

**College of Communication Arts and Sciences  
Michigan State University  
Policy Regarding Training in the Responsible and Ethical Conduct of Research**

**Background:**

An understanding of the issues concerning the conduct of research in an increasingly complex world has become critical to successful training of ethical scholars and professionals. To help prepare Michigan State University graduate students for their future scholarly and professional work, a plan for providing the foundation of responsible conduct has been developed in coordination with the Graduate School, the Vice President for Research and Graduate Studies and college associate deans for graduate education. The plan is predicated on the principles that a basic understanding of issues is necessary through didactic training and a periodic reinforcement of the principles through discussion. It is the belief of the College of Communication Arts and Sciences that this plan will provide a foundation in ethical behavior for all graduate students and will offer the basic information to meet most, if not all, federal agency granting requirements.

*Responsible Conduct of Research* is defined as conducting research in ways that fulfill the professional responsibilities of researchers, as those responsibilities are defined by their professional organizations, Michigan State University (MSU) and, when relevant, governmental and other entities that support and regulate research. *Research integrity* is defined as the quality of possessing and steadfastly adhering to high professional principles, standards, and obligations, as prescribed by professional organizations, MSU, and, when relevant, governmental and other entities that support and regulate research. *Research Ethics* is defined as the critical study of the moral problems associated with, or that arise in the course of, pursuing research.

Michigan State University (MSU) College Communication Arts and Sciences (CAS) strives to foster a research environment of ethical and responsible research conduct. CAS discourages research misconduct, and responds promptly to allegations or evidence of possible research misconduct. This document outlines the CAS policy on training and regulation of integrity in research and publication.

**Applicability:**

This policy applies to the following individuals, henceforth referred to as “Researchers”:

- Undergraduates, graduate students, and postdoctoral researchers supported by federal funding to conduct research and research-related activities.
- All graduate students in CAS.

**Requirements**

- **Students who are working on government sponsored research**
  - All students who accept payment to work on government sponsored research grants (e.g., as a research assistant) must comply with a set of federally mandated statutory requirements. Failure to comply will jeopardize both the student and faculty member’s eligibility for receiving future federal grants and could lead to the revocation of degree, loss of IRB status, destruction of data collected, and withdrawal of any publications resulting from data collected from the grant.

- All students working on grant-funded research will complete **four** CITI online modules within the first 6 months of appointment. Completion of this requirement will be tracked in SABA. The four required modules are:
  - Introduction to the Responsible Conduct of Research
  - Authorship
  - Plagiarism
  - Research Misconduct
- All students working on grant-funded research will complete online IRB training and be certified to conduct human research within 6 months of appointment
- All students working on grant-funded research must complete **eight** additional discussion session hours within 24 months of appointment. These hours will consist of a mix of the following:
  - CCAS sponsored RCR discussion sessions
  - Two hour discussion session held on the morning of the annual College Graduate Student Orientation
  - Ethical discussion sessions included in COM 803 and other research methods courses
  - University sponsored RCR training sessions
  - Other sessions conducted by faculty and pre-approved by the Associate Dean of Research or the Associate Dean of Graduate Studies
- All students continuing to work on grant-funded research will complete an additional 3 hours of RCR training in Year 3 and each subsequent year until completion of grant-funded work. The additional 3 hours can be a combination of online and in-person discussion

- **MA Plan A**

- All first year MA Plan A students are required to complete **four** CITI online modules within the first year of enrollment in their program. Completion of this requirement will be tracked in SABA. The four required modules are:
  - Introduction to the Responsible Conduct of Research
  - Authorship
  - Plagiarism
  - Research Misconduct
- All MA Plan A students must complete online IRB training and be certified to conduct human research
- MA Plan A students will also complete **six** additional discussion session hours by the time they complete their degree. These hours will consist of a mix of the following:
  - CCAS sponsored RCR discussion sessions
  - Two hour discussion session held on the morning of the annual College Graduate Student Orientation
  - Ethical discussion sessions included in COM 803 and other methods courses
  - University sponsored RCR training sessions

- Other sessions conducted by faculty and pre-approved by the Associate Dean of Research or the Associate Dean of Graduate Studies
  - All second year MA Plan A students will complete an additional **two** CITI online modules from the following:
    - CITI Collaborative Research
    - CITI Conflicts of Interest
    - CITI Data Management
    - CITI Financial Responsibility
    - CITI Mentoring
    - CITI Peer Review
    - Rigor and Reproducibility Course (MSU)
- **MA Plan B**
  - All first year MA Plan B students will complete **four** CITI online modules within the first year of enrollment in their program. Completion of this requirement will be tracked in SABA. The four required modules are:
    - Introduction to the Responsible Conduct of Research
    - Authorship
    - Plagiarism
    - Research Misconduct
  - MA Plan B students will also complete **six** additional discussion session hours by the they complete their degree. These hours will consist of a mix of the following:
    - CCAS sponsored RCR discussion sessions
    - Two hour discussion session held on the morning of the annual College Graduate Student Orientation
    - Ethical discussion sessions included in COM 803 and other methods courses
    - University sponsored RCR training sessions
    - Other sessions conducted by faculty and pre-approved by the Associate Dean of Research or the Associate Dean of Graduate Studies
- **PhD Students**
  - All first year PhD students will complete **four** CITI online modules within the first year of enrollment in their program. Completion of this requirement will be tracked in SABA. The four required modules are:
    - Introduction to the Responsible Conduct of Research
    - Authorship
    - Plagiarism
    - Research Misconduct
  - All PhD students will complete online IRB training and be certified to conduct human research
  - PhD students will also complete **six** additional discussion session hours. These hours will consist of a mix of the following:
    - CCAS sponsored RCR discussion sessions

- Two hour discussion session held on the morning of the annual College Graduate Student Orientation
    - Ethical discussion sessions included in COM 803 and other methods courses
    - University sponsored RCR training sessions
    - Other sessions conducted by faculty and pre-approved by the Associate Dean of Research or the Associate Dean of Graduate Studies
  - All continuing PhD students will complete an additional 2 CITI online modules in Year 2
  - All continuing PhD students will complete an additional 3 hours of refresher training each year subsequent to Year 2. The additional 3 hours can be a combination of online and in-person discussion
- **Online-only MA students**
    - All students enrolled in an online-only MA will complete **four** CITI online modules within the first year of enrollment in their program. Completion of this requirement will be tracked in SABA. The four required modules are:
      - Introduction to the Responsible Conduct of Research
      - Authorship
      - Plagiarism
      - Research Misconduct
    - Students enrolled in an online-only MA will also complete online IRB training and be certified to conduct human research by the time of degree completion.

### **Tracking and Reporting Procedure**

Requirements for training vary by graduate program (e.g., MA Plan A, MA Plan B, PhD) and consist of both online courses and in-person discussion sessions. Hours completed are tracked in two systems, corresponding to the presentation format: SABA online tracking for online courses and CCAS tracking for discussion sessions. It is the responsibility of the graduate student to ensure that hours attended to satisfy the requirements of this policy are recorded.

- CITI online training: All on-line training sessions are tracked automatically by the SABA system.
- MSU IRB training: MSU IRB training and certification is tracked automatically by the SABA system.
- In-person discussion training: Every in-person discussion-based training session will take attendance and the attendance sheets will be submitted to one of the Graduate Program Coordinators for entry into the CCAS RCR Training Database. It is the student's responsibility to ensure that her or his name is on attendance lists from training sessions attended.

### **Waiver Requests**

Partial waiver of RCR requirements will be evaluated on an individual basis for graduate students who are not working on federally-funded research. Waivers will only be granted for a subset of the requirements; there is no comprehensive waiver of RCR training available. Waivers may be requested by:

- Submission of the official waiver request form signed by the student and the student's advisor.
- Waiver requests must be submitted to the office of the Associate Dean for Research or the Associate Dean for Graduate Studies.

- Waiver requests must be submitted at least 15 working days prior to certification of graduate degree.



**MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY**

**College of Communication Arts and Sciences**

**RCR Waiver Request**

**Waiver Information**

Student Name:

APID Number:

Department:

Program

Committee Chair:

Number of hours  
taken

Number of waiver  
hours requested

Reason for Waiver:

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Student Signature*

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Date*

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Advisor Signature*

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Date*

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Dean's Office Signature*

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Date*