

Draft Deliverable 6: Safety Plan, MUN-Canada Pod

We recognize that this document was developed almost exclusively by a group of white settlers. It focuses on a safety plan covering field instruction (teaching, undergraduate and graduate level) and, for some codes/rights, field research campaigns in the Department of Earth Sciences at MUN. We intend it to be a living document that changes as we actively seek input and perspective from a more diverse group of past and future field participants and incorporate the experiences of instructors responsible for most of the field-based instruction.

Preface: MUN representation and general institutional code of conduct

Note that wherever you are, you are representing MUN and are bound by the guidelines that apply to MUN students, including the student code of conduct available here:

https://www.mun.ca/student/supports-and-resources/respectful-campus/Student_Code_of_Conduct_May_11_2017.pdf

In particular, this code states that “Memorial University is a learning, teaching and working community of students, faculty and staff, committed to providing a safe environment which is respectful of the rights, responsibilities, well-being and dignity of all its members.” It is reasonable to ask what does this mean in the field, and how might it be different from other activities? In the field, we live and work together. This requires that everyone take extra care to be considerate of the needs of others and to ensure that we all treat each other fairly and with respect. Field situations can be particularly stressful for students who may not have had much outdoors experience, or fit the usual stereotypes of field scientists and it is up to all of us to ensure that these students feel particularly safe and welcome. To ensure that this happens, MUN staff commit to:

Educate themselves on the experiences of under-represented groups in field situations and read about best-practices to create inclusive field experiences. Some examples are:

- <https://eos.org/opinions/ten-steps-to-protect-bipoc-scholars-in-the-field>
- <https://eos.org/features/the-challenges-of-fieldwork-for-lgbtq-geoscientists>
- <https://cals.cornell.edu/saferscience>
- <https://eartharxiv.org/repository/view/2091/>

Build cultural competency.

Be trained in first aid.

Before going into the field ensure that all participants:

1. Know where you are going, for how long, what accommodations and services will be available and have the equipment they need. This should not only include scheduling and geographic information but importantly the conditions and circumstances specific to the location and activities that will take place (e.g. weather conditions, level of hiking,

bathroom options). This should be done early enough to allow all participants regardless of experience or background enough insight to know what to expect and formulate questions of their own.

2. Have had a chance to ask questions and express anxieties about the fieldwork anonymously as well as directly.
3. Have met one-on-one with the team lead to ensure that they are appropriately prepared for field work.
4. Have all of the necessary emergency phone numbers, and understand how to communicate with those outside of the group, know how to access and use the necessary communications equipment, and that ***all members of the group understand that anyone may use this equipment at any time.***
5. Know who to contact in case of a medical emergency.
6. Know who to contact in case of harassment or discrimination (<https://urgeo.org/index.php?gf-download=2021%2F02%2FMUNCanada-MUN-Complaints-and-Reporting-Policy-Session2.pdf&form-id=4&field-id=6&hash=0248ecd9c9ccc4fab5fc2f12937282870b3c3641b19501c9552eb37365644590>).
7. Have the necessary documentation and equipment (e.g. high-visibility vests) to identify themselves as members of the field team.

In the field:

1. Ensure that all participants abide by the field code of conduct (see below).
2. To believe and respectfully listen to anyone reporting violations of the code of conduct, and/or to help them contact outside staff.
3. To take appropriate steps (e.g. re-assigning, disciplining, or sending harassers home) to stop behaviours that violate the code of conduct.
4. Model appropriate behaviour and respectful interpersonal interactions.

MUN general field code of conduct

In order to participate in field work, all participants agree to the following code of conduct:

(Note that this document is heavily based on that of the Association of Polar Early Career Scientists, available here: <https://www.apecs.is/career-resources/diversity-equity-inclusion/field-code-of-conduct.html>)

Team Interactions

- Be accepting of diverse viewpoints and allow all team members to express their opinions openly without judgment, if viewpoints are not discriminatory. **Scrutinize ideas not individuals.**
- Respect and be considerate of others without prioritizing some knowledges, such as western science, over others, such as local and Indigenous knowledge.
- Do not underestimate the impact of your own statements on those around you.
- Allow all team members to partake in decision making and do not exclude others from meetings.
- Be honest and accountable. If you violate any forms of conduct or fail to meet expectations in some way, be open about it, admit fault, and strive to do better.
- Avoid knowingly making false or misleading statement(s) (or engaging in activities) that could be viewed as offensive or defamatory to a team member, group, or organization.
- Do not bring discriminatory or sexually explicit imagery with you into the field.
- Be able to recognize and avoid machismo (overly aggressive or chauvinistic actions). Avoid promoting a culture where “roughing it” is seen as a rite of passage.
- Ask for help when you need it and respect those who ask for help. **Recognize that people have different strengths and experience and that some disabilities are invisible.**

Recognizing the Context of the Work

- Be aware of, and address your positionality, power, privileges, and values. This includes recognizing the colonial histories, cultural biases, and structural marginalization that may have led to your position within the field team.
- Respect the landscape where you are staying including the land, water, plants, and animals that live there. Recognize that you are a guest and reduce your impact by following “Leave No Trace” principles. This includes making your best effort to leave the landscape how you originally found it. Do not deface (e.g. hammer) or take samples from protected grounds where this is prohibited or no sample permitting is in place.
- Respect the culture and community of the people that live on this land. Make efforts to learn the culture and value the knowledge that the residents hold from their deep-rooted experience with this environment. This includes respecting Indigenous and traditional knowledge holders and explicitly asking permission to take photographs of people and use their stories, ideas, and information. Make efforts to share data with the community and build relationships for future collaborations.

Respecting Personal Boundaries

- Respect the safety of others. Respect that what feels safe to one person may not feel safe to another, be supportive and helpful when others express fear.
- Respect the privacy of others. Do not enter rooms/tents without permission, leave if you are asked to and allow everyone to use the bathroom (even the natural one) in private.
- Ask permission to take photos or record team members in any way, and only post photos or video on public platforms if consent has been given.
- Follow the rules laid out by the team lead including respecting the property and facilities.
- Team members should follow an “Ask Once” policy when it comes to consensual sexual advances or “asking someone out” during field activities. An “Ask Once” policy ensures that all team members can only “ask out” an individual once. Asking out includes flirting, expressing interest, and/or making advances towards an individual. If at any point that individual states that they are not interested, brushes off the advance, or does not reciprocate in a positive way, the team member must not continue to ask out the individual. If the team member continues to pursue the individual, it is considered harassment.

Unacceptable Behavior

- Misconduct that will result in termination of fieldwork includes:
 - Physical or verbal abuse, harassment, or assault
 - Intimidation or bullying
 - Coercion/Manipulation
 - Threats (including but not limited to threats of violence, professional discreditation, unwarranted decreases in responsibilities, and public embarrassment.)
 - Gender, race-based, age-based, ability-based, or sexual harassment
 - Sexual misconduct including the inappropriate use of nudity and/or sexual images in a public space.
 - The use of hate speech directed at a minority group including comments about a person’s gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, disability, physical appearance, body size, race, religion, or national origin.
 - Behavior that endangers the mental or physical health and safety of oneself or others
 - Stalking
 - Tampering with the proceedings of a misconduct report, including actions to inhibit, discredit, stop, or falsify the investigation of a misconduct case
 - Retaliation against a person or group reporting code of conduct violations
- Misconduct that will result in review by the code of conduct committee and possible termination from fieldwork includes:
 - Acting as a bystander and not reporting misconduct
 - The use of illicit drugs or excessive use of alcohol during field operations or while in town
 - Furnishing alcoholic beverages to any person under the legal age in the locality or distribution of illicit drugs
 - Dangerous driving
 - Disregard for the personal property of others

- Loud and obnoxious behavior
- Disregard for quiet hours
- Repeatedly disregarding responsibilities
- Use of social or mainstream media to target team members in a way that could harm their privacy and/or reputation
- Deliberately mis-characterizing a person's gender identity, including through the use of a name or pronoun that the person has rejected
- All field members have the responsibility to report all instances of unacceptable conduct as defined above to the appropriate party and see that the issue is reported to the outside contact personnel. All instances of misconduct require reporting no matter the severity.

MUN field research code of conduct and bill of rights

This code of conduct applies to field research campaigns involving MUN students or staff in addition to the general code of conduct above, and is targeted primarily at the responsibilities of field research leaders. It is built under the premise that communication within the group is essential to safety and respect. Awareness of how groups with different visible identities are *perceived* and treated by others in different environments is key for ensuring safe and inclusive field experiences. The isolating and severe burden of fieldwork risks to minoritized individuals means that supervisors bear a responsibility to educate themselves on the differential risks posed to their students and junior colleagues in the field. It should never be considered a form of bias or discrimination for a supervisor to offer a discussion on these topics to any individual that they supervise.

The bill of rights applies to all team members, and should be read and signed by all before the start of any field work.

(Note that this document is heavily based on that of the Association of Polar Early Career Scientists, available here: <https://www.apecs.is/career-resources/diversity-equity-inclusion/field-code-of-conduct.html>)

1 - Inclusive practices for preparing a team for fieldwork

- **Choose your team with the goal of inclusion.**

Inclusive practices begin before the team deploys. For example, choose diverse teams...this creates an inclusive and safe environment for everyone. "hard skills", or time spent in the field, should not be a prerequisite for inclusion. Field skills can be learned

- **Proactively prepare expectations about field conditions.**
- **Assure adequate skills-specific training for each team member, prior to departure.**
- **Establish codes/norms early, get buy in, and reinforce continuously.**

2 - Implement inclusive tasking and routines in the field

- **Enable individual responsibility for tasks**
- **Proactively give everyone a voice during preparatory work and execution.**
- **De-emphasize hierarchies**

3 - Adopt an inclusive leadership style

- **Foster mutual respect as a core cultural value for the team.**
- **Be responsive (!) to misconduct issues, even suspected ones.**

there must be a responsiveness to and consequences for harassment and misconduct

- **Maintain a positive attitude.**

As a field team leader, you set the tone. Those around you, especially newcomers, look to you for guidance. They will learn from your norms.

Strive to keep morale high, avoid and discourage gossip, and don't play favorites.

Bill of Rights

The list below designates a set of liberties afforded to all team members throughout the course of the field campaign. By signing below, you are acknowledging these rights and agree to take no action to impede or hamper the listed rights for any and all team members.

1 - Right to respect, dignity, and professionalism

- All team members have the right to not experience or bear witness to misconduct from other team members as defined by the Code of Conduct. Any accusations of misconduct must be taken seriously and acted upon swiftly.

2 - Right to privacy

- All team members have the right to a private space (i.e. a team member's room or tent). Each team member must respect the privacy of team member's space and not enter it without their permission nor disturb a team member in their room/tent unnecessarily. If private accommodation is not possible, all participants must be comfortable with the arrangements.
- All team members have the right to privacy when using the bathroom. In some field situations the use of indoor bathrooms is not possible and care must be taken to respect the privacy of team members outdoors. See this document for further information on using the bathroom in the field: [ToiletsAndFieldTrips.pdf](#)

3 - Right to communicate

- All team members have the right to receive training in the use of satellite phones or other satellite communication devices.
- All team members have the right to use a satellite phone or outside communication device during the field campaign and access to such devices should not be infringed.
- All team members have ownership of any physical communication such as text message records and are not obliged to share such records with any other team member. Outside communication is confidential and private.

4 - Right to anonymity

- Any team member that submits a report of harassment or Code of Conduct violation has the right to maintain anonymity throughout the reporting process if they choose. The team member's identity shall not be revealed to the accused or reporting agency without their consent. However, anonymity may not be guaranteed within formal university reporting systems.

5 - Right to rest

- All team members have the right to a rest day if they are physically or mentally exhausted as long as doing so does not infringe on the safety or wellbeing of other team members.
- A team member taking a rest day does not preclude other team members from continuing to work.

6 - Right to safety

- All team members shall have access to and training for safety equipment
- All team members have the right to refuse or pause work if they have not been adequately trained or if equipment is not provided
- All team members shall be provided visible proof of credentials and affiliation if requested

7 - Right to data access

- All team members shall have access to data which they collect for future publications unless explicitly agreed upon before the data was collected. Such data should be made easily available to all team members, for example through an online repository.
- Any team member that independently collects data for their own project during a field campaign shall be consulted before those data are shared with other team members not associated with or participating in that project.
- All publications that result from data collected by a team member or local knowledge holders who are engaged in a project should include that team member as a co-author or an acknowledged party in such publications. All team members associated with data collection should be notified of the data usage before submitting the publication.

I have read and understand the expected and unacceptable behavior for participating in the _____ field team, led by _____, and taking place on the dates of _____.

Signature:

Date:

Incidents, violations of code of conduct, and responses

What to Do if You Have Experienced Inappropriate Behavior

Each situation is unique. You are entitled to the following (not exhaustive):

- Talk to anyone about your experience
- Change your mind about talking to anyone about your experience at any time
- Report to any of the reporting options listed below
- Bring someone with you to provide support during reporting or any resulting discussions
- To seek reasonable accommodations to ensure the success of your work
- To seek medical assistance

Reporting an Incident

Multiple reporting avenues are available to individuals at _____. Below is a list of individuals who you can confidentially disclose an incident you observed or experiences. This list includes individuals who can maintain communications throughout the field season and includes individuals in the field, at the home institution, and at the relevant research station. Code of conduct committee members, who are responsible for enforcement of the code of conduct, are identified by an asterisk (*). This list includes people of multiple genders.

- Primary outside contact: _____, Affiliation: _____, Contact information: _____
- Institutional contact: _____, Affiliation: _____, Contact information: _____
- Outside medical contact: Dr. _____, Affiliation: _____, Contact information: _____
- *Team safety lead: _____, Affiliation: _____, Contact information: _____
- *Chair of code of conduct committee: _____, Affiliation: _____, Contact information: _____
- *Code of conduct committee member: _____, Affiliation: _____, Contact information: _____
- *Code of conduct committee member: _____, Affiliation: _____, Contact information: _____

Response to Reporting Code of Conduct Violation(s)

Concerns and reports will be addressed promptly by the code of conduct committee. First, the committee will ensure that immediate safety concerns have been addressed. Secondly, committee members will recuse themselves if there are strong conflicts of interest that would bias their decisions. A meeting amongst committee members will be arranged as soon as it is practical where neither the alleged harasser or target is present. Before or after the meeting, committee members will find more information about the incident, including but not limited to interviewing the alleged harasser (if safe) or interviewing witnesses. The committee will choose a response that best protects the community from future harm. This may include:

- Termination from fieldwork
- Remove responsibilities, privilege, or access
- Temporary ban from team spaces
- Permanent ban from team spaces
- Further response that follows MUN's Respectful Workplace Policy

Adverse action against a person or group as a result of a report will not be tolerated, and are subject to the consequences as outlined above.

I have read and understand the expected and unacceptable behavior for participating in the _____ field team.

Signature:

Date: