

## URGE Deliverable 6: Field Work Code of Conduct for Yale EPS

This deliverable was prepared by Jennifer Kasbohm, Alexie Millikin, Dalton Meyer, Brian Beaty, and Timothy Gibson, inspired by the fieldwork code of conduct Kasbohm helped draft at Princeton University. In preparing this deliverable, it became clear that this is the first of many field-related documents and policies that should be drafted and defined to make all department-sponsored field experiences as inclusive, equitable, and safe as possible. Following discussions with IDEA Committee Chair Maureen Long, we plan to first seek faculty approval to implement this *Code of Conduct*, and then create a Fieldwork Working Group of interested grad students, postdocs, and faculty in Fall 2021 that will be tasked with creating and seeking departmental approval for the following initiatives, to be implemented on all future department field trips and field work:

- All department trips should be supplied with a standardized pre-departure packet that will include
  - A packing list that can be tailored to each trip location
  - A site-specific risk assessment, with a particular focus on possible discrimination against minoritized participants
  - Best practices document for promoting accessibility in the field (building upon the enclosed table in [Kingsbury et al., 2020](#))
  - Best practices document for engaging with local/indigenous communities (documented in URGE Deliverable 4 by Sophie Westacott and Tom Reershemius Matras)
  - Best practices on bathroom usage ([Greene et al., 2020](#))
  - Medical and dietary questionnaires, to be completed by all participants and reviewed by the trip leader
- To promote the safety of all participants, each trip leader will be required to take a Wilderness First Aid class funded by the department. The IDEA Committee is currently reaching out to the Wilderness Medicine Section in Yale's Department of Emergency Medicine to find out about training options that could be offered annually in EPS. All department members would be welcome, though not required, to participate
- The department should standardize means of communication with individuals in the field, making sure all trips bring a satellite phone and inReach texting device that are available to all trip participants
- The department should sponsor day hikes and camping skills workshops during the academic year/prior to breaks so that students are not experiencing these for the first time when traveling far from campus
- The department should begin collecting lightly used field gear that can be loaned to students for use on class trips
- The department needs to draft and implement a post-field survey, required of all participants and read by Department leadership to maintain a written record of troubling or positive field experiences
- The department needs to define, articulate, and implement consequences for violating this code of conduct.

## Department of Earth & Planetary Sciences Code of Conduct in the Field

An important part of the research and teaching mission of the Department of Earth & Planetary Sciences is conducted away from Campus, often in remote and isolated locales: the “Field”, for short.

Many of us find field work rewarding in ways different from the satisfaction that we may get from “regular” laboratory or office work. Unusual, sometimes unpredictable, non-campus settings, the great outdoors, the camaraderie of a ship’s crew or field party: all are aspects that may make field work *seem* out of the ordinary. None of these should detract from the fact that field work is, quite simply, *work*.

Wherever field research or instruction are conducted, for whatever purpose, and in whosever company, field safety is every bit as important as lab safety, in every aspect. Similarly, Yale University’s Policy on Environmental Health & Safety apply while traveling and in the field every bit as much as on campus.

Fieldwork is also a *privilege*. Since the Department grants the right for students, employees, and faculty to travel and conduct field work, it can also take it away.

Our *Code of Conduct in the Field* is meant to supplement Yale’s Policy on Environmental Health & Safety for the particular circumstances under which field work is conducted. By extension it applies to all travel, and thus also to conference travel and attendance.

It is a *compact* between all of us, as a community. Each time you sign it, you have read and understood it, you agree to abide by it, to be bound by it, and to live up to it.

To the greatest extent possible, the Department seeks to make the field an inclusive and accessible educational environment. Prior to selecting field localities, trip leaders should carry out a site-specific risk assessment, paying particular attention to whether or not a given location is safe and welcoming for **all participants**, especially those with minoritized identities, including but not limited to race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender, and disability.

Upon your return, the Department will collect and monitor feedback on your experiences in the field. We will do so by a questionnaire that will ask specific questions, including on your experience with the conduct of supervisors, peers, and supervisees, so that we can follow up as appropriate.

*The Code on the next page provides a list of preparations that must be made by yourself or that you have the right to expect from the expedition leaders. Leaders and participants in field expeditions should use the Code as a set of guidelines in preparing for the expedition with adequate time and consideration for each of the bulleted items. These preparations are separate from—but equal in importance to—the scientific preparation that you will make for your field work.*

Signed by the Chair, DGS, DUS, DPA,

## Department of Earth & Planetary Sciences Code of Conduct in the Field

As I, \_\_\_\_\_, am about to conduct field work in \_\_\_\_\_, for the period of \_\_\_\_\_, I affirm that I have read and understood Yale University's Policy on Environmental Health & Safety here: <https://provost.yale.edu/policies/university-policy-environmental-health-safety>. In addition, I affirm that:

- If I am a **trip leader**, I have
  - Made every effort to select localities that will be safe for all participants, especially those from minoritized backgrounds
  - Completed, distributed, and discussed a site-specific risk assessment document for all participants
  - Engaged with participants needing disability-related accommodations to be guided by their input on how I can help them learn and thrive in the field
  - Reviewed the "Best Practices for Engaging with Local Communities" document, and made an effort to incorporate these practices into my trip planning
  - Participated in the annual EPS-sponsored Wilderness First Aid class, or received and documented similar training obtained elsewhere
  - Created an itinerary for the trip (to the best of my ability), and shared it with the EPS emergency contact for this trip and all trip participants.
  - Tailored the EPS field trip packing list shared with all participants to our specific destination
  - Committed, to the best of my ability, to lead by example in upholding every item in this *Code of Conduct*, to promote the safety and education of all trip participants
- I have had the opportunity to discuss any issues with trip organizers and fellow travelers. In order to prepare for my trip, I have been made aware in advance of **training options** in which I could partake to increase my comfort level and experience. I have reviewed the information enclosed in the accompanying trip preparation packet and have filled out the required medical and dietary questionnaires.
- I have been given and have **reviewed the itinerary**. I have been made aware of country- and culture-specific issues which may affect my personal comfort and safety, and accept the risks as they have been described to me, though, as stated below, I also have the right to request removal from the field if I find the environment unsafe.
- I have a right to **first-aid materials and supplies**, and to expect fellow travelers (including myself) trained in how to use them. Examples of adequate training include, but are not limited to: First Responder and CPR Training certificates, Outdoor & Wilderness Guide certificates, etc.
- I have a right to **personal space, free from bullying or harassment**. I cannot be compelled into situations where a power imbalance could cause harm or unreasonable discomfort, as may arise in situations involving only *two* persons. I can give input and feedback on group assignments.
- I have a right to **personal care**. While I understand that hygienic facilities may be below Campus standards, I have a right to sanitation, resting and sleeping arrangements that make the best of local circumstances. I am comfortable with the field-site specific constraints as communicated to me.
- I have a right to **adequate nourishment**, and at no point should I be forced or feel compelled to partake in the consumption of alcohol, for which alternatives must always be

available. I have had the opportunity to communicate and make arrangements for dietary restrictions and medical needs by filling out the pre-departure questionnaire.

- I have been given the means to contact and **notify a campus advocate** in case unwelcome situations arise. I have a right to use the satellite phone or my cell phone in a private location, without questions asked. My campus advocates have the power and the means to extricate me from such situations as expediently as possible and will reimburse related expenses. I received and reviewed the enclosed additional materials.
- I have a right to **be heard, file a complaint, and receive assistance**, about any aspect of my field experience that I deem transgressive of any of Yale's Policy on Environmental Health & Safety, or this *Code of Conduct in the Field*. I have received and reviewed the enclosed additional materials with details.
- **I will not engage in any of the following unacceptable behaviors:**
  - Harassment, sexual harassment, bullying, or discrimination in any form. This includes, but is not limited to: verbal comments related to gender, sexual orientation, disability, physical appearance, body size, race, religion, national origin; inappropriate use of nudity and/or sexual images in public spaces; threatening or stalking any participant
  - Physical or verbal abuse of any participant or community member
  - Reckless behavior that would endanger myself or others
  - Drinking or using other legal intoxicants to the extent that your ability to act professionally is compromised
  - Any use of illegal substances
- Should I allow, enable, or engage in any of the aforementioned unacceptable behaviors, **the consequences may include (but are not limited to):**
  - Immediate removal from the field
  - Prohibition on my leading or participating in future EPS-sponsored fieldwork or field trips
  - Notification of my supervisor and department leadership of my unacceptable behavior
  - Mediation and counseling
  - University-mandated consequences resulting from investigations by Title IX of the Office of Institutional Equity and Access

I am signing and dating this document without coercion and filing it with the Department of Earth & Planetary Sciences where it shall remain on file for the indefinite future, accompanied by my post-trip survey.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

### **Mechanisms for Contact and Reporting**

If you have witnessed or have been a victim of a violation of local laws, it may be pertinent to contact local law enforcement. To discuss whether the Code of Conduct in the Field is being met, or to report a violation thereof, engage the field leader, another member of the field party, the Chair, Associate Chair, the Director of Graduate Studies, or the Director of Undergraduate Studies.

For this particular trip to \_\_\_\_\_, for the period of \_\_\_\_\_, the Department of Geosciences Campus contact is: \_\_\_\_\_.

The persons above are *not* confidential resources and may be mandated to report incidents. If you are not comfortable reporting to any of the above points of contact, do not hesitate to contact the support services at Yale University, listed below.

## **Yale University Confidential Resources**

Confidential Resources are support and advocacy services on Campus that are available for consultation and reporting. Information shared with Confidential Resources (including information about whether an individual has received services) will only be disclosed to the Title IX Coordinator or any other person with the individual's express written permission, unless there is an imminent threat of serious harm to the individual or to others, or a legal obligation to reveal such information.

### **Sexual Harassment and Assault Response & Education Center (SHARE)**

55 Lock Street, Lower Level  
New Haven CT 06511  
24-hr hotline: (203)432-2000  
<https://sharecenter.yale.edu/>

### **Office of Institutional Equity and Access**

Provides avenues for filing formal complaints of discrimination or harassment other than gender discrimination or sexual misconduct. All inquiries are confidential.  
<https://student-dhr.yale.edu/>

#### *Contact:*

Valarie Stanley, Senior Director; [valarie.stanley@yale.edu](mailto:valarie.stanley@yale.edu); (203)432-0849

#### *or the following Deans' Designees:*

Graduate School of Arts & Sciences: Michelle Nearson, Dean of Graduate Student Development and Diversity; [michelle.nearson@yale.edu](mailto:michelle.nearson@yale.edu)  
Yale College: Melanie Boyd, Dean of Student Affairs; [melanie.boyd@yale.edu](mailto:melanie.boyd@yale.edu)  
Burgwell Howard, Senior Associate Dean of Yale College; [burgwell.howard@yale.edu](mailto:burgwell.howard@yale.edu)

### **Mental Health & Counseling**

55 Lock Street, 3rd floor  
New Haven CT 06511  
(203)432-0123; 24-hr acute care: (203)432-0123  
<https://yalehealth.yale.edu/directory/departments/mental-health-counseling>

### **Student Accessibility Services**

35 Broadway (rear), Room 222  
New Haven, CT 06520  
(203)432-2324; [sas.yale.edu](https://sas.yale.edu)

### **Walden Peer Counseling (undergrads)**

*Confidential counseling staffed by Yale undergraduates*  
Welch Hall basement, Entryway B, room A-05  
New Haven, CT 06511  
8pm-2am EST hotline: (203)432-8255  
<https://walden.sites.yale.edu/> ; [walden.counseling@gmail.com](mailto:walden.counseling@gmail.com)

ESM to Kingsbury et al (2020): “Nothing about us without us:” *The perspectives of Autistic geoscientists on inclusive instructional practices in geoscience education.* Journal of Geoscience Education.

*Challenges Autistic individuals may experience in the field, and potential solutions to these issues*

	<b>Challenges Experienced</b>	<b>Suggested management techniques</b>
<b>Sun Protection</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sunscreen is famous for its “slimy” feeling</li> <li>• Sunglasses change visual input</li> <li>• Hats and bandanas are a potentially novel article of clothing that takes acclimation.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pre-trip, provide information about different forms of sun protection, show pictures, and if possible, have different options available for students to try.</li> </ul>
<b>Field Clothing &amp; Shoes</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Textures and sounds of “quick-dry” field/outdoor clothes can be extremely uncomfortable</li> <li>• field clothes have a different “fit” from everyday clothes worn in a classroom</li> <li>• Boots are heavier/more restricting than shoes</li> <li>• Finding clothing that is both tolerable for the student and provide appropriate levels of protection and functionality for field conditions is something best handled by the individual student.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Let students know what the parameters for “appropriate field clothing” are for your trip. (Do they need long pants? Why/Are jeans inappropriate in this setting? What types of cloth/materials make the best layers? Will they be getting wet, and if so, what are the options for drying off or changing clothes?).</li> <li>• Provide or suggest shorter opportunities to practice field activities while wearing field clothes prior to bigger trips, to experiment and learn what works best.</li> </ul>
<b>Bathroom Needs</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students may have to use the bathroom in situations that they have not encountered before. This is not specific to Autistic students, although autistic students specifically may not have the social scripts to know how to ask.</li> <li>• For in-depth discussion, see Greene et al. (2019)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prior to the trip (in lecture, course website/syllabus) discuss resources available for taking care of bathroom needs within the parameters of your trip.</li> <li>• Share bathroom availability information</li> <li>• Include relevant supplies on the packing list.</li> </ul>
<b>Food, Mealtimes, and Meal Prep</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Many autistic people are very sensitive to the textures and tastes of food, making it difficult or impossible to simply eat whatever food is provided. Autistic people in particular, may find that it is easier to tolerate ‘hunger’ than to tolerate the sensory input of certain foods. This can lead to restricting intake.</li> <li>• <u>Preparing Meals:</u> On trips where the students are responsible for their own food, autistic students may struggle to share kitchen facilities with many others, or not have a group of peers they feel comfortable joining to make meals. may struggle to buy and organize their food needs for the duration of the trip.</li> <li>• <u>Scheduling:</u> Without a designated period in which to eat lunch, autistic students may struggle to know when to eat or chose not to eat for fear of falling behind with work.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Share the specific contents/plans for each meal with the class prior to the trip &amp; solicit suggestions for food</li> <li>• Plan for flexible meals that let each student ‘construct’ their own final dish.</li> <li>• Encourage students to bring their own snacks; give examples of good and bad field snacks. This also gives the permission for students to determine whether/how they will need to supplement whatever food is being provided.</li> <li>• On trips where students are responsible for their own food, ensure meal plans and shopping lists are made before the trip. Provide examples</li> <li>• Where feasible, distribute students between multiple kitchen spaces</li> <li>• Designate a time in the day where the expectation is that everyone will stop working to eat lunch, drink water, etc.</li> </ul>

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*Challenges Autistic individuals may experience in the field, and potential solutions to these issues (cont)*

	<b>Challenges Experienced</b>	<b>Suggested management techniques</b>
<b>Weather</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Autistic students may be particularly sensitive to being wet or muddy.</li> <li>• Being caught in unexpected or severe weather can be scary.</li> <li>• It is common for autistic individuals to have impaired body temperature regulation or struggle to recognize when to add or remove layers of clothing in the field.</li> <li>• Students may be too anxious to ask everyone to wait for them to adjust layers or drink water.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Share weather forecast ahead of time</li> <li>• Suggest appropriate gear and clothing</li> <li>• Provide specific information about accommodations and schedule: knowing when they will be able to get clean/dry can help an uncomfortable student stay focused on the task at hand, rather than on the fact that they are cold, wet, &amp; muddy.</li> <li>• Have regular, announced, 5-minute breaks for everyone to adjust layers or have a drink/ snack without concerns of being left behind.</li> </ul>
<b>Visual processing</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Some autistic individuals see the world in “higher definition”, observing and recording extreme detail in outcrops whether or not those details are pertinent to the main problem they are at the outcrop to solve.</li> <li>• Intense visual information can drive overloaded and tire the autistic student more quickly.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prior to arrival on the outcrop, prime students about potential observations to prepare for, what specifically to focus on, and what details can be ignored,</li> <li>• Include these focus questions/concepts in the field guide where possible.</li> </ul>
<b>Noise sensitivity/ Auditory processing</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Many autistics are hypersensitive to noises, particularly unfamiliar noises (e.g. the sound of boots scuffing over dry rocks, rushing wind, road noise, or the sound of unfamiliar fabrics rubbing on each other), which can cause significant distress, pain, and contribute to overloading and shut-down.</li> <li>• Difficulty filtering this input may make it challenging to hear, understand or process what is being said in the field.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Many noises in the field are unavoidable, but an awareness of their impact will go a long way to reducing an autistic person's anxiety.</li> <li>• When giving introductions, summaries, or having group discussions, ensure that only one person is talking at once, and pick a location that minimizes other distractions.</li> <li>• Ear plugs or ear defenders may be beneficial (though not for everyone), and short breaks to recover from overstimulation should be allowed for.</li> </ul>
<b>Asking for help</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Anxiety or the challenges involved with starting or maintaining a conversation means that some autistic individuals hugely struggle to self-advocate, particularly in real-time:</li> <li>• A student may not know <i>how</i> or <i>when</i> to ask for help, who to talk to, or even what to bring up to an instructor if it hasn't been asked about specifically.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assign a point of contact who the autistic student is familiar with (friend, teaching assistant, professor, support person), who they can explicitly discuss any concerns, questions, or comments with, no matter how small or irrelevant they might seem.</li> <li>• Provide ample opportunities for students to ask questions both in a group setting and individually. Make it clear that this is an acceptable and expected thing to do.</li> <li>• Ex: have each student write down a question, and then discuss their question with their neighbor or the professor or teaching assistant.</li> </ul>