

Procedure for Approval of Departmental Graduate-Level Responsible Conduct of Research (RCR) Courses

University of Maine
Office of the Vice President for Research and Dean of the Graduate School
Effective July 2014 (*Revised 1/18/2021*)

Background

All students enrolled in masters or doctoral programs with a research component must receive one credit of Responsible Conduct of Research (RCR) training prior to completing the degree, preferably prior to commencing the research. At the advisory committee's or Graduate Coordinator's discretion, this credit may be substituted for one of the 6 required thesis/dissertation credits (XXX 699). Students must take the RCR training before the commencement of the fourth credit of XXX 699.

Graduate students who are not subject to the Graduate School's RCR Training requirement are not required to take RCR training unless supported to conduct research on an award from the National Institutes of Health, National Institutes of Food and Agriculture, or National Science Foundation (see [RCR on the ORC website](#) for information on these federal regulations).

Graduate students subject to the RCR training policy and/or federal mandate must enroll in INT 601, or an approved alternate course (see [RCR in the UMaine Graduate School](#)). Recognizing the fact that many UMaine colleges require their graduate students to take existing departmental courses with RCR content, the Assistant Vice President for Graduate Studies (AVPGS), through the Office of Research Compliance (ORC), will consider approving such courses as alternates to INT601 in order to minimize student duplication of effort.

The process for gaining approval for alternate courses is outlined below. Questions regarding the RCR graduate training requirement should be directed to Amanda Ashe at amanda.l.ashe@maine.edu or 207-581-1480.

Alternate Course Approval Process

Step 1: The assigned course instructor will have his/her certification in the Responsible Conduct of Research which may be obtained in any of the following ways:

- a. Complete a general or discipline-specific RCR course online through the Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative (CITI) and forward the completion certificate to ORC; or
- b. Participate in INT601 and forward the completion report to ORC; or
- c. Participate in and complete an ORC-approved RCR workshop.

Step 2: The proposing department will submit for approval a new or amended course syllabus incorporating the RCR topics outlined in the Office of Research Integrity publication, *Introduction to the Responsible Conduct of Research*, by Nicholas H. Steneck¹, as follows:

- a. RCR – Rules of the Road
- b. Research Misconduct
- c. The Protection of Human Subjects
- d. The Welfare of Laboratory Animals
- e. Conflicts of Interest
- f. Data Management Practices
- g. Mentor and Trainee Responsibilities
- h. Collaborative Research
- i. Authorship and Publication
- j. Peer Review.

This most effectively can be accomplished by incorporating the contents of INT 601 into departmental courses. This also is the preferred method, as the topics, lectures, and assignments in INT 601 are designed to meet federal RCR training requirements and are all available for use and adaptation at [UMaine Computing Course Materials \(INT 601\)](#).

Important: If the syllabus in question is a modification to an existing, previously approved course, the department must submit the original along with the modified syllabus, and provide an explanation of the changes, and the reason for them.

Step 3: ORC will provide a review of the syllabus(i) and advise the department as to whether and what type of revisions are required for the course to meet federal and UMaine RCR training requirements.

Step 4: Upon preliminary approval, ORC will forward course documents to the Assistant Vice President for Graduate Studies (AVPGS) for final review and approval, as follows:

- a) If the course in question is a new course then the syllabus will be submitted to the graduate board for approval.
- b) If the course in question is a modified existing course, then the AVPGS shall determine if the changes in the course syllabus are significant enough that the course must be reapproved by the graduate board, or if it is acceptable as proposed.

Step 5: Courses approved as meeting the Graduate School's RCR requirement shall be listed as such in the graduate catalog.

¹ Available for download at [Introduction to the Responsible Conduct of Research by Nicholas H. Steneck](#)