

Qualité

The program with a mission to ensure and enforce the responsible conduct of research meeting high ethical standards.

The Research Education Unit

The Research Education unit was formalised to provide educational support to researchers

The Research Education (RE) unit is a functional branch of the Office of Human Research Protection Programme (OHRPP), with its organisational designation formalised in May 2013. Fueled by the burgeoning demand for educational initiatives to support new and experienced researchers alike, the formal appointment of the RE unit was a logical development, subsuming under it the RTS and RCR sub-unit functions.

Researchers' Training and Support (RTS)

The role of RTS may be aptly described as the brains behind the brawn. Unlike its more visible counterpart – the Research Training and Development Unit (RTDU) – which organises and fronts training courses for researchers, a substantial portion of RTS' work takes place behind the scenes.

New clinical research coordinators may be familiar with previous Proper Conduct of Research workshops they have attended, while new investigators may recall research techniques imparted during a Research Ethics course. These are courses for which the contents and curriculum were either partially or wholly conceived by RTS, in consultation with relevant stakeholders and / or subject matter experts. In addition, RTS also conducts regular reviews of the contents for the Singapore Guideline for Good Clinical Practice (SGGCP) course – a "rite of passage" training that investigators are strongly encouraged to complete before embarking on their research endeavours.

The Qualite newsletter, embedded within the quarterly NHG Catalyst publication and distributed to NHG and its partner institutions, is another means of outreach utilised by RTS to educate the research community. RTS makes regular contributions to Qualite, exploring various topics of interest to investigators and featuring best practices investigators can adopt to systematically improve the management of their research studies.

Beyond the borders of NHG and on a wider platform, RTS is involved in the organisation of educational events, including Clinical Research Coordinator Society (CRCS) forums and investigator forums that reach out to their respective communities. In response to formal requests, RTS also provides consultation services to new principal investigators seeking to initiate research studies for the first time, as well as conducts research-related training for clinical research units, principal investigators, study coordinators and other stakeholders.

Responsible Conduct of Research (RCR)

Conceptualised in 2010, the RCR sub-unit is the main driver behind the propagation of an ethically responsible culture within the NHG research community. Its aims are noble and synergistic with that of RTS' – that is, to equip researchers with the know-how to maintain the integrity of their research projects, particularly in delicate situations that may challenge personal values. RCR principles ubiquitously pervade all aspects of research conduct, including authorships, management and utilisation of data, managing conflicts of interests, handling misconduct, peer review, mentor and trainee relationships, protection of human subjects, as well as collaborative research.



As part of its efforts to impart knowledge and promote the RCR culture, RCR has launched a manual detailing best practices that institutions can use as a reference to develop their own RCR guidelines and policies. An avenue for the reporting of research misconduct events has also been created, by means of the Research Misconduct Event Report Form for Institutions. Like RTS, RCR also makes regular contributions to the NHG Catalyst newsletter in the form of a discursive column on RCR issues. Another aforementioned collaborative initiative with RTS is the conduct of research-related training for Clinical Research Units and investigators, initiated since July this year.

Interested readers who wish to obtain more information about RCR may visit the following page on the NHG research website: <http://www.research.nhg.com.sg/wps/wcm/connect/romp/nhgromp/hspp/responsibleconductofresearch/responsibleconductofresearch>

Both the NHG RCR manual and the Research Misconduct Event Report Form for Institutions are also available for download at the above link.

Research education is niche yet dynamic, with a scope that is constantly evolving to meet the demands of the research fraternity. This iterative process can only be effective in achieving its educational objectives with the valued inputs of researchers on the receiving end of the training. The results of prudent research education are potentially far-reaching, and will allow researchers to reap benefits associated with higher standards of research quality, greater subject protection and assured data credibility across the community.

Ms Lim Boon Hwee & Ms Valerie Wee

Senior Executives
Research Education (RE) Unit
Office of Human Research Protection Programme (OHRPP)
Research & Development Office
National Healthcare Group