

# URGE

Unlearning Racism in Geoscience



## Field, Lab, and Group Safety and Code of Conducts

### Overall Recommendations:

- Faculty and staff “responsibilities” are contained in the associated handbooks. A clear and explicit code of conduct, conduct process, and sanction guidelines (mirroring the student ones) should be easily accessible.
- Units should have a set of standard expectations for research assistants (graduate, undergraduate, and postdocs) and supervisors that address safety and JEDI. Many versions exist across geosciences at OU currently but the race and ethnicity component is missing, or emphasized less. For example:
  - AI2ES [Code of Conduct](#)
  - College of AGS and NWC [Protocol](#)
  - Individual groups
  - Department-level “expectations” (or code of conducts, although OU will not let us use that phrase) being refined and developed
- Need consistency and support across the University, including associated field sites (e.g. Kessler), in terms of field safety planning, training, and execution that go beyond University liability and traditional “health and safety”.
  - University wide field trip code of conduct. Can we get faculty senate support?
  - Importance of more than just University liability for accidents
  - Setting up online daily safety reports (all aspects of safety)
- Field work safety can and should also be applied to Study Abroad, although the Education Abroad office does provide some limited resources regarding safety in relation to identity ([https://www.ou.edu/cis/education\\_abroad/diversity](https://www.ou.edu/cis/education_abroad/diversity)).
- Create a set of OU resources where field work participants can rent or borrow field work gear.

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### Important Elements of Field Safety Plans:

1. Safety aspects, especially those related to identity need to be communicated to potential participants prior to even applying to a field program (if applicable).
2. Organizers of field programs should administer a survey in which participants provide information about prior experience with field programs and can share any concerns they might have.
3. A comprehensive risk assessment must be conducted that outlines the risks and related mitigation measures for female, LGBTQ+, BIPOC and disabled participants of a planned field program.  
→ this is missing from most OU safety plans we have seen.
4. If any BIPOC students/scientists are participating in a large field campaign, make sure to connect them with other participants beforehand (outside of your own group if necessary) so that they have a broader network of support
5. The safety of participants must be a top priority and safety plans must also address access to bathroom facilities, medical care (including nearest facilities where sexual assault examinations can be conducted), food, housing, and shelter during hazardous weather for the entire field program.
6. All safety plans and resources must be accessible and available to all participants while in the field (e.g. hard copies, audio versions).
7. At minimum, faculty/staff field leadership must participate in antidiscrimination, active by-stander, and/or de-escalation training prior to leading field programs. Similar trainings should be available to all participants also.
8. Before departure, the leaders of the field programs must hold briefings with all participants during which risks for minoritized participants are discussed, mitigation strategies are outlined, and scenarios of interventions are presented.
9. The pre-departure briefings should also include a discussion of the cultural norms expectations, jargon, policies, and rules at the field program sites and any locations that will be travelled through on the way to the site. Information about expected behavior at the program site as well as local authorities and contacts should be given to all participants.
10. The leaders of the field program must inform local authorities, field site managers and other relevant local contacts about the participants of the field program and discuss risk mitigation strategies with them.

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11. Participants receive and wear badges and/or clothing that identifies them as members of the field program.
12. Participants are introduced to local authorities, field site managers and other relevant local contacts shortly after arrival at the field site
13. During the field program, participants stay together in teams with a minimum of two people and team members are trained to act as allies for minoritized students. This includes visits to shops and restaurants.
14. Participants are encouraged to report any incidents that affected their safety (including any forms of harassment, discrimination, hostile behavior, or microaggressions) with a daily safety report form is submitted online by each participant. Must have a designated person viewing these reports - perhaps at least one person not at the field site.
15. Any safety concerns (including any forms of harassment, discrimination, hostile behavior, or microaggressions) are addressed immediately by the program leads. In the event that interventions fail and the safety of any participants cannot be guaranteed, the field program must be interrupted and the safe relocation of participants must be organized by the program leads.

### Links to resources:

- [1] To find a location near you that performs sexual assault forensic exams, call the National Sexual Assault Hotline at 800.656.HOPE (4673) or talk to your [local sexual assault service provider](#).
- [2] <http://fieldworkinitiative.org/>
- [3] <https://cals.cornell.edu/saferscience>
- [4] <https://eos.org/features/the-challenges-of-fieldwork-for-lgbtq-geoscientists>

### Links to URGE resources:

- [5] <https://urgeoscience.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/33/2021/03/Ten-Steps-to-Protect-BIPOC-Scholars-in-the-Field.pdf>
- [6] <https://urgeoscience.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/33/2021/03/Ten-Simple-Rules-for-Building-an-Antiracist-Lab.pdf>
- [7] <https://urgeoscience.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/33/2021/03/Safe-Fieldwork-Strategies-for-At-Risk-Individuals.pdf>

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- [8] [https://urgeoscience.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/33/2021/03/Promoting-Inclusion-in-Ecological-Field-Experiences\\_Examining-and-Overcoming-Barriers-to-a-Professional-Rite-of-Passage.pdf](https://urgeoscience.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/33/2021/03/Promoting-Inclusion-in-Ecological-Field-Experiences_Examining-and-Overcoming-Barriers-to-a-Professional-Rite-of-Passage.pdf)
- [9] [https://urgeoscience.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/33/2021/03/Collectors\\_Nightlights\\_and-Allies\\_Oh-My\\_White-Mentors-in-the-Academy.pdf](https://urgeoscience.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/33/2021/03/Collectors_Nightlights_and-Allies_Oh-My_White-Mentors-in-the-Academy.pdf)
- [10] <https://urgeoscience.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/33/2021/03/Lab-heads-should-learn-to-talk-about-racism.pdf>