



Responsible Conduct of Research (RCR) Academic Policy for Master's Thesis Students

Type of Policy: Academic
Effective Date: August 2014
Last Revised: April 2014

Policy Owner: Office of the VPGEFA

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1. Reason for Policy

The responsible conduct of research (RCR) is an increasingly significant component of the education and training of researchers. Policies from federal agencies have contributed to this change. In 2009, the National Institutes of Health (NIH) updated its RCR policy, adding emphasis to the importance of in-person training. That same year, the National Science Foundation (NSF) released a new RCR training policy.

As a premier technological university at the cutting edge of education, research, and innovation, the Georgia Institute of Technology (Georgia Tech) is committed to providing leadership in the realm of ethics and RCR. RCR training is central to Georgia Tech's mission to ensure that students are prepared with the knowledge and skills necessary to conduct themselves professionally and with integrity. In Fall 2011, Georgia Tech implemented the **RCR Academic Policy for Doctoral Students**, which covers new doctoral students. The Policy described here builds on that prior initiative and expands RCR training to master's students who are pursuing a thesis degree.

2. Policy Statement

The **RCR Academic Policy for Master's Thesis Students** applies to all master's students who register for thesis hours (courses numbered 7000) starting Fall 2014.

As part of their degree requirements, master's students who register for thesis hours (courses numbered 7000) starting Fall 2014 must complete at least one of the following options:

First Option - Successfully complete an online CITI RCR course (rcr.gatech.edu/online-training/).

OR

Second Option - Successfully complete an RCR course that has already been approved to satisfy the in-person RCR training requirement for doctoral students (<http://rcr.gatech.edu/rcr-courses>).

OR

Third Option - Receive at least 4 contact hours of RCR education during a course that is a required part of the curriculum for the specific master's program (programs should refer to: <http://rcr.gatech.edu/masters-policy/third-option>).

Master's students who plan to transition to a doctoral program should refer to the "Related Information" section below.

3. Scope

This Policy applies to all Master's Students who enroll in thesis hours (courses numbered 7000) starting Fall 2014.

4. Definitions

RCR	Responsible Conduct of Research
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5. Procedures

5.1 RCR Training Timeline	
Notification of the Requirement	Students will be informed of the RCR requirement described in this Policy when they enroll in 7000 thesis hours.
Deadline for Completion	Students are strongly encouraged to complete the requirement prior to conducting research but it must be completed no later than when submitting the Request for Approval of Master's Thesis Topic Form to the Office of Graduate Studies.

5.2 Documenting RCR Training Completion on the Request for Approval of Master's Thesis Topic Form

First Option	If the First Option is selected, applicable master's students must successfully complete an online CITI RCR course before the Request for Approval of Master's Thesis Topic Form will be processed by the Office of Graduate Studies. The completion of the training must be indicated on the Thesis Topic Form. To expedite the process, students are encouraged to print out their CITI RCR completion certificate and attach it to the Thesis Topic Form.
Second and Third Options	If the Second or Third Option is selected, applicable master's students must successfully complete a course that has been approved to satisfy the in-person RCR training requirement before the Request for Approval of Master's Thesis Topic Form will be processed by the Office of Graduate Studies. The course name and semester taken must be indicated on the Thesis Topic Form.

5.3 Review of the Request for Approval of Master's Thesis Topic Form by Graduate Studies

Verification of RCR Training Completion	The Office of Graduate Studies will verify RCR training completion when it examines the Request for Approval of Master's Thesis Topic Form.
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6. Forms

Title	Link
Request for Approval of Master's Thesis Topic Form	http://www.gradadmiss.gatech.edu/thesis/forms/MasterTopicForm.pdf

7. Frequently Asked Questions

For more information, refer to the Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) document: http://www.rcr.gatech.edu/files/GTRCR_MastersFAQs.pdf.

8. Responsibilities

8.1 Master's Programs

Master's programs must inform their thesis students about this Policy. Master's programs who wish to pursue the "Third Option" (listed above) should refer to:

<http://rcr.gatech.edu/masters-policy/third-option>.

8.2 Master's Thesis Students

- Master's thesis students should contact their home program to learn about their degree requirements relating to RCR.
- Master's thesis students must complete RCR training before the Request for Approval of Master's Thesis Topic Form will be processed by the Office of Graduate Studies.

8.3 The Office of Graduate Studies

The Office of Graduate Studies will verify that the RCR training has been completed prior to processing the Request for Approval of Master's Thesis Topic Form.

8.4 The RCR Program

The Administrator of Graduate Research Ethics Programs, in conjunction with the Office of Graduate Studies, will monitor student adherence to this Policy.

9. Enforcement

Noncompliance with this Policy will result in the denial of the Request for Approval of Master's Thesis Topic Form until the RCR training (described above) is completed. Failing to complete the training may result in the Form being returned to the student's home department.

10. Related Information

- Master's thesis students covered by this Policy may need to complete additional RCR training if they receive funding from certain sponsors. Refer to the **Georgia Tech RCR Compliance Policy** for more information.
- Master's students who plan to transition to a doctoral program should refer to the RCR training requirements of that doctoral program and review the information contained within the **RCR Academic Policy for Doctoral Students**. Successfully completing the training requirements contained in the **RCR Academic Policy for Doctoral Students** also satisfies the requirements of this Policy.
- The **RCR Academic Policy for Master's Thesis Students** does not affect undergraduate students, non-thesis master's students, doctoral students, or postdoctoral researchers. However, they may still be subject to the **Georgia Tech RCR Compliance Policy** if they receive funding from certain sponsors.

Resources	
RCR Academic Policy for Master's Thesis Students website	http://rcr.gatech.edu/masters-policy
RCR Academic Policy for Master's Thesis Students - Third Option	http://rcr.gatech.edu/masters-policy/third-option
Responsible Conduct of Research website	http://rcr.gatech.edu
RCR Online Training	http://rcr.gatech.edu/online-training
RCR Courses	http://rcr.gatech.edu/rcr-courses
RCR Compliance Policy	http://www.osp.gatech.edu/forms/GT_RCR.pdf
RCR Academic Policy for Doctoral Students website	http://rcr.gatech.edu/doctoral-policy

11. Policy History

Revision Date	Author	Description
N/A		