



Code of Conduct and Fieldwork Checklist for Diversity & Inclusivity at MLML

DRAFT 4/23/2021

At Moss Landing Marine Labs we are a small community of students, faculty, researchers, and staff working together to advance science and education. Our work takes place in many settings: the classroom, lab, library, and the field. The following guidelines and code of conduct have been developed to foster an inclusive and safe learning and research environments for all at MLML. These guidelines are the foundation upon which all our other safety guidelines are set. They provide a basis for other safety guidelines for specific situations, such as boating, diving, chemical lab safety, and others, to be built upon. Conversely, these guidelines will be built upon adherence to MLML, SJSU, and CSU policies regarding discrimination and harassment and integrated into the required training for each student, faculty, and staff member.

Background

Diversity and inclusivity are important components of a safe environment. In addition, we acknowledge and celebrate that diverse research teams and collaborations have been shown to conduct better science and produce better quality publications. (Read more in this article [Why is Diversity Important?](#) by the NSF-funded [ADVANCE program](#) (whose mission is to transform the geosciences workplace climate).

“Access to fieldwork and field trips has traditionally been designed for able-bodied, cisgender individuals within the geosciences who have, in Western communities, historically been white men. And globally, able-bodied cisgender men are still the primary group for whom field access is planned.” (<https://eos.org/opinions/ten-steps-to-protect-bipoc-scholars-in-the-field>)

Fieldwork poses different challenges than onsite or lab work:

- new, unfamiliar, unknown or nonexistent rules of conduct and reporting mechanisms;
- reduced independence for access to transportation, food, medical resources, etc.;
- distance from personal support networks at home;
- unfamiliar cultural norms or language;
- long days with physically strenuous work and exhaustion;
- exposure to harsh environmental conditions and potential greater risk of environmental hazards, or unfamiliar risks compared to the home base location.

(https://serc.carleton.edu/advancegeo/resources/field_work.html)

DRAFT 4/23/2021

The NSF-funded [ADVANCE program](#) (whose mission is to transform the geosciences workplace climate) notes:

“Incidences of sexual harassment more often were associated with environments where rules and behavioral standards were not clearly codified and consequences for misconduct were not enforced. Conditions that allowed for sexual harassment to occur also contributed to other hostile environments, with gendered divisions of labor, outright sexism, abuses of power, and dismissal of individuals' contributions to the work. These behaviors have long-term negative career consequences, such as reduced access to professional opportunities, career stalling, relocation to a different institution or field site, or leaving career paths altogether.” (Nelson et al. 2017 as described in [In the Field](#) by ADVANCEGeo)

These testaments, statements, and studies inform MLML's code of conduct and our commitment to it.

Code of Conduct for Diversity & Inclusivity

These guidelines and codes of conduct apply to MLML classes, labs, library, fieldwork, and other onsite and offsite spaces and events. These form the basis of how we interact and communicate at MLML in order to create an environment of inclusivity, trust, respect, and open communication, and to support engagement with education and research. (Your lab, class, research team, or event, etc. may have additional guidelines to follow that are specific to that group and/or cover other guidelines, norms, and responsibilities such as research ethics, communication, data sharing, and more.)

MLML follows SJSU and CSU guidelines which prohibit discrimination and harassment because of any protected status, for example:

- Age
- Disability (physical and mental)
- Gender (or sex)
- Gender identity (including transgender)
- Gender expression
- Genetic information
- Marital status
- Medical condition
- Nationality
- Race or ethnicity (including color or ancestry)
- Religion (or religious creed)

DRAFT 4/23/2021

- Sexual orientation
- Sex stereotype
- Veteran or military status

We value diversity in our science and education.

We will not engage in discrimination or harassment, bullying, microaggressions, ethical misconduct, or other harmful behaviors.

We will be kind, tolerant, and respectful of fellow students, researchers, labmates, and collaborators.

We will communicate respectfully and professionally: All communication, be it online or in-person, should be appropriate for a professional audience and be considerate of people from different cultural backgrounds. Sexual language and imagery is not appropriate at any time.

We will adhere to laws and policies: We will be aware of and adhere to laws, university policies, and this Code of Conduct in our professional behavior.

We will practice and use the [5D strategy](#) for bystander interventions: direct, distract, delegate, delay, document.

Fieldwork

Due to the nature of fieldwork, whether it be for a class field trip or field research, there are additional considerations necessary to ensure a safe environment. MLML is committed to creating field experiences that enhance research, learning, and collaboration in a safe environment for all.

Physical and mental health risks should be assessed through a variety of lenses, taking into account participants' backgrounds, experiences, and needs.

- optimize the activity for learning instead of assessment,
- reduce environmental stressors as much as possible,
- keep the length of field activities to a reasonable number of hours per day,
- offer an opportunity for privacy in the evening,
- ensure participants can contact their support structure,
- have a compassionate and non-judgmental attitude towards participants expressing distress at the activity.

DRAFT 4/23/2021

<https://www.nature.com/articles/s41561-018-0219-0>

Before conducting any fieldwork, the trip leader/PI/faculty member should create/review the Fieldwork Additional Codes of Conduct, conduct a risk assessment and complete the fieldwork safety checklist.

Fieldwork Additional Codes of Conduct

- **We are all responsible for knowing and following** all codes of conduct, safety regulations, and complaint procedures.
- **We will conduct fieldwork with another person**, when possible.
- **We will notify our designated contact person (*name, number*)** of our fieldwork location and schedule **each** day.
- **Communication and safety equipment** will be accessible to all without gatekeepers; there will be multiple avenues for contacting help.
- **We will work together to protect targets of harassment or discrimination**: protect their safety, allow them to continue their fieldwork with minimal disruption, protect privacy as much as possible.
- **We will all bring research project/class and institutional identification** to the field site.
- **We are all responsible for contacting the trip leader/PI/faculty member if we feel unsafe** at any time, to discuss ways to modify our project.

The trip leader/PI/faculty member should consider the following issues and to their Fieldwork Code of Conduct:

- Issues that may be magnified in the field due to power dynamics and field/lab culture
- What is the plan for safety and does it include information on how to address harassment, bullying and discrimination?
- What are the attitudes around alcohol and drug use at the field site and how may these interfere with field safety?
- Who is responsible for responding to a safety incident, including an incident of discrimination or harassment?

Site and Travel Risk Assessment

Risk can vary across field work sites and over time; each site should be assessed for risk due to harassment or violence and risk to those with physical mobility each field season or academic year, or in the event of political or geographical changes that might necessitate a review.

- What nonverbal, verbal, and physical threats might exist for **travel to** the study site?

DRAFT 4/23/2021

- What nonverbal, verbal, and physical threats might exist **at the study site** or **in the study site community**?
 - For BIPOC researchers?
 - For those with physical disabilities
 - For women researchers?
 - For LGBTQ+ researchers?
- Consider harassment and/or violence motivated by racism, gender (or sex), gender identity (including transgender), gender expression, and sexual orientation, ableism, religious bias or other forms of discrimination.
- Consider applicable laws, regulations, or customs that may affect the safety of the fieldwork participants. These may include laws that make LGBTQ identities illegal or restrict which restroom someone can use.
- Consider the dominant demography or culture of an area, i.e. is the population of an area predominantly white? Are women present in public life and how might that affect women on the fieldwork team?
- Prepare descriptions of terrain, facilities, and basic physical requirements.
- Prepare descriptions of visual, auditory, and motor skills required to operate field equipment.
- Consider how the trip leaders' and participants' previous experiences may affect perceptions of hardships or challenging situations that could occur in the field.
- In all assessments and interactions:
 - Be sensitive to the power imbalance in the student–advisor/PI/trip leader relationship
- Prepare an exit plan to leave or relocate the field team to a place of safety if other strategies fail.

Pre-Departure Discussion Checklist

Recognize that those participating in fieldwork may have questions and/or anxieties about it for many reasons: unfamiliarity with wild areas, with fieldwork, with the geographic region, the gear required, the accessibility of the site for those with physical disabilities, etc. In addition, for some researchers and/or at some sites, there are very real risks of physical violence, discrimination, and/or harassment.

To prepare for fieldwork, I have:

- Conducted a site risk assessment.
- Notified local authorities, land management agencies, businesses, and/or community leaders, especially in white communities, to provide early notice of the diverse nature of the fieldwork team and the nature of the work. Introduced team leaders to local authorities.
- Provided materials to each fieldwork participant that clearly identifies researchers and their purpose (for example, signs for vehicles and field sites, safety vests, ID cards, etc.).

DRAFT 4/23/2021

- Provided researchers with contact information for project lead/institutional leadership/safety officers (if not onsite), field site managers, local police department, local management agency, and other officials, as applicable.
- Supplied an official letter of support with contact information to each fieldwork participant.
- Clearly explained the fieldsite and risk assessment and expected activities to all participants, including:
 - potential physical challenges with participants from the perspective of maximizing inclusion.
 - proper hydration and nutrition, in terms of general safety and health or religious restrictions or needs (e.g. for the management of diabetes or religious daily fasting requirements).
 - available toilet facilities at the field site and codes of conduct regarding toilet stops for urination, defecation, menstruation, or to take medicine.
- Clearly introduced team leaders and members to each other.
- Ensured that the fieldwork site meets MLML's Code of Conduct specifications
- Documented, shared, and discussed any site-specific additions to the MLML Code of Conduct with the fieldwork participants, including those determined by the field site and any field behavioral and communication norms.
- Lead collaborative discussions to identify discriminatory or race-related incidents with team members that could occur in the field and then encourage bystander interventions.

(ADVANCEGeo Partnership, Anadu, Ali, and Jackson, 2020, Demery and Pipkin, 2021, Greene et al, 2020)

Complaint Procedures

Violations to these fieldwork guidelines should be reported using MLML's Complaint Procedure. [link], which states that complaints should be reported promptly to the lab or field site leader or an MLML administrator **or** submit an [SJSU complaint form](#).

Because field sites are remote and communication is sometimes limited, team leaders have additional responsibilities. Team leaders should address incidents of discrimination when they happen. Team members should practice and use the [5D strategy](#) for bystander interventions: direct, distract, delegate, delay, document. The team should have a plan to exit dangerous scenes or to relocate the field party to a place of safety if other strategies fail. (Anadu et al, 2020)

Training Opportunities

- ADVANCEGeo Partnership [Resources](#) and [Training opportunities](#)
- SJSU Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion [educational offerings](#)

DRAFT 4/23/2021

- COAST [Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Webcasts](#)
- [Hollaback! Bystander Intervention Training](#)
- Additional training opportunities will be advertised through SJSU, MLML, and other consortium campuses as they are available.

Readings & Resources

These readings lay the groundwork for why a code of conduct is an important aspect of a safety plan and a diversity plan. We incorporated many of the suggestions in the articles into this plan. All MLMLers, especially those with a leadership role in education, lab, or research, are encouraged to read them.

ADVANCEGeo Partnership <https://serc.carleton.edu/advancegeo/index.html>

Atchison, C.L., Marshall, A.M., and Collins, T.D. (2019) A multiple case study of inclusive learning communities enabling active participation in geoscience field courses for students with physical disabilities, *Journal of Geoscience Education*, 67:4, 472-486, <https://doi.org/10.1080/10899995.2019.1600962> Accessed online: <http://oro.open.ac.uk/61429/3/61429.pdf>

Anadu, J., Ali, H. and Jackson, C. (2020), Ten steps to protect BIPOC scholars in the field, *Eos*, 101, <https://doi.org/10.1029/2020EO150525>

Barker, M.J. (2011) Racial context, currency and connections: Black doctoral student and white advisor perspectives on cross-race advising, *Innovations in Education and Teaching International*, 48:4, 387-400, <https://doi.org/10.1080/14703297.2011.617092>

[Basin Research Group](#) (Example Code of Conduct, under “Inclusivity and Diversity”)

Chaudhary VB, Berhe AA (2020) Ten simple rules for building an antiracist lab. *PLoS Comput Biol* 16(10): e1008210. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pcbi.1008210>

Demery, A. J. C., & Pipkin, M. A. (2021). Safe fieldwork strategies for at-risk individuals, their supervisors and institutions. *Nature Ecology & Evolution*, 5(1), 5-9, <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41559-020-01328-5>

Greene, S., Ashley, K., Dunne, E., Edgar, K., Giles, S., & Hanson, E. (2020, January 9). Toilet stops in the field: An educational primer and recommended best practices for field-based teaching. <https://doi.org/10.31219/osf.io/gnhj2>

John, C.M., Khan, S.B. Mental health in the field. *Nature Geosci* 11, 618–620 (2018). <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41561-018-0219-0>

DRAFT 4/23/2021

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