

Emory University Research Ethics Course GAH: 601A

This is an Ethics course of eight classroom sessions and eight on-line informational documents that was designed by the Emory University Ethics Center in collaboration with the Office of Postdoctoral Education for graduate level Postdoctoral and Research Fellows in the biomedical research. The course was designed with the specific focus of fulfilling the NIH requirement (NOT-OD-10-019). It has been approved by the Emory University Office of Research Compliance, the Office of the Dean of the School of Medicine, and the Curriculum Committee of the School of Medicine. The on-line documents on each of the eight topics listed below contain foundation information and explanation of the concepts involved in each of the topics. In addition, the foundation information contains for each topic Emory University policies, federal laws and policies, and sample case studies with guide questions indicating the ethical principles needed for solution of the ethical dilemma in the case studies. After reading the foundation documents, the Postdocs are required to submit a personal or created case study on the topic. Following submission of the case study, a one hour classroom session led by an expert faculty member leads discussions on the most important principles of the topic and how to resolve the ethical dilemmas in the submitted case studies. The small classroom sessions facilitate discussions on the topics that occur every two weeks during a semester. Submission of a case study and attendance at all classroom sessions are mandatory for course certification. This course is offered each semester of each academic year so can be attended in the first year of a research project and repeated annually or at two or three year intervals to retain and refresh guiding ethical principles for the conduct of research.

Each topic below is covered in detail in documents and classroom discussions:

1. Mentor/Mentee Relationships and Responsibilities
2. Responsible Authorship, Plagiarism and Review of Papers and Grants
3. Scientific Reputation and Impact on Society: Collaborative & Global Research
4. Data Acquisition and Management: Sharing and Ownership
5. Research Misconduct and Policies for Handling Misconduct
6. Conflict of Interest – Personal, Professional, and Financial
7. Responsible Use of Human Subjects in Research
8. Responsible Use of Animals in Research

The formalized background information and classroom discussions are supported and further enhanced by the mentor in the daily conduct of research relevant to the project. At Emory University, the faculty have been trained in the responsible conduct of research and thus are able to convey these principles to trainees as they enter into positions as postdoctoral and research fellows. The training in and practice of the responsible conduct of research is an Emory university-wide expected norm. An array of faculty take part in the leading the formal discussion sessions of the GAH: 601A course that brings a richness of experience on the topic. The course is evaluated each term with registrants always highly rating the value of classroom discussions, shared experiences of the expert faculty, and background information documents on the Emory Courses website.