LSU Department of Geology & Geophysics Lab & Field Safety Plan

1. Code of Conduct

1.1 General CoC for Lab and Field Settings
The code of conduct for field and lab settings in the LSU Geology & Geophysics department is in addition to, and does not supercede, the LSU Student Code of Conduct.

We do not discriminate based on any protected status and we do not tolerate those who do. This includes discrimination on the basis of race, color, marital status, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, religion, sex, national/ethnic origin, age, disability, genetic information, or veterans status. The field is a unique environment and poses specific mental, physical, cultural, and interpersonal challenges in terms of maintaining a culture and climate of inclusivity. In addition to the expectations outlined within the LSU Student Code of Conduct, we expect students, staff, faculty, and other participants within field experiences to adopt the following principles and practices:

- As an overarching principle, if an action, comment, or other form of interaction would not be appropriate in a standard classroom or work setting, it is no more appropriate in a field or laboratory setting. This does not change during more informal periods within such experiences, e.g., around the campfire or during meals.
- Maintain a heightened mindfulness of your interactions with peers and colleagues when spending extended amounts of time together in both formal and informal settings.
- Be aware and sensitive to differential levels of danger or “uncomfortableness” for different members of our community when away from the campus setting.
- Be adaptive to and respectful of all ability and experience levels, especially with regards to working in the outdoors in a lab setting that may be unfamiliar to some community members.
- Adopt a group mentality where everyone brings a different skillset to the table, providing cooperative support where all are included is beneficial to the group as a whole.
- An important part of a field or lab experience is providing an opportunity for students to develop resilience and resourcefulness, but critically these field or lab experiences should not be a barrier to entry or participation that is enforced by either the group leaders or peers.

1.2 Lab Group CoCs
We suggest that all research groups develop a code of conduct and discuss this code of conduct with their group members regularly. This code of conduct should at minimum provide a discussion of the type of environment you expect to be fostered within your group and guidelines for interactions between group members. We strongly suggest that you revisit this code of conduct often and update as necessary. We provide an example of such a group code of conduct from A.M. Forte’s research group.

2. Reporting Process for Violations
Regardless of location, LSU sponsored or affiliated field travel is subject to the same policies for reporting violations of any LSU policy. However, we provide some specific suggestions with respect to field trips where there are specific concerns that the normal reporting policies and procedures may be logistically challenging to access in a timely fashion. These include:

- At a basic level, all faculty, instructors, and TAs should consider it their primary mission to be part of the solution, not the problem.
- Anytime you are taking a group to the field, it is critical to ensure that there are at least two mandatory reporters on the trip. Any LSU employee is a mandatory reporter (e.g., faculty, instructor, TA, field cook, etc). This is to ensure that if the violation has been committed by one of the mandatory reporters, there is an alternative person that the impacted party can approach.
- It is also advisable to have a designated point of contact on campus who is not on the trip (e.g., Department Chair) who can relay reports if necessary if communication is limited.
- Their role as a mandatory reporter (or equivalent for complaints or violations that do not fall under the strict role of a mandatory reporter in the Title IX sense) should be explained to TAs prior to trips. It should be made clear that this does not require the TA to report to the group leader, though this is advisable if the complaint is not about the group leader.
- Finally, before a trip, it is essential to communicate to all group participants that complaints can be brought to multiple people.

3. Required/Suggested Training (Based on Available Courses offered by LSU ODE&I)
We recommend that the department begin offering regular training for both faculty and students. For both, we envision training offered by the LSU Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion and suggest a “curriculum” based on available courses and tailored for individuals based on their position.

3.1 Training for Group Leaders/PIs
We recommend that the department offer a recurring 1-2 days of training. This would not be required training, but highly recommended that faculty attend the complete training at least 1 and ideally revisit the training on occasion. The suggested components are:

a) Diversity 101 (1 hr - 0.5 day)
b) Cultural Competency (1 hr - 0.5 day)
c) Understanding the Dynamics of Power, Privilege and Oppression (0.5 - 1 day)
d) Barriers to Success for Students of Color (1 hr)
e) Mental Health & Wellness (1.5 hrs)
f) Safe Space Training (0.5 - 2 hrs)

3.2 Training for Group Members
At the graduate level we suggest that 0.5 days of training be added to the graduate student orientation. Alternatively, if we move toward offering a required “on boarding” course, this training could be folded into that course. The suggested trainings to include are:

a) Diversity 101 (1 hr - 0.5 day)
b) Cultural Competency (1 hr - 0.5 day)
c) Self Care & Wellness (1-2 hours)

At the undergraduate level, we plan for components of this to be included in the new required sophomore level course (GEOL 2900) which introduces students to research opportunities in the geosciences and the Department of Geology & Geophysics.

4. Field Work Specific Risk Assessment
We provide suggestions for risk assessments associated with marginalized groups participating in field activities. We provide some general suggestions applicable to most, if not all, contexts, but then provide additional more tailored suggestions for three specific contexts, field based research, field trips, and field camp.

4.1 General Suggestions
- PIs or group leaders should familiarize themselves, to the best of their ability, with the specific risks of planned field destinations with respect to hazards for particular groups. Both institutional (i.e., are there laws that impact the safety of particular groups?) and cultural (i.e., are particular groups traditionally discriminated against even in the absence of “legal discrimination”?) sources of risk should be considered.
- To understand this risk, PIs or group leaders can use their own experience with these destinations, but are also encouraged to seek out information from others who have traveled to these destinations (especially if they know of members of potentially at risk groups who have traveled to these destinations) or international groups which document restrictive laws (e.g., for safety associated with sexual orientation or gender identity: https://ilga.org/maps-sexual-orientation-laws).
- All of the information and materials described above should be included in a complete risk assessment document which should also include other relevant information (e.g., locations and driving instructions to the nearest hospital from the field site, particular health hazards in this field site, etc).
- The complete risk assessment should be updated prior to every trip to the field site in question.
- The assembled risk assessment document should be discussed with all group participants prior to the trip. All aspects of the risk document should be discussed, especially those pertinent to marginalized groups even if you do not think members of those groups are present in the travelers (you may not have all the information).
- Whenever possible, field work should be done in groups of at least 2.
- Participants should be encouraged to keep the group leader apprised of situations that develop or if they feel uncomfortable.
- Finally, we recommend anyone leading or TAing a field trip or participating in field research should receive at minimum Wilderness First Aid training (and maintain their certification).

4.2 Field Research Trips
To the extent possible, prior to the trip the PI or group leader should contact relevant parties who manage the relevant field site(s) to inform them of who is within the group. When possible, introduce all group members to relevant local contacts via e-mail prior to the trip. This is especially important if the PI or group leader is not joining on this trip.

PIs or group leaders, in coordination with administration members (e.g., Department Chair, etc), should provide official documentation, i.e. a letter of support with contact information, to all group members.

Preparing all group members for specific risks and highlighting alternative sources of information and preparation if particular group members feel they need these resources (e.g., Office of Risk Management).

Emphasize importance of carrying personal documentation, both those identifying your purpose (i.e., the support letter) but also more general things like license, passport, etc, in pre-trip meetings.

Ideally there should always be an established method of communication with the group leader if possible. At minimum, all group members should have the contact information of the group leader and at least one person in authority (e.g., another faculty member, department chair, etc) who is not on trip, but is aware of the trip and its participants.

4.3 Class Field Trips

During the assembly and update of the risk assessment documents associated with field work, consider whether the risk level for all group members is acceptable given the stated goals of the trip. Specifically, if the risk assessment highlights that this field location is particularly dangerous for specific groups, is this the only location where these same goals can be met? Are there alternative locations where most goals can be met but are safer for all groups?

4.4 Summer Field Camp

In addition to the practical considerations above, longstanding annual field experiences can have “identities created by past participants, faculty, and paradigms underlying the discipline itself” (Morales et al, 2020). While some aspects of these identities are widely beneficial, other aspects may serve to marginalize or isolate students who do not “fit the model” of those past predominant identities. For LSU's summer field camp, we recommend regular intentional assessment of which aspects of legacy and cultural artifacts we want to actively pass down to successive years of student participants, and which can be archived in their historical context.