Overview
All graduate students have the right to conduct their research in a safe, harassment free and inclusive environment, regardless of race, gender identity & expression, sexual orientation, age, religion and/or appearance. This document seeks to inform graduate students in the SEOE on available resources that can help to protect their safety and the safety of others. This document also outlines a standard code of conduct for interpersonal interactions to follow and hold others accountable to.

Student safety resources
Most available resources for individuals concerned with their own or another’s safety are listed on the UofSC website at: https://sc.edu/safety/index.php
- This page addresses issues of: Alcohol & Substance Abuse, Bias & Discrimination, Campus Safety, Hazing, Sexual Assault and Interpersonal Violence, Suicide Prevention and Mental health.
- Specifically on the subject of protection against bias, the school’s official statement reads: A bias incident is a non-criminal act that is motivated in whole, or in part, by a victim’s actual or perceived sex, race, ethnicity, religion, gender, gender identity or disability. This type of incident may be directed toward an individual or group and should be reported. You can remain anonymous.

Code of conduct
The following code of conduct provides a standard that we, as SEOE graduate students, agree to use to guide communications and interactions within the department.
- Communication and interactions should be considerate of people from different cultural backgrounds and without insults or harassment.
  - Harassment includes offensive, demeaning, threatening, and exclusionary comments or treatment. These commonly manifest in relation to gender, sexual orientation, disability, physical appearance, and race as actions such as intimidation, exclusion, stalking, verbal abuse, and inappropriate physical contact.
  - Do not assume that others, despite being in similar professional roles, have the same shared experiences.
- Communications and interactions should be appropriate for the social setting. Namely, in the context of professional interactions do not demean or undermine others qualifications and authority. For example, actively avoid letting social familiarity with graduate student peers undermine their authority over students or their professional relationships.
- Be mindful of varied personalities, especially in the context of talking over others in discussions and collaborations.
- Be active in stopping behavior that violates this code of conduct and informing on expected standards of behavior.

Information for safety in the context of field research
As Earth scientists, there is unique inherent risk in our field associated with travel and field work. As graduate students we must be aware of potential risks both to protect ourselves but also to be conscious that we must help support each other as well. Below are a set of guidelines for researchers on assessing and minimizing risk in relation to issues of identity when traveling. These guidelines come from the work of Demery and Pipkin (2020).

1. Talk with colleagues and supervisors about the risks, preparations to minimize risk, and reporting mechanisms. Be aware that the conversation will likely be difficult and will require mental and emotional readiness by both parties. If a supervisor is dismissive of this conversation, individuals should be informed that they can and should reach out to additional mentors, institutional or industry advocates (e.g., ombudsman, Equal Employment Opportunity officer, Diversity and Inclusion administrators, Student Disability Services, or other trusted professionals to have this conversation.

2. The scale of risk can be higher at international field sites (e.g., identities may be criminalized). At minimum, be aware of and abide by any international laws and customs in addition to local foreign laws, current political situations, actual degree of law enforcement, and mandate a conversation between researcher and supervisor to establish an emergency contingency plan.

3. Contact others (especially those who share an at-risk identity) that have previously used a field site at a location where there is a history of risk. It is recommended that researchers document all known cases of risk at that location.

4. Take advantage of training opportunities to increase field safety and promote awareness (e.g., self-defense courses, first aid, safety aids, cultural history course about the location of the field site).

5. Know who manages the field site(s) and inform the field managers when/where you will be at those locations.

6. Introduce yourself to the neighbors surrounding the field property, or leave a short note informing neighbors about research being conducted at nearby locations and who will be conducting the research. It is advisable to also include contact information, preferably information that clearly demonstrates affiliation with the research institution to provide additional credibility.

7. Engage in fieldwork with another person, when possible. When this is not possible, have a point of contact (preferably the supervisor) who is aware of your whereabouts and expected schedule on a given day. A written communication plan that gives notice of field plans is another way to maintain communication with a point of contact.

8. Always carry credentials in case someone challenges why you are at the field site. These include photo ID (driver’s license, passports, institution ID), and relevant permits. Any additional form of identification that clearly demonstrates affiliation with the research institution can also be helpful (i.e., University apparel, institution bumper stickers/car magnets, etc.).

9. If at any time you feel unsafe, you should contact your supervisor to discuss ways to modify the project. While supervisors work closely with researchers, they often do so

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outside of the field site, and therefore may not know of the risks and dangers therein encountered. It is paramount that at-risk individuals advocate for themselves.

Faculty

We also want to address the graduate student - faculty relationship. We, as graduate students, expect the faculty to adhere to the same code of conduct in their interactions with graduate students. We also believe that Faculty have a responsibility to create an inclusive and anti-discriminatory laboratory setting for all researchers (graduate, undergraduate, post-doc, etc.) and are encouraged to enact policies such as including anti-racist journal articles in reading groups and developing lab and field safety plans which address safety needs of high-risk researchers. We have a responsibility to continue to encourage the departmental decision-makers to formalize these expectations and hold faculty accountable.