

URGE

Unlearning Racism in Geoscience

Unlearning Racism in Geoscience (URGE; www.urgeoscience.org) is a community-wide journal-reading and policy-design curriculum to help Geoscientists unlearn racism and improve accessibility, justice, equity, and inclusion (AJEDI) in our discipline. URGE's primary objectives are to (1) deepen the community's knowledge of the effects of racism on the participation and retention of black, brown, and indigenous people in Geoscience¹, (2) use the existing literature, expert opinion, and personal experiences to develop anti-racist policies and strategies^{2,3}, and (3) share, discuss, and modify anti-racist policies and strategies within a dynamic community network and on a national stage. By meeting these objectives, we hope that Geoscience departments and societies will be able to implement a well-researched crowdsourced group of anti-racist policies.

Deliverable - Safety Plan

Education is essential but action is also imperative for achieving the objectives of URGE. Therefore, each URGE topic is paired with deliverables for individual pods to draft and share. This deliverable is a safety plan, whether you work in a laboratory or in remote field settings.

Consider spaces in your organization as well as in the broader geosciences that have barriers to access for people of color. Much of the attention on this topic has been regarding field work⁴ but this also applies to spaces closer to home, e.g. a Black graduate student walking home late from lab work may be more likely to be stopped and questioned by police. Consider that Black, Brown, Indigenous, and other people of color will face different challenges from one another.

Suggested discussion questions:

- Where is your work done? Are these spaces uncomfortable or unsafe for people of color?
- What training does your organization require or offer? How often? Do you find this training effective? What would you introduce to make it more effective?

Deliverable: Develop and publish a safety plan specific to your pod (lab, university, organization). This safety plan should include a code of conduct as well as a process for reporting violations, as covered in your Complaints and Reporting Policy deliverable from Session 2. Outline training resources that are available and requirements for antidiscrimination, bystander intervention, and de-escalation training. For field work, include a racial risk assessment of sites, a pre-departure checklist of discussions within the field team, procedures for documenting incidents in the field, as well as additional required or supported training⁵. This safety plan can (and should be) a work in progress that is revisited and refined.

- Example Safety Plan: (Demery & Pipkin, 2021) www.preprints.org/manuscript/202008.0021⁶
- Example Code of Conduct: [Basin Research Group](https://www.basinresearchgroup.org/inclusivity-and-diversity) (under "Inclusivity and Diversity")
- More Resources: https://serc.carleton.edu/advancegeo/resources/field_work.html

Pods should upload their safety plans to the URGE website by 4/16/21. We also encourage pods to post on their organization's website and share over social media (#URGEoscience & tag @URGEoscience). Sharing deliverables will propagate ideas, foster discussion, and ensure accountability.

¹R. E. Bernard, E. H. G. Cooperdock, No progress on diversity in 40 years. *Nature Publishing Group*. 11, 1–5 (2018).

²<https://notimeforsilence.org/>

³<https://www.change.org/p/geoscientists-call-for-a-robust-anti-racism-plan-for-the-geosciences>

⁴www.sciencefriday.com/segments/making-outdoors-inclusive

⁵J. Anadu, H. Ali, C. Jackson, Ten steps to protect BIPOC scholars in the field, *Eos*, 101, DOI: [10.1029/2020EO150525](https://doi.org/10.1029/2020EO150525) (2020).

⁶AJ.C. Demery, M.A. Pipkin, Safe fieldwork strategies for at-risk individuals, their supervisors and institutions. *Nat Ecol Evol*, (2021).

Codes of Conduct

- [Student Conduct Code \(www.wvu.edu\)](http://www.wvu.edu) - provides code of conduct, but work should be done to incorporate more language with respect to anti-racism
- NOTE: There is no current WWU Geology Department code of conduct. We **recommend** the Geology Department **draft a department code of conduct**, with a specific section or separate code of conduct in the class and research related field work.
- NOTE: We **recommend** developing a **field safety rights document for students**

Process for reporting violations

Bias incidents can be reported using references in the Unit 2 deliverables and include:

- The Geology Department Bias Reporting Form
- The CSE Bias Reporting Form
- The WWU Bias Response Team Reporting Form
- The WWU Title IX Coordinator Reporting Form

Training resources

The resources below are available and requirements for antidiscrimination, bystander intervention, and de-escalation training.

- STEM Campus Equity and Inclusion Forum Workshops for Faculty
- DEI Training all WWU students <https://pws.wvu.edu/diversity-equity-inclusion-training> that includes de-escalation training.
- NOTE: We **recommend** that **de-escalation training be offered to anyone participating in field work** for teaching or research purposes.
- Faculty and graduate students teaching spring and summer field courses take Wilderness First Aid training paid for the by the department.
- NOTE: We **recommend** that **Wilderness First Aid training be offered to any faculty or student participating in field work** for teaching or research purposes.
- Faculty, graduate, and undergraduate students who drive vehicles must take mandatory van safety training.
- Faculty, graduate, and undergraduate students working in Geology Department lab spaces must complete mandatory lab safety training and any equipment specific training.

Field Safety plan

1. Faculty that work and teach in field settings should participate in:
 - a. STEM Campus Equity and Inclusion Forum Workshops
 - b. Wilderness First Aid Training
2. Before traveling, faculty should lead collaborative discussions with field participants to:
 - a. Explain policies and rules practiced in field communities that may be unfamiliar to the fieldwork team.
 - b. Identify discriminatory or race-related incidents that could occur in the field.
 - c. Establish group norms during field work.
3. Prior to departure, faculty should use the resources at [Field Course Safety \(www.wvu.edu\)](http://www.wvu.edu) to:
 - a. Develop a risk management plan.
 - b. Evaluate the accident and incident reporting procedure.
 - c. Create a student participant list.
 - d. NOTE: We **recommend** that field safety plan above should be revised to **incorporate**

racial, gender, and identify risk assessment of field sites.

- e. Share the above resources/expectations/risks with field participants.
- 4. While in the field
 - a. Faculty should be initially present to introduce team members to property owners or stake holders.
 - b. Faculty should initially be present and assess and discuss any possible risks or incident that team members may encounter.
 - c. Address any bias incidents as they occur to deescalate the situation.
 - d. Take notes of any injuries or hostile encounters.
- 5. After returning from the field, faculty should:
 - a. Document any injuries that occurred that occurred in the field, regardless of the severity using the reporting forms at [Field Course Safety \(www.wvu.edu\)](http://www.wvu.edu).
 - b. Document any hostile encounters members experienced in the field, regardless of the severity using the bias reporting resources above.
 - c. NOTE: We **recommend** the [Field Course Safety \(www.wvu.edu\)](http://www.wvu.edu) guidelines be revised to **include resources for reporting bias or harassment incidents while working in the field.**

*This safety plan can (and should be) a work in progress that is revisited and refined.