



# WHITMAN COLLEGE

## **Policies on Research Safety and Ethics**

Whitman College is strongly committed to ensuring that all research conducted by Whitman faculty and/or students be held to the highest standards of ethics and safety. The Whitman College Faculty Handbook outlines the official College policy on faculty and student research, including the procedures for handling allegations of research misconduct and for fulfilling the research ethics training requirement.

### **Whitman College Policies on research involving vertebrate animals, humans, or recombinant and/or synthetic nucleic acids**

The College believes in the ethical care and treatment of animal and human subjects to be used in biological, biomedical and behavioral research, and has established policies to ensure that College and national regulations are followed. These include an Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee and an Institutional Review Board. In addition, through its Institutional Biosafety Committee, the College takes great care to assure that biosafety standards are followed, to ensure the health and safety of the campus. These are described in the Faculty Handbook.

#### Animal Care and Use

All research proposals involving vertebrate animals must have their research protocol approved by the Whitman Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC). Whitman's IACUC is approved by the federal Office of Laboratory Animal Welfare (<http://grants.nih.gov/grants/olaw/olaw.htm>). New protocols that involve animals should be submitted to the current Chair of the Committee, who will distribute them to the members of the committee for approval.

#### Institutional Review Board

All research conducted by Whitman College faculty or students involving human participants, regardless of its funding source, must be submitted to the Institutional Review Board (IRB) for review. Federal guidelines for this review process can be found under Academic Offices on the Provost and Dean of the Faculty web page and at <http://www.hhs.gov/ohrp/index.html>.

#### Institutional Biosafety Committee

Protocols for research conducted by faculty and/or students using recombinant and/or synthetic nucleic acids must be approved by the Whitman Institutional Biosafety Committee (constituted as needed). Most federal agencies follow the National Institutes of Health policies (found at <https://osp.od.nih.gov/biosafety-biosecurity-and-emerging-biotechnology/>) and guidelines, be found at <https://osp.od.nih.gov/biotechnology/nih-guidelines/>. Any faculty member planning to conduct recombinant DNA research at Whitman College should contact the Provost and Dean of the Faculty's office or the Office of Grants & Foundation Relations for further guidance.

## **Whitman College Procedure for Handling Cases of Research Misconduct**

Whitman College is committed to maintaining high standards of integrity in research and scholarship, whether funded or not.

The Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) requires that institutions have a written policy on research misconduct in order to be eligible for research funding. While there is less than total unanimity on what constitutes misconduct in research, the categories of fabrication, falsification, plagiarism, and “other serious deviations” that appear in the annual HHS questionnaire are sufficient to cover the full range. All research trainees must also receive instruction in the responsible conduct of research (Whitman’s procedure is described below in its RCR Training Procedure).

Anyone who suspects possible research misconduct should report it to his/her supervisor. Supervisors should transmit the allegation to the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs (who is the College’s Research Integrity Officer), who will then conduct an informal inquiry. If the supervisor is the one suspected of research misconduct, the employee should report directly to the Associate Dean. The allegations and the results of the inquiry will be submitted in writing to the Provost/Dean of the Faculty, who shall determine whether a formal investigation is warranted. If an investigation is deemed necessary, the Provost shall form a panel of three (chaired by the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs). The panel must complete its work within 120 days unless there are unusual and extenuating circumstances, and will submit its conclusions in writing to the Provost. The Provost will review the case, and on the merits of the findings, recommend appropriate action to the President of the College. The person against whom the allegations were lodged shall receive copies of the written reports of the inquiry and investigation and shall have the right to appeal the decision to the president. Following any appeal, the President’s decision is final.

In all cases regarding possible misconduct of researchers holding federal, state, or private grants, the College will follow the guidelines issued by the respective agencies or foundations and will submit written notification, etc., as required.

The College will furnish copies of this policy to each faculty member who receives a research grant at the same time the faculty member receives instruction on the College’s Responsible Conduct of Research training policy. The Research Misconduct policy will be published in Whitman’s Faculty Handbook, the Grants & Foundation Relations website, and the Whitman College Grants Manual. Students involved in research will also receive a copy. Faculty or staff who direct research projects will be responsible for monitoring and assuring the integrity of the research conducted under their direction and will set high standards in this regard.

The College encourages anyone who observes research misconduct to come forward with his or her concerns. In the initial phases of inquiry, the responsible official will maintain confidentiality of an individual who comes forward with allegations. Once a formal investigation is conducted, however, such confidentiality may not be guaranteed. The institution will seek to protect the complainant against retribution but is also committed to due process and fairness toward the accused.

For further detail, please consult the federal Public Health Service Policies on Research Misconduct, effective June 2005 (<https://ori.hhs.gov/sample-policy-procedures-responding-research-misconduct-allegations>).

## **Whitman College Responsible Conduct of Research Training Procedure**

The 2007 America COMPETES Act directs the NSF to require that all funded students and postdoctoral researchers undergo training in the responsible conduct of research (RCR) (see <http://www.nsf.gov/bfa/dias/policy/rcr.jsp>). All institutions submitting proposals to NSF must certify that they have a training plan in place for undergraduate and graduate students and postdoctoral scholars who will be supported by NSF to conduct research. In addition, the National Institutes of Health (NIH) has declared that all institutions receiving Public Health Service funding must ensure that research trainees receive instruction in the responsible conduct of research (see [http://grants.nih.gov/grants/research\\_integrity/index.htm](http://grants.nih.gov/grants/research_integrity/index.htm)). Further information can be found at the NIH's [Office of Research Integrity](#).

Whitman College has determined that all students who are conducting federally-funded research on campus must receive instruction in the responsible conduct of research. Institutions are responsible for verifying that their undergraduate students (as well as graduate students and postdoctoral scholars) receive training.

To fulfill the RCR requirement, all research students at Whitman College are required to take an online RCR tutorial. The tutorial, provided by Ethics CORE, can be accessed here: [https://nationalethicscenter.org/index.php?option=com\\_rcrtutorial](https://nationalethicscenter.org/index.php?option=com_rcrtutorial).

You must register as a new user, affiliate yourself with the "Whitman College RCR" group and then proceed through the online tutorial modules. The Sponsored Program Coordinator will provide further instructions. It is recommended that the students' supervisor discuss the issues involved in the responsible conduct of research with the students and reinforce the ethical concepts taught in the modules. It is estimated that the on-line training will take 1-2 hours to complete. A student does not have to complete the training in one sitting. Once a student has taken the RCR training course, his or her certification will be valid until graduation. He/she will not have to retake the course each year.

Whitman's Sponsored Program Coordinator will generate a list of federally-funded student researchers each spring. Students who have not undergone RCR training will be sent a message informing them that they will need to complete the Ethics CORE course *before they start work*. The students' faculty mentors will also be informed that their students must fulfill this requirement. The Sponsored Program Coordinator will manage the online group and ensure through the online system that students are fulfilling the RCR requirement. Through the system, the Sponsored Program Coordinator will also be able to provide documentation if necessary.

Whitman College's Research Integrity Officer (RIO) is the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs. She has ultimate oversight on compliance with the College's Responsible Conduct of Research and Research Misconduct procedures.