**TEMPLATE PLAN FOR SAFE AND INCLUSIVE RESEARCH ENVIRONMENTS FOR   
OFF-CAMPUS OR OFF-SITE RESEARCH ACTIVITY**

1. **Introduction**

Columbia University is committed to providing a learning, living, and working environment free from prohibited discrimination and harassment and to fostering a nurturing and vibrant community founded upon the fundamental dignity and worth of all of its members. Each individual has the right to work and learn in a professional atmosphere that promotes equal employment opportunities and prohibits discrimination and harassment. This commitment applies to all activity sponsored by the University, whether on or off campus.

It is also NSF policy to “foster safe and harassment-free environments wherever science is conducted.” (NSF 2023 PAPPG II-E.9) NSF’s [policy](https://beta.nsf.gov/policies/pappg/23-1/ch-2-proposal-preparation#2E9) recognizes that a community effort is essential to eliminate sexual and other forms of harassment in science and to build inclusive scientific climates where people can learn, grow, and thrive. Accordingly, for each proposal that proposes to conduct research off-campus or off site, NSF requires a certification that the proposing organization has a plan in place *for that proposal* that describes how the following types of behavior will be addressed:

* Abuse of any person, including, but not limited to, harassment, stalking, bullying, or hazing of any kind, whether the behavior is carried out verbally, physically, electronically, or in written form; or
* Conduct that is unwelcome, offensive, indecent, obscene, or disorderly.

NSF states that this plan should also identify steps the proposing organization will take to nurture an inclusive off-campus or off-site working environment, e.g., trainings; processes to establish shared team definitions of roles, responsibilities, and culture, e.g., codes of conduct; and field support, such as mentor/mentee support mechanisms, regular check-ins, and/or developmental events.

NSF requires this plan to be disseminated to individuals participating in the off-campus or off-site research prior to departure.  Proposers should not submit the plan to NSF for review unless it is requested.

NSF defines “off-campus or off-site research” as “data/information/samples being collected off-campus or off-site, such as fieldwork on research vessels and aircraft.”

This Plan has three (four if applicable) additional sections. **Section 2** of this document outlines the plan specific to the off-campus research planned for the project described therein.[[1]](#footnote-1) **Section 3** outlines University-wide policies and resources that support safe and inclusive work environments, in accordance with NSF requirements and the University’s own expectations. **Section 4** outlines University-wide trainings and other resources to promote safe and inclusive work environments**. Section 5** references school- and unit-specific resources, if any are applicable.

1. **Project-Specific Plan**

Principal investigators must complete Part 2 below for the specific project and then distribute Parts 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5 if applicable, to all participants in the field or off-site activity.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| NSF Grant Number: |  |
| Principal Investigator Name and Contact Info  (include cell and/or email) |  |
| Off-Campus Location |  |
| Description of off-campus research activity (fieldwork, research activities on vessels or aircraft, work in an off-campus location, etc.) |  |
| Estimated Departure Date |  |
| Estimated Return Date |  |
| Will participants have regular internet or cell service available? *(If no, what alternate arrangements are in place for participants to report suspected misconduct?)* |  |
| Will participants from other entities (governmental, company, sponsor, educational institutions, subrecipients) be involved? *If yes, are there any special arrangements needed to make sure any misconduct involving these individuals is reported?* |  |
| Recommended contact for any suspected misbehavior *(note: participants remain free to use this contact or any other contact they prefer to report misconduct including contacts on the following pages)* |  |
| Are there any special circumstances that necessitate special plans? *(e.g., participants are at sea without ability to make contact with land, only a single satellite phone is available for the group, no local transportation to a safe space is likely to be available, variance in cultural norms might necessitate advance awareness training).* If yes, describe those circumstances and the arrangements in place to assure misconduct can be reported or safe alternatives made available. |  |
| Other comments or information that participants may find useful. |  |

1. **Columbia’s Commitment to Safe and Inclusive Research Environments**

All employees, applicants for employment, interns (paid or unpaid), students, contractors and people conducting business with the University are protected from prohibited conduct. The University does not tolerate unlawful discrimination, harassment, sexual assault, domestic violence, dating violence, stalking, or sexual exploitation and all such conduct is prohibited by Columbia University Policy. Some specific examples of behaviors that will not be tolerated during University-sponsored programs or activities include, but are not limited to:

* engaging in biased, demeaning, intimidating, coercive, harassing, or hostile conduct or commentary, on the basis of age, alienage or citizenship status; arrest or conviction record; caregiver status; color; credit history; creed; disability; familial status; gender (sex); gender identity; genetic predisposition or carrier status; lactation accommodation; marital status; national origin; pregnancy; race; religion; salary history; sexual or reproductive health decisions; sexual orientation; status as a victim of domestic violence, stalking, or sex offenses; unemployment status; veteran or active military status; or any other protected characteristic as established by law;
* retaliation against reporting of conduct concerns or assisting in conflict resolution;
* engaging in any of the above behaviors in an online platform (e.g., Zoom).

The Office of [Equal Opportunity and Affirmative Action Policies and Procedures](https://eoaa.columbia.edu/content/eoaa-policies-and-procedures-1) (“EOAA Policies & Procedures”) are designed to establish a non-discriminatory work and educational environment and to meet relevant legal requirements.[[2]](#footnote-2)

These Policies apply to any University-sponsored program, including programs that take place off-campus or in the field or on an online platform (e.g., Zoom).

The EOAA Policies and Procedures also govern the conduct of third parties that occurs on any University campus, in connection with University-sponsored programs or activities that take place off-campus, and/or University-sponsored programs or activities occurring in an online format (e.g., Zoom).

The University strongly encourages those who have experienced, witnessed, or become aware of conduct that violates EOAA Policies & Procedures to come forward promptly so that the University can take appropriate steps to prevent such conduct from occurring in the future and to ameliorate its effects. EOAA has a variety of resources available that support individuals affected by harassment. The University will respond to any reports related to this field or off-site activity in accordance with the applicable EOAA Policies and Procedures. The University will protect the privacy of those who come forward to the extent possible and permissible by law.

If you believe that you have been subjected to, witnessed, or have otherwise learned of conduct prohibited by EOAA’s Policies & Procedures, you may notify the University in any of the following ways:

→ Via online report

→ By email at eoaa@columbia.edu

→ By phone at (212) 854-5511

→ By mail at 103 Low Library, MC 4333, 535 West 116th Street, New York, NY 10027; or

→ By hand delivery to 103 Low Library.

→ Title IX Coordinator

• Email: titleix@columbia.edu

• Phone: 212-843-1276

• Mailing Address: Kent Hall, 201(A), 1150 Amsterdam Ave., New York, NY 10027

1. **Additional Policies, Training and Resources to Promote Safe and Inclusive Work Environments**

The University has a number of policies, trainings and resources for all members of the University community to promote safe and inclusive work environments. Some of these are highlighted below. In addition, individual schools and units may have their own, additional resources.

* All Columbia personnel must complete [New York Anti-Harassment Training](https://eoaa.columbia.edu/content/new-york-anti-sexual-harassment-training) annually, including but not limited to faculty, staff, researchers, contractors and student workers.
* Columbia’s [Policies on Romantic and Sexual Relationships](https://eoaa.columbia.edu/content/romantic-and-sexual-relationships) prohibit such relationships between faculty or other supervisory personnel and any undergraduate student, as well as, in many circumstances, between faculty or other supervisory personnel and graduate students.
* EOAA offers a [briefing](https://columbia.sabacloud.com/Saba/Web_spf/NA3P1PRD0112/common/leclassview/dowbt000000000027600) for Columbia faculty and researchers concerning student resources, policies and Title IX. This briefing is in addition to the anti-harassment training referenced above, and is required for all full-time and part-time officers of instruction and research.
* Columbia’s [Statement of Ethical Conduct](https://universitypolicies.columbia.edu/content/statement-ethical-conduct-and-administrative-code-conduct) expects all officers of instruction, research, libraries, athletics, and administration; support staff; and students to maintain the highest standards of ethical conduct.
* Columbia’s [Institutional Policy on Misconduct in Research](https://research.columbia.edu/research-misconduct) governs allegations of falsification, fabrication or plagiarism in research.
* Columbia’s [Policy on Non-Retaliation](https://universitypolicies.columbia.edu/content/columbia-university-non-retaliation-policy) prohibits retaliation against those who report or seek guidance on ethical or compliance issues.
* EOAA publishes a list of [points of contact](https://eoaa.columbia.edu/content/campus-resources), including community and confidential resources.
* The [Office of University Life](https://universitylife.columbia.edu/) offers resources regarding inclusion and belonging, including, for example:
  + [Columbia’s Commitment to Antiracism](https://universitylife.columbia.edu/content/columbias-commitment-anti-racism)
  + [Resources for Promoting Social Justice and Combating Bias](https://universitylife.columbia.edu/content/promoting-social-justice-combating-bias)
* The [Office of Postdoctoral Affairs](https://research.columbia.edu/office-postdoctoral-affairs) offers resources for postdocs, including postdoc career development and wellness resources.

1. **Applicable School- or Unit-specific Resources, if any,** including the [Lamont Code of Conduct](https://diversity.ldeo.columbia.edu/sites/default/files/content/Lamont%20Code%20of%20Conduct%202019.pdf), for Lamont-Doherty Earth Observatory projects

1. Section 1 is based on a template created by University of Minnesota and is included with its permission. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. These include: Titles VI and VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964; Title IX of the Education Amendments Act of 1972; relevant sections of the Violence Against Women Reauthorization Act; the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Age Discrimination in Employment Act of 1967, New York State Education and Human Rights Laws, and New York City laws that prohibit discrimination on the basis of certain enumerated categories. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)