, and biohazards/ recombinant DNA; effective mentoring; ethical considerations in clinical research; safe lab practices; research subject privacy; peer review; humane and compliant use of animals in research; collaborative science; and rigor and reproducibility. While some of the RCR courses touch on ethical issues related to research with human subjects or animals, they are not the basic courses required of all researchers prior to working with human subjects or animals. Trainees/career awardees are not limited to RCR-eligible courses offered by their hospital; they may enroll in any RCR offering across the MGB system.

Faculty Participation

Dr. Anne Klibanski, currently MGB CEO, and Dr. Paul Anderson, MGB Chief Academic Officer, provide guidance to the MGB Chief Research Compliance Officer on curriculum development and faculty participation.

RCR courses are taught by senior hospital/Harvard Medical School faculty, K-24 PIs in fulfillment of their RCR requirement, and by hospital and MGB research faculty leadership.

Duration of Instruction and Frequency

The basic MGB RCR Program requires eight (8) hours of face-to-face instruction. New trainees/career awardees are required to enroll in and complete the MGB RCR Program within 12 months of their appointment to the training grant/receipt of career development award.

Additional RCR instruction is required of trainees/career awardees during their fourth year of NIH support. They fulfill this requirement through completion of a 90-minute MGB *RCR Refresher Lecture*. In addition, they may also attend any hospital-based, RCR-eligible course.