

Emory University Office of Postdoctoral Education
Training in the responsible conduct of research

***Course: Responsible Conduct of Research for Postdocs, Medical Research
Fellows and Early Career Researchers***

The course was designed by the Emory University Ethics Center in collaboration with the Office of Postdoctoral Education for graduate-level Postdoctoral and Research Fellows in the biomedical sciences. The course fulfills the NIH requirement for training in the responsible conduct of research (NOT-OD-22-055). It has been approved by the Emory University Office of Research Compliance, the Office of the Dean of the School of Medicine, and the Curriculum Committee of the School of Medicine.

This course consists of readings, classroom sessions, and assignments. The readings contain foundation information and explanation of the concepts involved in each topic. In addition, the foundation information contains Emory University policies, federal laws and policies, and sample case studies with guide questions indicating the ethical principles needed for solution of the ethical dilemma in the case studies. After reading the foundation documents, course participants who are at the post-doctoral level submit a personal or created case study. Participants at the junior faculty level conduct two mentorship sessions and document completion. Classroom sessions are led by an expert faculty member or senior University staff member with specific expertise, who leads discussions on the most important principles of the topic and how to resolve ethical dilemmas selected cases.

This course is offered each semester of each academic year. Submission of a case study and attendance at all classroom sessions are mandatory for course certification. In addition to submission of assignments and attending classes, participants take a quiz at the end of the course and have to achieve a grade of 75% or higher. Participants who miss any session(s) are required to attend make-up session(s) in a subsequent semester before being considered to have completed the course.

The following topics are covered:

1. Conflict of Interest – personal, professional, and financial – and conflict of commitment, in allocating time, effort, or other research resources
2. Policies regarding human subjects, live vertebrate animal subjects in research, and safe laboratory practices
3. Mentor/mentee responsibilities and relationships
4. Safe research environments (e.g., those that promote inclusion and are free of sexual, racial, ethnic, disability and other forms of discriminatory harassment)
5. Team science
6. Peer review, including the responsibility for maintaining confidentiality and security in peer review
7. Data acquisition and analysis; laboratory tools (e.g., tools for analyzing data and creating or working with digital images); recordkeeping practices, including methods such as electronic laboratory notebooks
8. Secure and ethical data use; data confidentiality, management, sharing, and ownership
9. Research misconduct and policies for handling misconduct
10. Responsible authorship and publication