
Safety Plan for SIO/UCSD

This deliverable focuses on developing a safety plan specific to our pod that includes (A) a code of conduct and (B) a process for reporting violations (as covered in Session 2), whether you work in an office, laboratory or in remote field settings.

Code of Conduct:

A Code of Conduct can help clarify inappropriate behaviors, consequences and reporting routes when it comes to building an antiracist workspace.

We propose that SIO creates a standard “template” code of conduct for each lab/research group to follow and adapt. The code of conduct should leave as little “unspoken knowledge” as possible by clearly codifying all norms and expectations required of lab/group/research members. The code of conduct should address issues, and offer solutions which span the full spectrum of offensives (including microaggressions and general lab culture) rather than focusing on only the most egregious acts. The code of conduct should include contact information for “responsible” (in terms of supervisory or power-having) people. Below we summarize the action items and suggestions presented in this document.

- Normalize talking about expectations, barriers, struggles, and successes.
- Remove as much uncertainty in research and the research process as possible by encouraging engagement in mentoring programs and outreach programs. Ensure that expectations are set for engagement in these programs.
- Encourage multiple methods of/approaches to conflict resolution including restorative (rather than punitive) justice methods in addition to traditional mediation practices.
- Require all faculty/staff who mentor others attend a weekly, quarter-long seminar series on mentoring practices. Faculty/Staff must take part in such a seminar series every two years.
- Require all students, staff, and faculty take part in comprehensive, practical Bystander Intervention Training at SIO every 2 years.
- Implement a standard field safety guide that includes reporting points of conduct (in-field and at the office), reporting procedures, and post-trip reporting for all participants. We propose a mandatory post-field work survey (reported to a central office), after every outing, to encourage a culture of transparency and documentation. This document encourages more accounting and consideration of racial risk assessments for SIO related field activities. An existing document for reference exists here: [Field safety template](#).
- This group encourages SIO to adopt (with proper acknowledgment) policies found in other codes, such as from the [UT Institute for Geophysics \(UTIG\)](#) and the [Basin Research Group](#).

¹ R. Kelley, 10 Samples of an Effective EEO Statement, blog.ongig.com/diversity-and-inclusion/eeo-statement-samples, (2017).

² <https://careers.whoj.edu/opportunities/diversity-inclusion/>

³ K. Cobb, #GRExit Resources, <https://doi.org/10.6084/m9.figshare.13215461.v1>, (2020).

⁴ J. Posselt, Inside Graduate Admissions: Merit, Diversity, and Faculty Gatekeeping, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctvjghw8s>, (2016).

⁵ <https://www.brandeis.edu/diversity/dei-recruitment-hiring/rubric-for-evaluating-diversity-statements.html>

⁶ K. Griffin, J. Bennett, T. York, Leveraging Promising Practices, Washington DC: Aspire Alliance, (2020).

⁷ https://serc.carleton.edu/advancegeo/resources/field_work.html



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Here the SIO pod Code of Conduct will focus on each of the following areas:

1) **Safety in the lab/office:** *While safety practices for activities such as handling hazardous chemicals are widely acknowledged and include **required** training, it is also important to consider hazards and risks involving how people are treated in these spaces, including specific barriers, risks and dangers faced by BIPOC and other underrepresented scientists.*

- **What are your experiences?**

Currently, safety in the office/lab is very much considered from a “harm to person” standpoint. However, there is very little consideration to mental and interpersonal health, especially for historically underserved communities. There is no official SIO code of conduct, however, examples of a code of conduct do exist at the university (i.e. the SURF REU program). Currently individual labs have made codes of conduct, but they have been mixed in their content (e.g., focusing on working hours vs. clearly described policies for responding to harassment or racist acts).

- **What practices are already in place at SIO?**

Currently, SIO has a few training programs and regulations in place for office and interpersonal safety. These include:

[Lab safety requirements](#)

[Injury & Illness Prevention](#)

[The URGE Session 2 Deliverable on complaints/reporting policies](#)

[Safety at Scripps](#)

[Search Committee Code of Conduct](#)

[SIO Codes of Conduct](#)

UC Learning courses:

[Mandatory Sexual Harassment Training](#)

[SIO Harassment Prevention](#)

- **What are some suggestions for improvement?**

This group encourages inclusivity and diversity training specifically similar to the examples demonstrated in the [BRG code of conduct](#). We propose that SIO creates a standard “template” code of conduct for each lab/research group to follow and adapt. We propose that this document should extend beyond the common material (i.e., physical safety/professional success) and addresses interpersonal relationship issues and proper handling of intermediary intervention

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as explored in the [UTIG code of conduct](#). The code of conduct should include contact information for “responsible” (in terms of supervisory or power-having) people in event of time-sensitive emergencies/incidents. This document should provide information/instruction on how to report issues within a lab group to an external party that could potentially intervene. Additionally, it should provide guidance for specific training which all members of the lab are required to fulfill.

- 2) **Safety in the field:** *Fieldwork can lead to liminality, which is a condition where conventional social structure is suspended and participants are separated from their regular social ties and way of life (Morales et al., 2020). It is important to prepare by identifying potential hazards and risks (including how people are treated), creating a plan for addressing, and reporting these, and defining consequences for misconduct.⁷*

- **What are your experiences?**

We are unaware of any specific, universal code of conduct training for SIO field work, and amongst our small POD we have noted specific examples of dangerous and malevolent behaviour that is difficult to report. There are very basic trainings on physical safety and sexual harassment required by SIO/UCSD. For example, folks from an Antarctic expedition reported inefficient/ineffective mechanisms for documenting and reporting conduct violations; external groups were defensive rather than supportive and did not address the known issues. UTIG is dealing with this challenge with external groups via training programs (I.E. bystander intervention) and have developed a Field Safety Guide as an Appendix to their [Code of Conduct](#) which includes reporting points of conduct (in-field and office environments), reporting procedures and post-trip reporting for all participants.

- **What practices are already in place at SIO?**

Currently, SIO has a few training programs and regulations in place. Hyperlinks to these resources are included below:

[SIO field research safety planning requirement](#)

[Safety at Scripps](#)

[Safety at sea](#)

[Annual Sexual Harassment Training](#)

Additionally, there are many good resources in the geosciences community that this group has identified. These include:

[In the field resources](#)

[Safe fieldwork strategies for at-risk individuals](#)



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- **What are some suggestions for improvement?**

We encourage Scripps to put into place the following practices to ensure health and safety which considers folx from particularly vulnerable groups. Additionally, it is our opinion that SIO should implement a field safety guide that includes reporting points of conduct (in-field and at the office), reporting procedures, and post-trip reporting for all participants. In this model, every field participant fills out this form which includes backup mechanisms for reporting if there is a problem with field safety officers. We propose following the UTIG example which has developed a policy for filling out a post-trip survey when handling the reimbursement process after each trip; we intend to explore with UCSD whether this form should be mandatory or not for reimbursements to be issued. This is meant to normalize the feedback process and is meant to reduce barriers to reporting entry. ***In this way an individual does not need to decide whether it is worth the time to report, rather everyone does a survey after every trip.*** The intent of this form is not necessarily only to report about team members but rate the performance of the whole team to try and track problems and develop a culture that does not allow for harassment/bad behavior.

- A racial risk assessment of field work sites
- A pre-departure checklist of discussions within the field team
- Groups ask to trade code of conducts with partners ahead of time to clear up misunderstandings before fieldwork begins
- Bystander intervention training with first follower practices (i.e., one person speaking up is way less effective than two or more)
- Systematic integration of Bystander Intervention practices, such as using a code word amongst team to trigger an action (e.g. bake in the *first follower* concept into the coded response)
- Develop clear procedures for documenting incidents in the field
- Additional required trainings for going into the field
- Clearly defined metrics and measures of success
- Multiple approaches to conflict resolution including restorative (rather than punitive) justice methods in addition to traditional mediation practices.

3) ***Mental health/burnout:*** *Factors such as low pay and quality-of-life issues, feelings of isolation, uncertainty in your research or career, burnout, etc. have been shown to negatively impact mental health. It is important to include mental health as a part of safety and conduct and provide means to access the right support networks (as addressed in the [BRG Code of Conduct](#)).*



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- **What are your experiences?**

Focus on mental health & burnout is increasing, but experience varies greatly based on the group leader and culture. There is often little time off available while doing fieldwork, but some free time helps with mental health. Due to the nature of fieldwork, there can be limited access to resources.
- **What practices are already in place at SIO?**
 - Counseling and Psychological Services ([CAPS](#)) provides counseling services to UCSD students.
 - Faculty and Staff Assistance Program ([FSAP](#)) serves faculty staff and other UCSD community members.
 - Graduate resources at UCSD [Advisor-Student expectations](#) has been useful for defining expectations with students
 - [Graduate student handbook](#) offers some practices
- **What are some suggestions for improvement?**
 - Talking about Advisor-Student expectations and Student Handbook at group meetings including things like: explicit statements of time off, guidelines on flexibility and accountability, support for leaves of absence
 - Encourage talking about career plans & making formal career plan
 - Having leaders give examples of lapses in mental health and what people did to get through.
 - Going around the room and asking people how they're doing where everyone is frank and honest about their emotions and feelings. People in STEM are often personally introverted and uncomfortable expressing feelings and emotions in a public setting. Seeing their peers and leaders do so can be helpful
 - Remove as much uncertainty in research as possible by doing things like outreach programs that address questions of 'is my research useful'.
 - Include background 'about me' at the start of your talks to normalize struggles through the field and show the unconventional pathways to get where they are.

4) Establishing group norms (work hours, methods of communication, etc.):
Having well-established guidelines for what is expected of you as a worker (e.g. work hours, holiday time and methods of communication) can foster collaboration and help facilitate a more fulfilling research experience (BRG Code of Conduct).

- **What are your experiences?**

SIO often operates in a 'do what you feel is right and beg for forgiveness if its wrong' approach to work. People and groups are left to establish their own



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norms, often with the uncertainty of knowing if the norms are 'ok'. Many groups are very individual, and lack collaboration or group work. Much is left unspoken, but in general the feeling is if you get things done it's fine. The lack of structure leaves people unsure of what or who to ask when first starting and hoping you find the 'magic' person in the organization that will help you. Lack of written norms leads to avoidable conflict.

- **What practices are already in place at SIO?**

Outside of the university conduct and practices for [students](#) / [employees](#) and [UCSD Performance Standards](#) there is little documentation of group or lab norms. The [Advisor-Doctoral Student Expectations](#) is a good start, but doesn't include harassment, discrimination, or mental health as explicitly as BRG code of conduct.

- **What are some suggestions for improvement?**

Labs and groups should use the [BRG code of conduct](#) as a template to write down all norms and expectations. This would remove a lot of the uncertainty that people feel when starting with a new group. It would also promote conversation around what is working for the people and what is not. It would make it easier for new / potential group members to know if they are a good fit with the group when applying. That being said, the document should be considered "living" with a timetable for updates (as with the 2-year cycle on the [UTIG Code of Conduct](#)) so that it can reflect and drive improvements to group culture. Leaders should lead by example and make sure the norms are being followed, such as vacation time being taken, work hours being followed, etc.

5) ***Mentoring/supervisors:** Students of Color tend to be left to rely on White mentors within academia (Martinez-Cola, 2020). It is important for mentors to understand their position, acknowledge their implicit biases and do the work to provide meaningful mentorship. Additionally, things like developing a dynamic research agenda can expand participation to a wider group (Chaudhary & Berehe, 2020).*

- **What are your experiences?**

It is observed that one's experience of being mentored/supervised at SIO is very much dependent on who the mentor/supervisor is and where they are in their career. The majority of those available to mentor/supervise are white men, which means that BIPOC, women, and gender non-conforming groups may never have a mentor who understand where they are coming from. The frequency of interaction between mentors varies from meeting weekly to yearly, a schedule which is set by the mentor/supervisor and unlikely to be able to be changed by the junior member.



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There is little-to-no training required of mentors/supervisors, although there are resources available (eg. UCSD Teaching and Learning Commons). One realm of mentoring that isn't given much attention is that of taking on interns (e.g. Research Experiences for Undergraduates). It has been experienced that some individuals take on students as hourly employees and do not offer mentorship, while others approach the opportunity more as an opportunity for the undergraduates to nurture their career.

- **What practices are already in place at SIO?**

There are several practices in place for establishing mentorship/supervising relationships at SIO, however there is a lack of accountability to ensure that these relationships are effective, truly supportive, and executed as intended/expected.

Existing resources and practices include:

- Minimum expectations for graduate students and their advisors: see [Advisor-Doctoral Student Expectation](#) and [Advisor-Masters Student Expectations](#). While the intention is that these expectations will be discussed yearly between the advisor and advisee, the responsibility tends to fall on the student to bring it up. There is no accountability for those who do not discuss the expectations nor for those who do not meet the expectations.
- [Student Mentor program](#) (note this webpage is out of date)
- As a Teaching Assistant, students are required to take part in a brief training through UCSD and have access to UCSD Teaching and Learning Commons resources.
- Note there is no training required for graduate students who wish to take on interns.
- SIO pairs all new hires with senior mentors, however the nature of this relationship is not well-defined and therefore doesn't achieve its full potential.
- [Scripps IMPROVES](#) (Inclusive Mentoring Program for Retention and Outreach through Value-driven Engagement and Support) program. It is unclear what this program entails or how to get involved.
- [Scripps HIRES](#) (Hiring through Inclusive Recruitment and Engagement Strategies) which provides support to staff search committees and provides guidance for targeted outreach. Again, it is not clear how to take



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part in this program. There does not appear to be any practices in place in terms of mentorship relations between staff and their supervisors at SIO.

- **What are some suggestions for improvement?**

General suggestions:

- All faculty/staff who mentor others must attend a weekly, quarter-long seminar series on mentoring practices. Faculty/Staff must take part in one of these seminar series every two years. This may require hiring someone new to teach these seminars, this hire will also be able to help lead the mentoring programs.
- Establish safe reporting mechanisms for inappropriate behaviour that protect the victim from retribution.
- Be proactive about addressing cases of inappropriate mentoring.
- Formalize and clarify mechanisms for conflict resolution at all levels, from bad-taste jokes and microaggressions to Title IX violations.
- Implement onboarding and offboarding surveys at the beginning and end of mentorship relationships as a standard practice.
- Ensure that information about mentoring practices is transparent and up to date.

For advisor-advisee relationships, we give the following suggestions for improvement:

- The Faculty Chair must remind advisors yearly to discuss the student-advisor expectations with their students, so that the onus is not on the student to bring it up. This will ensure that a conversation about what the student needs and wants out of the relationship is discussed.
- Acknowledge that the current mechanism for reviewing one's advisor is not anonymous and does not protect students from retribution. A new mechanism needs to be established.
- Advisors are to be tasked with helping their advisee to develop an [Individual Development Plan \(IDP\)](#)
- Establish a basic set of expectations for the mentoring relationship between established and new faculty as exists for advisors and students (e.g. frequency of meetings, content of meetings, etc.)



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Reporting Violations:

- Deliverable from [session 2](#) addresses the complaints and reporting policy for harassment and discrimination.
- What other forms of accountability can be implemented to ensure codes of conduct and the safety plan outlined here are followed at SIO?

As detailed in the Deliverable from session 2 there are many ways to report severe violations, but few formalised ways to address minor harassment, bullying, and discrimination which still need to be addressed. We recommend that an effort be made to address microaggressions and exclusionary behaviour such that there is a means of conflict resolution for conflicts of all scales. It is important to provide additional approaches to conflict resolution and not rely on single one-size fits all processes. For example, some conflicts could be resolved using a **restorative justice process** (rather than retributive justice), to ensure that the conflict is reconciled within the community, as well.

Establishing a formal Code of Conduct will enable community members to easily identify when behavior violates expectations and gives members a tool to use to address the behavior (e.g. "I experience your behavior to be in violation of this part of the Code of Conduct, let's talk about another way to do this...").

The hierarchical structure of SIO means that this calling in can be daunting and thus it is important that **comprehensive, practical Bystander Intervention Training be required of all individuals at SIO every 2 years**. Normalizing the exchange of feedback through bystander intervention will help to create a true shift in culture at SIO.

General Safety Resources for SIO and UCSD

- [Safety at SIO: covid safety, emergency preparedness, field safety, and lab safety](#)
- [SIO Safety Roles and Contacts](#)
- [Mandatory Sexual Harassment Training](#)
 - [SIO Harassment Prevention](#)