

# URGE

## Unlearning Racism in Geoscience



### Session 6

In this deliverable made by ESS Grad Student and Postdoc URGE Pod we based our specific safety plan on the official guidelines and policies of the Department of Earth and Space Sciences of the University of Washington. Our strategy is to suggest new sections and procedures that should be included in the official documents putting emphasis on racial risk in the field. We believe that because of the extraordinary circumstances that a field work implies, members of marginalized communities are more vulnerable to unsafe situations and here we propose a minimum plan to protect them.

The structure of the present document includes the links to the official policies with a description of their content, assuming that every plan from the university and college should apply to the department. The suggestions for a more inclusive code of conduct and development of field work guide are listed below.

#### **Guidelines and Policies that are currently in place at the department and university level:**

Earth & Space Sciences Department:

- [ESS Department Guidelines for Participants in Field Trips and Field Courses](#)- Field trip leaders must collect signed copies of this form from all field trip participants and submit a .pdf copy to the ESS Department Administrator prior to taking participants into the field.
- [ESS Field Trip Paperwork Policy](#)- Describes the paperwork that must be completed and signed by all field trip participants (including current/prospective students, TAs, and trip leaders) before they are taken into the field. Also describes roles of trip leaders and ESS Department Administrator related to field trip paperwork and important steps that field trip leaders must take to confirm that all drivers have completed the UW's Driver Safety and Awareness Training.

From UW Environmental Health and Safety:

- [UW Field Operations Safety Manual](#) - This is a big fairly comprehensive general safety document (117 pages). Amongst other items it goes over creating risk assessments and making safety plans, though is quite brief when it comes to racial risk assessments or listing unique risks for minoritized individuals. Sections relevant to creating inclusive field environments are listed at the end of this document.

*It should be noted that the departmental guidelines are not publicly available on the department website and are not even advertised broadly within the department. These materials should be more widely circulated and uniformly implemented.*

### **Additional items to add to the ESS documents**

1. Rights of field trip participants: ESS department guidelines detail the responsibilities that every student should have during fieldwork, however the rights of students are not mentioned. We suggest that students and staff participating in fieldwork should have a “rights card” including topics related to:
  - A. Information about the plans.
  - B. Freedom to express their concerns.
  - C. Supplies of equipment, shelter and food.
  - D. Social safety environment.
  - E. Medical Assistance.
  - F. Request to be evacuated of the field work if any of their rights are violated.
  
2. We also suggest that graduate assistants participate in the EPIC training for harassment prevention provided by peer leaders at the UW in addition to the standard CPR training as a required activity in their first quarter.
  - EPIC training - <https://www.washington.edu/safecampus/epic-program/>
  
3. Reporting resources that should be added to existing Field Trip Guidelines:
  - ESS DEI comment box: <https://tinyurl.com/ESSDEICommentBox>
  - ESS grad reps comment box: <https://catalyst.uw.edu/webq/survey/kelsst/399810>

### **New documents to create**

We would like to advocate for the creation of a new **field campaign checklist**. This checklist would be used for field research (not courses). We imagine a document that a graduate student, or professor, who is planning field work should review. The document would help guide the trip leader through planning logistics, required paperwork, field safety considerations, and considering the well-being of all participants. This document should also act as a template for facilitating pre-, mid-, and post-trip conversations among the participants regarding expectations for the trip, and scientific work resulting from it. This document would include but not be limited to:

- Pre trip planning
  - Creation of a safety plan or risk assessment for the specific location. Identity based risks should be included. Creation of a plan to exit the field or relocate in case of any unsafe conditions.
  - Field leader should solicit concerns from participants regarding the trip location and conditions of fieldwork (camping? Hotel? Shared rooms?). The Field leader should guarantee that everyone who is attending the trip has the proper equipment and access to any gear required for safe and comfortable fieldwork.
  - If any tasks are required to be done by members of the team (eg: shopping, groceries) details like limited budget, prohibition of specific products (eg: alcohol) and deadlines should be informed to avoid any misunderstandings.
  - Logistics guide: -transportation, how to rent department vehicles, -equipment, list of equipment available to rent through the department, -budget, what steps need to be taken ahead of field work to make sure that the budget is not exceeded and reimbursements are possible
- Pre-trip group member communication (discussion of field expectations)
  - Work schedule and daily work responsibilities and expectations: how many hours a day? Conditions and activities that will be done during the day (walking, hiking, driving, working in the sun, working in the rain, etc) How many meals? Are days off in between or after? What will the bathroom situation look like?
- During trip check-in guidelines
  - Introduction to the host community; if necessary and safe it is suggested to uniform the group with identifying clothing (eg: jacket, logo, institutional car) to guarantee the recognition of team members.
  - Encourage active daily check-ins with participants to find any situation or potential problems between team members or with non-UW participants when incidents are happening.
  - Adaptation of safety plans to new field conditions as necessary.
- Post trip review
  - Report of check-ins and summary of the fieldwork describing the normal and unusual situations occurred. Anonymous surveys of participants will be requested and analysed by a third neutral member of the Department trained for this role. This person can't be part of the fieldwork team that is analysed. It is

suggested to create a field trip committee that could take this task after fieldwork is done in the Department.

- Scientific discussion, What is the plan for the data collected, what are the expected authorship outcomes?

**Additional references/notes:**

Particularly relevant sections of the UW Field Operations Safety Manual include:

- Section 1-G: Creating Safe Learning Environments
- Section 1-H: Addressing Student/Participant Behavior in the Field
- Section 2: Planning and Preparation
  - B: preparing for potential field hazards and risks
- Section 3-F: Preventing and responding to harassment and violence  
"F. PREVENTING AND RESPONDING TO HARASSMENT AND VIOLENCE Standards for behavior and practices in the field should match those for activities on campus. This includes preventing harassment and discrimination based on culture, gender, race, sexual orientation, immigration status, and ability. Field leaders should ensure that all participants in their group are aware of this and have access to support and guidance in the field. When traveling to areas off campus, be mindful of discriminatory behaviors and practices that may be encountered. Know who to contact to report harassment or discrimination in the field, and include that information in your Field Safety Plan"
- Assembling a field safety plan examples Pg. 53

**[Respect and Equality in Fieldwork - UW Committee Report 2018](#)**

- Document "Preventing Harassment in Fieldwork Situations" - This is a thorough report of the types of policies that can be enacted at University, College, and Department levels to create healthy cultures in the field (recommendations)
- Pg. 5 summary of recommendations at the College/Departmental/Individual Researcher Level. Detailed recommendations on pg. 18 (section 3.3).

University Student Conduct Code:

<https://www.washington.edu/cssc/for-students/student-code-of-conduct/>