Safety Plan

*Many of the suggestions and points made in this document are drawn from Demery and Pipkin (2021). We are grateful to them for this useful resource, which can be found at: https://www.preprints.org/manuscript/202008.0021/v1*

The risks:
Conflict fueled by prejudice can present short and long term risks to a researcher’s physical and mental health. It is important to acknowledge the lack of diversity in the earth sciences and that a traumatic or uncomfortable experience can permanently affect the mental or physical health, productivity, professional development, and career advancement of at-risk researchers. ‘At-risk’ researchers are those that may feel unsafe or ‘othered’ in places where they are working or conducting field work due to prejudice. It’s important to remember that who is considered at-risk will vary based on place and context. Any person may identify as at-risk depending on the location or context of field work.

Individual strategies to mitigate risk in the field:

- Open discussion with colleagues and supervisors.
- Reach out to others who are working or have worked in the area.
- Fill out racial risk assessment and pre-job discussion checklist (Appendices I, II)
- Work in groups or pairs whenever possible
- Be aware of areas with heightened risk (Eg. Areas where certain identities are criminalised, etc.)
- Get the necessary technical and social training for handling situations in the field
  - The Queen’s University Human Right and Equity Office offers a variety of non-technical training courses for students. Topics covered include Sexual Violence Prevention and Response, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI), Sexual and Gender Diversity, Human Right, and Anti-Racism: [https://www.queensu.ca/hreo/education](https://www.queensu.ca/hreo/education)
- Check in with field site managers
- Introduce yourself and respect locals surrounding the field site
- Carry credentials and wear appropriate scientific gear when necessary (ex. Hi-vis, safety vest, hard hat)
- If there are any problems follow the reporting method developed in session 2 (Appendix III)
● Report incidents to appropriate authorities

**Individual strategies for work in labs, offices, and classrooms:**

- Open discussion with colleagues and supervisors
- Get necessary technical and social training training when possible
  - The Queen’s University Human Right and Equity Office offers a variety of non-technical training courses for students. Topics covered include Sexual Violence Prevention and Response, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI), Sexual and Gender Diversity, Human Right, and Anti-Racism: [https://www.queensu.ca/hreo/education](https://www.queensu.ca/hreo/education)
- Avoid working alone when possible and check-in regularly if you are alone
  - Queen’s University offers the SeQure mobile app which provides quick access to Campus Security and Emergency Services. The app has a “WorkAlone” feature which allows students to virtually check-in and will alert Campus Security if there is no response: [https://www.queensu.ca/security/services/secure-app](https://www.queensu.ca/security/services/secure-app)
- Report incidents to appropriate authorities

**What can supervisors do:**

- Ensure communication is kept open. Listen to students and respect their experiences
- Create a safe space for students to discuss issues of discrimination
- Communicate the risks (technical and social) and ways to mitigate risks to students before work starts
  - Create a field risk management plan, and ensure that students are given physical and digital copies before heading out into the field
  - Similar risk management plans for labs, offices and classrooms should be printed and made visible / accessible for students
- Encourage communication between students
- Alert students to training opportunities that may be available
  - The Queen’s University Human Right and Equity Office offers a variety of non-technical training courses for students. Topics covered include Sexual Violence Prevention and Response, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI), Sexual and Gender Diversity, Human Right, and Anti-Racism. [https://www.queensu.ca/hreo/education](https://www.queensu.ca/hreo/education)
- Ensure students are aware of who they can raise concerns to beyond the programme leader before, during, and after fieldwork has occurred
- Include daily “Safety Moments” before going out into the field
- Introduce yourself to locals surrounding the field site in advance of conducting fieldwork
  - Email, phone, written communication, or in-person discussion with personal and research institution information included
- Review and agree upon fieldwork and safety plan with researchers before any fieldwork begins

**What can the department do:**

- Update the Health and Safety manual to include sections addressing interpersonal risks.
- Provide training addressing Psychosocial Hazards, Mental Health, Workplace Violence, Discrimination, and Harassment.
  - [https://www.queensu.ca/hreo/education](https://www.queensu.ca/hreo/education)
- Facilitate communication between individuals. Eg. Help connect students with others who may have worked in a particular field area, etc.
- Provide a list of safe contacts in the department for students or researchers who have concerns that they don’t feel comfortable discussing with their supervisor or instructor.
- Provide appropriate, visible forms of identification (e.g. safety vests, car magnets identifying Queen’s Geology, Queen’s Geo stickers for hard hats, etc.)
- Incorporate the risk of prejudice-driven conflict into departmental OCASP forms (See Appendix A1)

**Code of Conduct:**

We want the department to be a safe place for everyone. Our department does not tolerate harassment by or of members. In addition to abiding by the Queen’s University Student Code of Conduct, the following behavior is expected:

- Do not engage in harassment or discrimination. Be kind to others, and communicate professionally.
- Report incidents of discrimination or harassment.
- Do not make jokes that are sexist, racist, or exclusionary.
- Do not make verbal comments related to gender, sexual orientation, disability, physical appearance, body size, race, religion.
- Do not display images that could be considered offensive.
- Be receptive to concerns or experiences of other members in our department and understand that their experiences may differ from your own.
- Educate yourself on local customs and laws in your fieldwork location

**Appendices:**

Queen’s University requires all participants in university-related off campus activities to fill out an Off-Campus Activities Safety Plan (OCASP). This includes a list of hazards, related risks, and plans to mitigate risks. We recommend the following be added to all OCASP forms in our department:

- **Hazard:** prejudice-driven conflict
- **Risk:** Potential for physical harm and/or damage to mental health
- **Plan:** Hold an open discussion about dangers to at-risk identities in the field during planning stages, provide all researchers with clear identification (e.g. vests, hard hats, Queen’s stickers or insignia), avoid working alone in the field.

In addition, we recommend that the following risk assessment is filled out (Appendix I), the pre-discussion checklist is used to guide discussions (Appendix II), and the reporting protocol is reviewed (Appendix III).
### I) Risk Assessment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Person completing assessment:</th>
<th>Persons present (Printed):</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>-Name:</td>
<td>-</td>
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<td>-Phone Number:</td>
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<tr>
<td>Supervisor:</td>
<td>-</td>
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<tr>
<td>-Name:</td>
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<td>-Phone Number:</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activities that will be completed:</th>
<th>Spaces they will be completed in:</th>
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<tbody>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Risks that may be present:</th>
<th>Mitigation methods:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Eg. (Verbal harassment, exclusion, discrimination, violence, crime…)</td>
<td>Eg. (Working in groups, safety plan…)</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Are the risks acceptable:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>☐ Yes</td>
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<tr>
<td>☐ No</td>
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If yes, proceed with work while following all mitigation methods listed above.

If no, stop work and reassess. If the risks cannot be adequately mitigated do not perform work and reach out to your supervisor, department manager or other individuals that can help adjust the activity in order to ensure worker safety.

### Signatures:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Human Rights Office:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>-Email: <a href="mailto:hrights@queensu.ca">hrights@queensu.ca</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-Phone: 613-533-6886</td>
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<tr>
<th>Queen’s Student Wellness Services:</th>
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<tr>
<td>-Website: <a href="https://www.queensu.ca/studentwellness/">https://www.queensu.ca/studentwellness/</a></td>
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II) Pre-work discussion checklist:

- Discuss with supervisors/colleagues/students the potential risks for prejudice-driven conflicts
- Familiarize yourself with local laws and customs in your field locality
- Discuss whether at least two people will be in the field together or make plans to have a point of contact who will check in regularly
- Discuss the OCASP (field safety) form and specifically any scenarios that has the potential to make at-risk identities feel threatened, frightened, or uncomfortable
- Discuss strategies to mitigate prejudice and promote safety in the field

III) Incident reporting protocol:
There are a number of avenues through which students can report an incident related to discrimination, harassment, and other forms of psychosocial risk and prejudice-driven conflict. These avenues will help determine whether you are comfortable filing a formal complaint and will explain details of those procedures. For students, formal complaints are managed through the University Secretary (for harassment and discrimination) or the Non Academic Misconduct Intake Office (for specifically sexual violence and harassment). Filling a formal complaint entails the initiation of a detailed investigation and then the exploration of appropriate resolutions. The following is a list of resources for those who would like to confidentially discuss an incident:

1. **Office of the University Ombudsperson**
   a. For those seeking advice that do not yet know whether they wish to file a formal complaint or the avenue is best to pursue, the Ombudsperson is available to confidentially consult. They assist in connecting students to appropriate forms of support.

2. **Human Rights Office**
   a. Students can connect with the Human Rights Office to consult with an advisor to navigate concerns including instances of discrimination, harassment, failure to accommodate, etc. They will help determine whether you are comfortable with filing a formal complaint and discuss other forms of support.

3. **Sexual Violence Prevention and Response**
   a. If the incident is related to sexual/relationship violence/harassment, students may consult the Sexual Violence Prevention and Response Coordinator to confidentially discuss forms of support and provide advice regarding filing a
formal complaint. If a formal complaint is desired, Barb will help the complainant navigate the process.

4. Four Directions Aboriginal Student Centre
   a. For cultural related support and counselling for indigenous students, the Four Directions Indigenous Student Center provides individual advisors.