

VANDERBILT  UNIVERSITY
MEDICAL CENTER

Director of Research Compliance
Vanderbilt University Medical Center
Nashville, Tennessee

THE SEARCH

Vanderbilt University Medical Center (VUMC) seeks a collaborative and experienced compliance leader to serve as its inaugural Director of Research Compliance within the [Office of Compliance and Corporate Integrity](#) (OCCI). Reporting to [Bob Mangeot](#), Vice President and Chief Compliance Officer, and working in close partnership with [Jennifer Pietenpol](#), Executive Vice President for Research and Chief Scientific and Strategy Officer, the Director will lead VUMC's research compliance program at a pivotal moment for the institution.

VUMC is at a critical juncture. The regulatory landscape is reshaping what ethical research conduct requires while federal research security expectations have never been more demanding. The Vanderbilt University School of Medicine is currently nationally ranked #4 in direct NIH awards, at over \$420M. With more than 900 NIH-funded researchers submitting over 3,500 grant and contract proposals annually, the institution has decided to elevate its research compliance function for the first time to the Director level. This role reflects a strategic investment in proactive, enterprise-level research compliance leadership. The Director will have a singular opportunity to advance and integrate VUMC's research compliance program, building on an established foundation of institutional support, backed by the full commitment and direct partnership of VUMC's most senior research and compliance leadership from day one.

The incoming Director will be expected to engage, lead, and energize a broad network of compliance stakeholders across a research enterprise of significant scale and complexity. The successful candidate will bring judgment, credibility, and executive presence to steward a high-stakes, evolving portfolio while enabling ethical, compliant, high-quality research. Tasked with shaping a compliance function that will define VUMC's research posture for years to come, the Director must build trust, community, and culture across the institution.

VUMC has partnered with Isaacson, Miller, a national executive search firm, to help with this recruitment. Confidential inquiries, nominations, and applications may be submitted to Isaacson, Miller as indicated at the end of this document.

VANDERBILT UNIVERSITY MEDICAL CENTER

[Vanderbilt University Medical Center](#) is one of the nation's leading academic medical centers and a major driver of biomedical discovery, clinical innovation, and regional economic impact. Based in Nashville, Tennessee, VUMC is an independent nonprofit health system and research institution affiliated with Vanderbilt University, employing tens of thousands of professionals across hospitals, clinics, research facilities, and academic programs. Across its clinical enterprise, VUMC supports more than 3 million patient visits annually, reflecting the magnitude of its healthcare operations.

VUMC is also a nationally prominent research institution. The [Vanderbilt University School of Medicine](#) consistently ranks among the top medical schools in the country for National Institutes of Health funding, with annual federal support approaching \$700 million. Across Vanderbilt University and VUMC, external research awards regularly exceed \$1 billion per year, spanning basic, translational, and clinical investigation. This sustained level of research activity places Vanderbilt among the most research-intensive academic medical enterprises in the United States.

The Medical Center's research infrastructure includes hundreds of laboratories, core facilities, and shared resources supporting a broad range of scientific disciplines. Spread across 12 divisions and 20 research centers, VUMC's investigators conduct human subjects research, clinical trials, biobanking, and a broad portfolio of federally funded programs, each subject to increasingly sophisticated regulatory requirements. Sustaining this enterprise demands not only scientific excellence but rigorous, proactive stewardship of research integrity, security, and institutional risk.

Beyond its academic and clinical missions, VUMC and Vanderbilt University together represent one of the largest economic engines in the region, generating tens of billions of dollars in annual economic impact statewide and supporting well over 100,000 jobs. This scale underscores both the visibility and the public accountability of the institution and its research activities.

OFFICE OF COMPLIANCE AND CORPORATE INTEGRITY

Integrity is fundamental to the Vanderbilt Health Credo, and the Office of Compliance and Corporate Integrity (OCCI) sits at the center of VUMC's commitment to doing the right thing across its clinical and research enterprise. Led by the Vice President and Chief Compliance Officer, OCCI's mission is to promote practices that align with the Credo and Code of Conduct: ensuring that every member of the workforce understands their compliance obligations through appropriate oversight and training. OCCI provides enterprise-wide compliance infrastructure through rigorous governance, policy development, annual education, confidential reporting, routine monitoring and exclusion screenings, and consistent corrective action when compliance issues arise. Compliance officers are embedded directly within clinical and research operations to provide real-time guidance and decision support.

The Research Compliance Program

The Research Compliance Program is a sub-component of OCCI's broader Compliance Program, reflecting VUMC's commitment to the ethical conduct of research and designed to prevent and detect violations of law, regulation, or contract relating to healthcare research. The program is structured around the seven elements of an effective compliance program as outlined by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Office of Inspector General: governance, policies and procedures, training and education, compliance reporting, monitoring and auditing, disciplinary response, and corrective action.

In practice, the Research Compliance Program spans a broad portfolio of research operations: human research protections, research contracts and grants management, research data management, research finance, research privacy, and research security. Annual regulatory risk assessments inform the development of a compliance work plan, approved by the Compliance and Corporate Integrity Committee (CCI), that drives institutional research compliance priorities. OCCI also conducts quarterly audits of clinical trials billing and reviews semi-annual reports on human research protections, as well as other key elements of the research enterprise.

Research Compliance Committee

The Research Compliance Committee (RCC) is authorized and chartered by CCI and serves as the primary governance body for research compliance across VUMC. Co-chaired by the Chief Scientific and Strategy Officer and the Senior Vice President for Research Administration, the RCC promotes and facilitates a culture of compliance through collaboration and communication between and among the leaders, offices, and individuals that support and direct VUMC's research enterprise. The Committee engages in processes to identify and address existing and emerging research compliance risks through an annual work plan, bringing together stakeholders from sponsored programs, finance, research privacy, research security, and human research protections.

THE ROLE

Reporting to the Vice President and Chief Compliance Officer, Bob Mangeot, the Director of Research Compliance is the inaugural leader of VUMC's research compliance program within OCCI — serving as the institution's most senior expert on the regulatory, ethical, and operational dimensions of research compliance, and includes continued growth opportunities within the organization. In practice, the Director will work in close and sustained partnership with the EVP of Research and Chief Scientific Officer Jennifer Pietenpol, positioning this leader at the direct intersection of VUMC's compliance and research enterprise.

The Director will plan, organize, and lead OCCI's research compliance program, including the development and implementation of research compliance work plans, risk mitigation and monitoring strategies, policy

development, specialized research education, and the consistent operationalization of compliance expectations across the research enterprise. The Director will coordinate the activities of the VUMC Research Compliance Committee in close collaboration with its co-chairs and key stakeholders and will develop appropriate key performance indicators to drive continuous program improvement. The Director will also lead investigations into regulatory compliance concerns involving human research and will observe and advise the work of VUMC's Institutional Review Boards and Biosafety Committee.

Serving as OCCI's key coordinating lead with VUMC's research enterprise leadership, human research protections and institutional review boards, privacy, the Office of Sponsored Projects, and export controls, the Director will interpret and advise on rules and regulations across OCCI's scope. The Director will assist CCI, OCCI, and key VUMC leaders in supporting compliance needs related to research security, research integrity, and Federal-Wide Assurance requirements, and will collaborate on OCCI's research compliance monitoring probes from prioritization through execution. Working closely with the Vice President and Chief Compliance Officer, the Director will also assist in developing and executing OCCI's work plan, governance reporting, and program management.

KEY OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

To ensure the VUMC's sustainable growth, innovation, and increased research stature, the Director will address the following key opportunities and specific challenges:

Establish and strengthen an adherent and innovative culture of research compliance at VUMC

VUMC's research enterprise is distinguished not only by its scale but by a genuinely collaborative institutional culture. The incoming Director will have the opportunity to build on that foundation, engaging faculty, investigators, and senior leadership proactively to develop the trust and institutional credibility that makes compliance function as a resource rather than an oversight burden. The goal is a research compliance program that both safeguards integrity and actively supports scientific innovation. By balancing regulatory rigor with the cultivation of trust and collaboration, the Director will position compliance as a genuine institutional partner.

Implement efficient and sustainable research infrastructure and streamline operations

The incoming Director will have the opportunity to build the research compliance function into a strategic, proactive program backed by full institutional commitment. Central to this work will be elevating the Research Compliance Committee into a more effective governance body that incorporates investigator-level input, addresses the full spectrum of research compliance risk, and bridges across sponsored programs, finance, research privacy, research security, and human research protections. This role will require systems thinking, operational discipline, and the ability to execute across institutional boundaries.

The Director will also develop and execute multifaceted projects to address key prioritized risks, building the compliance infrastructure VUMC's research enterprise requires to operate at its ambition.

Navigate a rapidly evolving regulatory landscape

The regulatory environment governing research compliance has shifted substantially in recent years and at VUMC, the incoming Director will have to navigate recent challenges. The Director will help build VUMC AI policy and oversee the creation of functional guardrails around AI-enabled tools in research contexts. Beyond AI, executive orders have significantly reshaped the landscape around research data flows and international partnerships; export controls and foreign influence concerns are growing in prominence; and the full span of federal research compliance requirements continues to evolve. The Director who can interpret, communicate, and build institutional strategy around the current regulatory landscape will find success and a leadership team ready to move.

Serve as the Integrating Bridge Across the Research Enterprise

VUMC's research enterprise is large, distributed, and organizationally complex — and the incoming Director will need to function as its compliance integrator. Building and sustaining relationships across this broad stakeholder map, the Director will promote integrity and compliance through frequent interaction with key VUMC leaders and through targeted communications, education, and training focused on prioritized topics.

VUMC and Vanderbilt University also operate as two separate organizations sharing one School of Medicine: basic science investigators route through VU-sponsored programs while clinical investigators route through VUMC, creating dual-compliance challenges that investigators often cannot navigate on their own. The successful candidate will bridge these silos, communicate compliance obligations accessibly and proactively, and serve as the thought partner that research leadership turns to freely.

QUALIFICATIONS AND CHARACTERISTICS

Ideally, the successful candidate will bring most, if not all, of the following professional qualifications, characteristics, skills, experience, and personal qualities:

- A minimum of 5 years of directly related work experience in research compliance, healthcare compliance, or a closely related field, with demonstrated leadership experience in a large, complex academic medical center or research-intensive institution.
- A bachelor's degree in a work-related discipline from an accredited institution is required; a J.D. or advanced degree in a relevant field is preferred. Candidates with a J.D. must bring substantial, hands-on compliance experience — beyond purely advisory or legal practice roles.

- Deep, hands-on expertise in research compliance including human research protections, research integrity, or research security. Experience in clinical trial compliance and clinical trials billing is a plus.
- Working knowledge of HIPAA, research data privacy, and data protection requirements, including familiarity with the evolving landscape of international data sharing restrictions and export controls.
- Demonstrated ability to interpret and apply ambiguous regulatory requirements, advise senior leadership, and direct others in regulatory interpretation.
- Proven record of leading compliance programs, investigations, and projects.
- Exceptional interpersonal skills and demonstrated credibility with senior research and compliance leadership, faculty, and regulatory officials.
- A track record of fostering collaborative relationships between compliance and research operations and serving as a trusted institutional advisor.
- Excellent communication skills, including the ability to translate complex regulatory requirements into accessible, actionable guidance for investigators and institutional leaders.
- Strong project management and facilitation skills; demonstrated ability to convene diverse stakeholders, drive processes to resolution, and operate effectively.
- Experience building or restructuring compliance programs, governance structures, or institutional infrastructure is strongly preferred; comfort operating without a playbook and in inaugural or transformational roles.
- Certification in Healthcare Compliance (CHC), Certified IRB Professional (CIP), or equivalent professional certification is preferred.
- Leadership style characterized by integrity, sound judgment, and collaboration, with a service-oriented, problem-solving approach.

APPLICATIONS, INQUIRIES, AND NOMINATIONS

Screening of complete applications will begin immediately and continue until the completion of the search process. Inquiries, nominations, referrals, and CVs with cover letters should be sent via the Isaacson, Miller website. Electronic submission of materials is strongly encouraged.

<https://www.imsearch.com/open-searches/vanderbilt-university-medical-center/director-research-compliance>

Randi Herrick, Partner
Rebecca Kennedy, Managing Partner
Ibaad Nazeer, Senior Associate
Cortnee Bollard, Managing Search Coordinator

Vanderbilt University Medical Center recognizes that diversity is essential for excellence and innovation. They are committed to an inclusive environment where everyone has the chance to thrive and to the principles of equal opportunity and affirmative action.

This document has been prepared based on the information provided by Vanderbilt University Medical Center. The material presented in this leadership profile should be relied on for informational purposes only. While every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of this information, the original source documents and information provided by VUMC would supersede any conflicting information in this document.