URGE
Unlearning Racism in Geoscience

SF STATE

Safety Plan

This Safety Plan was adapted from the Basin Research Group Code of Conduct and the Rutgers University URGE Pod's Safety Plan.

A. Purpose of this Document

The SFSU URGE Pod is dedicated to creating an inclusive and antiracist environment that fosters academic growth and ensures the physical and emotional safety of our members and collaborators. Pod members should use this document to define expectations in their respective lab groups and share widely among SFSU lab groups not participating in the SFSU URGE Pod. Pod members who already have a Safety Plan established for their lab are encouraged to revise their safety plan as needed to align with the expectations set forth here.

B. Scope of this Document

This document is supplemental to the existing ethical codes and rules identified in San Francisco State University's Code of Student Conduct Nondiscrimination Policy and Complaint Procedures, Title IX Policy, and Bias Incident Education Team.

The policies outlined here apply at all places and times where you are working in a capacity related to the lab, including but not limited to conferences, travel, workshops, field sites, and social work functions.

This is a living document. It is intended to adapt and change to address the concerns of present and future Pod members as they arise. Pod members are invited to voice any concerns about their experience in their lab or suggestions about how to improve this document whenever necessary.

C. Code of Conduct

It is our responsibility to foster a collaborative, inclusive, respectful, and supportive environment for all of the members in our lab groups, including students, employees, faculty, and visitors. The purpose of this Code of Conduct is to identify a core set of expectations that we agree to follow as individuals and as a group in order to achieve this goal, in addition to the policies set forth by SFSU.

1. ***Community Expectations***
    - 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 are not appropriate at any time.
    - Be kind to others and do not insult or put down other group members.
    - Behave professionally. Remember that harassment and sexist, racist, or exclusionary jokes are not appropriate.
    - Harassment includes offensive verbal comments related to gender, sexual orientation, disability, physical appearance, body size, race, religion, sexual images in public spaces, deliberate intimidation, stalking, following, harassing photography or recording, sustained disruption of discussions, inappropriate physical contact, and unwelcome sexual attention.
    - Participants asked to stop any harassing behavior are expected to comply immediately.
    - Contribute to discussions in meetings with a constructive, positive approach.
    - Be mindful of talking over others when discussing in groups, and be willing to hear out the ideas of others.

2. ***Individual lab groups should consider adding expectations in the following categories:***
    - PI/advisor/supervisor expectations
    - Student/trainee expectations
    - Field work and lab work expectations
    - Conduct when attending or traveling for conferences
    - Intellectual property, data ownership, co-authorship

3. ***Accountability***

    Lab managers or Principal Investigators will discuss the Code of Conduct with lab members who violate these rules, no matter how much they contribute to the lab, or how specialized or needed their skill set. If inappropriate behavior persists after this initial discussion, formal processes, in line with SFSU's work practice policies, will commence. To report an issue, please contact your designated lab contact person or any of the offices outlined in **Section E**. All communication will remain confidential whenever possible (consistent with Title IX obligations).

4. *Mental Health*

There is increasing evidence that certain attributes of academic research may challenge your mental health. Specific factors driving this include:

Challenge	Strategies
Low pay and quality-of-life issues, particularly as a function of living in an area as expensive the San Francisco Bay Area.	• Develop a financial plan in collaboration with advisor. • Connect with other students to find housing resources (through social media and program networks, see below). • Apply for all possible funding sources in collaboration with advisor.
Feelings of uncertainty and isolation regarding research • everyone has their own topic, and it can often feel as if you are working on your own. • Uncertainty in your research. • So-called "negative results"; i.e., at some point in your research it is likely that certain questions will be more challenging to answer than anticipated, or that you will feel you have spent days/months/years toiling with little to show.	• Join student groups. • Use social media to find others (students/researchers) doing similar work • Make these topics of conversation in lab group meetings. • Share/hear experiences with others • Ask your advisor/mentor/committee members for guidance. • If students are not getting support within their own lab groups they should reach out to other mentors.
Uncertainty in your post-graduate career.	• Develop connections between students and Career Services and Leadership Development. • Use LinkedIn and other social media platforms to network. • Consider doing informational interviews. • Attend and network at professional meetings. • Use career resources of professional societies.
Burnout; i.e., feeling the need to work endless hours to make up for the above issues, and the subsequent exhaustion	• Take vacations! • Spend time outside. • Get regular exercise. • Spend time with family and friends.

All students come across most of these issues at some level. We strongly encourage members of all lab groups to take an active and pre-emptive approach towards the maintenance of their mental health. If there is anything that is placing undue stress, or preventing you from performing at your potential, please do not hesitate to reach out to your lab contact person. You should also be familiar with resources on campus (see list below as well as the SFSU resource map). Every effort will be made to help you access the right support networks.

Support Resources

This list is not comprehensive.

- Counseling, Psychological and Mental Health Resources
- Counselors or advocates, especially those of the same race, ethnicity, and gender.
    - Division of Equity and Community Inclusion
    - Dean of Students
    - Safe Space
- Graduate division writing support at Division of Graduate Studies
- Graduate Student Housing Network at SFSU Facebook group: https://www.facebook.com/groups/255066231312093
- Bay Area Conscious Community Housing Board Facebook group: https://www.facebook.com/groups/303241339725481
- Apartment Love (Advertised by SFSU graduate studies): https://apartmentlove.com/california/san-francisco

D. Preparation/Planning for Field and Lab Work

Additional guidelines should be created to address the particular needs and situations of individual projects. Project leaders should initiate a conversation at the beginning of each project or when new personnel join a project to discuss safety issues in detail. Potential discussion items can include:

- Where is the field site located and will there be individual risk to participants due to their identities (race, gender, etc.)?
- What are the amenities available at a field or remote location?
- How and when will the supervisor/project leader notify authorities of students working late in the lab or at a field site?
- How will a student communicate concern or worry before, and importantly, during their field or lab work?
- Discussions on implementing a buddy system if students are in the field without their supervisor/project leader.

1. Field Work Specific:

Field work warrants specific discussions and preparation including:

- Discussing the physical location of the field site.
- Discussing possible risks/inconveniences and how they might be dealt with in situ (weather/nature, sampling gear, injuries, access to typical restroom facilities), as well as limitations that may be encountered when dealing with these situationsin a field or remote setting.
- A pre-departure checklist of things to bring so each person is best prepared given their own needs (credentials, clothing layers, food/snacks, water, medicine, sunscreen, etc.)
- Discussing the financing of specific field gear items needed for the field.
- Development of specific lab gear to wear out in the field (i.e. hats, shirts with university or lab logo).
- A racial risk assessment of field sites and discussions about this with the field crew.
- Reaching out to local authorities, businesses, and community leaders, especially in white communities, to provide early notice of the diverse nature of their teams. This should be undertaken by the supervisor or project leader prior to fieldwork.
- Completion of bystander intervention training.
- Completion of any other relevant and necessary fieldwork related training (e.g., boating safety, defensive driving, etc.).
- Setting procedures for documenting incidents in the field. This **must** be discussed prior to the start of fieldwork, and should consider the isolating nature and remote environment of the field experience. This plan needs to be specific to each field experience.
- Notify someone not in the field with you of your planned departure, return, and location (and when to call for help). Confirm with that person when you have

returned safely.

2. Lab Work Specific:

Lab work warrants specific discussions and preparation including:

- Taking any specific lab and safety training pertaining to the techniques that will be used in experiments.
- Updating and maintaining the chemical hygiene plan for all protocols and chemicals in the lab.
- Annual lab check-ins by the supervisor/project leader to remind lab members of the location of safety equipment and the accident reporting protocol (especially if working in more than one lab).
- Discussing expectations of the amount of time to be spent in the lab (dependent on the lab work).
- Discussing the specific supplies needed for a project, where they are purchased, and the fund used to acquire supplies.
- Planning a schedule, especially if lab work needs to occur during the weekends or after working hours.
- Use of campus Safety Escort Program, police escort for after hours on main campus.

E. Process for Reporting Violations

The following are links to the reporting policies at SFSU:

- University Policies
- New Bias Incident Education Team at SFSU
- Title IX
- Department, Lab, Division, Advisor or Supervisor Policies
    - No formal reporting mechanism or structure in the individual departments or within the College of Science and Engineering.
    - Informally, department chairs and directors are often the people that students, staff, and faculty reach out to. Additionally, chairs and directors will reach out to deans and/or associate deans if needed.

F. Training Resources

- As part of the California State University system, SFSU requires regular Title IX Sexual Misconduct Prevention Program Training.
- The SFSU URGE Pod strongly recommends individual labs as well as the university adopt policies requiring antidiscrimination, bystander intervention, and de-escalation training.

In addition to the above Safety Plan, the SFSU URGE Pod developed guidelines and recommendations for school-led field trips at both the undergraduate and graduate level.

Guidelines for School-Led Field Trips

Practices Currently in Place:

1. **University field trips policies** are available here: https://academic.sfsu.edu/content/academic-field-trips. In addition to the minimum requirements below, instructors must fill out an instructional plan that describes the activities and anticipated outcomes of the field trip(s) in a course. One form can be used for multiple field trips taken within a single course.

2. **Field Trip Policy – Minimum Requirements**. The campus field trip policy must include the following minimum requirements:

    a) Include a means to identify all courses that involve off-campus field trips.
    b) Require the use of the approved liability waiver.
    c) Ensure student emergency contact information is obtained prior to the field trip. The campus must have emergency contact information readily available.
    d) Provide students with an instructional agenda, health and safety information, emergency procedures, and the student code of conduct, prior to the field trip.
    e) Require a pre-trip evaluation. This should include a site visit and the written evaluation should be retained by the qualifying department and available for review. The pre-trip location visit can be bypassed if the campus can demonstrate and document sufficient knowledge of the field trip site. This could be accomplished by review online, published materials, or contacting the site to discuss the visit.
    f) Include a plan to accommodate students with special needs.
    g) Provide training for any equipment that may be used on the activity.
    h) Provide for an alternate assignment for students unwilling to accept the risk of participation.
    i) Comply with the California State University Use of University and Private Vehicles Policy Guidelines and the California State University student travel policy, where applicable. See Executive Order 1041.
    j) Administer regular reviews to monitor and document compliance with the field trip policy and update requirements as necessary at regular intervals.
    k) If a field trip is required for a course, access should be facilitated by the instructor, or it should be held in an accessible location, or alternative assignments should be developed (https://senate.sfsu.edu/policy/student-field-trip-policy).
    l) The Student Internship and Field Trip Policy Committee (part of the SFSU Senate) has the discretion to amend its field trip policy to include components not addressed above. (https://senate.sfsu.edu/policy/student-field-trip-policy

Additional Considerations:

1. **Transportation**: Instructors often ask students to carpool to field trips because there are no or few university vehicles or funding to rent vehicles to support field trips. In the past, graduate assistants (GAs) could assist with driving university vehicles to bring students out, but field classes are no longer provided with GA support due to budget cuts and enrollment declines. Sometimes driving campus-owned vehicles is not feasible for instructors living far from campus, which results in students driving their own vehicles or carpooling with other students. However, instructors are not permitted to help to organize carpools in personal cars due to institutional liability concerns. This means some students without cars may not be able to secure a carpool if they are not invited or welcomed by students with cars. Further, not owning a car could lead some students to opt out of classes with field trips to avoid being in a situation to have to ask others for rides.

2. **Field trips for research:** Student researchers, especially during COVID due to social distancing requirements, often must drive their own vehicles to research sites and may or may not be reimbursed for this expense. Also, driving individually subjects students to public scrutiny about whether they belong at the field location or are permitted to engage in the research activity. Some student researchers also do not own a car, or they share a car with a partner and have limited access or may have an unreliable car increasing concerns/risks that they may get stranded potentially in an unsafe place.

Implementable Practices to Increase Equity and Inclusion:

1. **Transportation**: Some field trip sites may be accessible by public transportation (e.g., the Presidio in San Francisco), and this should be a consideration whenever possible. Instructors should be provided with guidelines that permit them to assist with organizing field trip carpools while maintaining the university's risk management rules. Classes could be advertised as accommodating students without cars. Departments should support students and instructors that include field experiences in their courses just like they support health and safety PPE and related expenses for chemistry laboratories.

2. **Field trips for research**: Student researchers can be loaned placards to attach to their personal vehicles indicating university-sanctioned research is underway. Further, they can be issued bright vests that in themselves imply official activity. If these can be printed with the university name and the word "research" this would also help to keep our students from being confronted for not belonging at the research site. Funding to reimburse student researchers for travel costs should be sought (mileage, rental cars, etc.).