

UIC LABORATORY AND FIELD SAFETY PLAN

LABORATORY:

Laboratory safety plans will vary given the individual nature of each UIC EaES research group. However, all safety plans will provide: 1) a lab code of conduct; 2) JEDI-informed safety protocols and resources; and 3) a general laboratory welcome orientation and “living” handbook.

Code of Conduct

In the **code of conduct**, the PI can articulate their commitment to justice, equity, diversity and inclusion, the way those values and efforts intersect with the research culture and experience particular to the lab group. For example, the PI may discuss how JEDI informs their current research, teaching, or service, or how JEDI might ask the PI to reconsider aspects of those activities in a new light. The code of conduct should also clearly outline the expectations that the group has for the professional behavior of lab members as well as a process for reporting violations and incidents, which is also covered in the URGE Complaints and Reporting Policy deliverable from Session 2.

- A strong example of a Code of Conduct is the [Basin Research Group](#).

JEDI-informed Safety Protocols

The **Safety Protocols** section should cover the standard information for the individual lab group, as well as the department and wider campus. As an urban campus, UIC provides additional safety resources to students who may be in transit after typical work hours. The protocol should also incorporate JEDI-informed information including an acknowledgement and description of the additional hazards and risks faced by individuals of minority and/or marginalized identities. Unlike the code of conduct, which is primarily concerned with within-lab-group interactions, the safety protocols should consider and provide guidance for interactions that lab group members will have across the campus.

- [UIC SAFE](#) app provides students and employees quick access to in-campus safety resources.
 - Work Alone – a feature which you can set to either call your emergency contact or UIC Police if you don’t check in within certain time intervals (15, 30, 45, or 60 mins)
- If a student feels uncomfortable walking back to their car/transport, the student can request for a [walking safety escort](#).
- During the year, work hours in the lab may vary. Summer term safety protocols may differ from a regular term because there are fewer people on campus. Prior to the summer term, PIs and/or lab managers should create space and time to address in-campus safety concerns with their lab

members. Throughout the summer term, PIs and/or lab managers should check-in with their lab members to address new concerns.

- [EHS](#) provides guides, useful references, training, and consultation for occupational safety such as ergonomics (fitting work areas/stations to the worker).

Group Orientation and Handbook

The third component, the **Lab Group Orientation and Handbook** is likely to be highly tailored to a given lab group and can be viewed as a “living document” that can be revised and contributed to by the PI and lab members over time. The **orientation** can provide an in-person or virtual tour of the space and the working conditions, as well as research capabilities. The **handbook** can be more comprehensive and could provide information on all important aspects of the academic research experience, including:

- Work-life balance
- Meetings (i.e., group and individual)
- Communication
- Social media
- Anti-bullying statements
- Value affirmations (e.g., scientific integrity, excellence, etc.)
- Reporting problems
- Co-authorship
- Conferences and travel
- Mental health
- Productivity expectations
- Links to relevant resources

FIELDWORK:

Field safety plans will vary depending on the individual nature of the research group field work, or class or department field trip. However, all safety plans should provide: 1) a field code of conduct; and 2) pre-departure orientation. Field safety plans should be discussed and agreed upon by all field participants prior to departure.

Field Code of Conduct:

As representatives of the UIC community, PIs and field instructors should create a field code of conduct that outlines professional and behavioral expectations when in the field. PIs and field instructors can adapt and modify their lab code of conduct to better suit the individual nature of the participants and field

location. The field code of conduct should also outline the procedures for documenting major and minor incidents of unacceptable behavior in the field, and the consequences of unacceptable behavior. Below are examples of a field safety plan and field code of conduct:

- Example [Safety Plan](#) in the field.
- Code of Conduct Examples – [Geology Field Trips at Whitman College](#)

Pre-departure Orientation:

Prior to departure to the field, it is important to allocate space and time when PIs and field instructors address field safety concerns through an orientation. This is to ensure the safety of the physical, mental, emotional, and social wellbeing of all participants. Specific attention should be paid to ensuring that all participants go into the field with the same level of preparedness and to making the field a welcoming and not a scary experience. The pre-departure orientation could provide information on the following:

- Field Code of Conduct
- Historical and cultural background of the site
- General outdoor preparedness including weather appropriate clothing, field friendly food, supplies (e.g. hygiene products) that will and will not be available at the site(s).
- Field guides/mentor system.
 - Pairing individuals with more field experience with individuals or groups with less field experience and being careful about power dynamics between students.
- Environmental Risk Assessment of site.
 - Hazardous plants and animals.
 - Other environmental hazards (cliffs, country roads, fast moving rivers, etc.)
- Racial Risk Assessment of site
 - This should be addressed in class prior to the trip with a serious and somber tone, with an emphasis on the team aspect of the field trip.
 - It is important to make students feel safe but not patronized.

ADDITIONAL TRAINING RESOURCES:

1. Preventing Harassment and Discrimination (Title IX) Training.
2. Annual Ethics Training
3. Environmental Health and Safety Trainings: <https://ehso.uic.edu/training/>