Overview of Responsible Conduct of Research

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Chief Research Compliance Officer
Office of the Vice President for Research and Innovation
“Responsible Conduct of Research” is maintaining ethical standards:

“…conducting research in ways that fulfill the professional responsibilities of researchers, as defined by professional organizations, the institutions for which they work and, when relevant, the government and public.”

Responsible Conduct of Research (RCR) encompasses the elements of research integrity and ethics:

- Integrity in reporting research results
- Conflict of interest
- Use of human subjects
- Use of live vertebrate animals
- Use of biohazardous materials
- Data management and reproducibility
- Peer review
- Authorship and ethical citation
To the Researcher,
Compliance can
Appear as a Barrier...
To Sponsors, Compliance is Keeping Faith with the Public

- National Pool of Research Scientists
- Taxpayers
- Reliable Information
- Patents, Start-ups, Jobs
Unethical Conduct is Destructive and Expensive

• **Damages institutional reputation**
  • Suppresses future grants and gifts,
  • Drives away prospective students and faculty,
  • Students learn flawed methods.

• **Distorts the scientific record**
  • Spawning misinformed research and
  • Damaging the public trust in scientific knowledge.

• **Wastes Public funds.**
The Scientific Method Slowly Corrects Error

- Replication and peer review identify and correct mistakes.
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- Temptations to “cut corners” come from real life pressures:
  - Desperate need for the next grant
  - Competition for jobs
  - Experiments go “wrong”
  - “Publish or perish”
  - Etc.
Duke University settles research misconduct lawsuit for $112.5 million
By Science News Staff Mar. 25, 2019

Harvard teaching hospital to pay $10 million to settle research misconduct allegations
Retraction Watch April 27, 2017

You don’t want to see your name in something like this!
Office of Research Integrity & Assurance (ORIA)

• ORIA educates the Cornell research community about Research Integrity and RCR requirements.

• ORIA administrates research compliance programs for:
  • Conflict of Interest & Commitment
  • Human subject, Animal, and Biohazardous Materials.

• ORIA cannot, and should not, directly monitor every Cornell research activity.

• Every researcher is responsible for conducting research ethically and with integrity.
Consult the Research Services Website
https://researchservices.cornell.edu

Starting point for Information on ORIA compliance teams and RCR.
RCR Overview:  
https://researchservices.cornell.edu/resources/what-is-rcr

If specific RCR training is required for certain grants, e.g. NIH and USDA, faculty and students will be notified.

Explicitly required or not, it’s a good idea to look through this website and become familiar with its content.
Cornell University Policy 1.2, Definition of Academic Misconduct

“Any act that violates the standards of integrity in the conduct of scholarly and scientific research and communication.”

Mistakes and sloppiness are not misconduct.

Misconduct is intentional.

It’s not unethical to be a poor researcher.

(But it isn’t a good idea.)
Federal Research Misconduct*

- This is more narrowly defined, including only:
  - **Fabrication**: making up data or results and recording or reporting them.
  - **Falsification**: manipulating research materials, equipment, or processes, or changing or omitting data or results such that the research is not accurately represented in the research record
  - **Plagiarism**: the appropriation of another person’s ideas, processes, results, or words without giving appropriate credit.

*OSTP Research Misconduct Policy 65 FR 76260*
Plagiarism

- Plagiarism is the unacknowledged use of the words or ideas of others.
- It is the most common form of academic integrity violation at Cornell.
- Cornell (Ithaca and Weill Cornell Medical campuses) provides resources for recognizing and educating yourselves about plagiarism.
- Many are easy to find by searching Cornell and plagiarism on the internet.
When an allegation of Research Misconduct is made, the university must:

1. Inquire: Does the allegation have substance? If so;
2. Investigate: What are the facts? Did misconduct occur? If so, recommend corrective actions
3. Adjudicate: Review recommendations and determine corrective actions

OSTP Research Misconduct Policy 65 FR guides all agency policies (NIH, NSF, USDA, etc.)
The Ombudsman is an advocate for fairness and equity and:

- Is independent to the highest degree possible within Cornell.
- Is neutral, unaligned and impartial.
- Strives to promote procedural fairness.
- Does not engage if conflict of interest is perceived.
- Holds identity of those seeking assistance in strict confidence.
  - except as required by law, or
  - If imminent risk of serious harm exists.
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