

January 23, 2023

University of Rochester Interim Procedure and Policy to Ensure Safe and Inclusive Working Environments for Off-Site Research and Training

The University of Rochester is committed to maintaining a workplace and academic/research environment free from discrimination and harassment. This commitment extends not only to research conducted on campus, but to research conducted off site. All participants taking part in off-campus research and training activities must be afforded protections to ensure a safe and inclusive environment. The University's research sponsors are also committed to this goal, and the National Science Foundation (NSF) has recently instituted new requirements for off-site research or training.

NSF requires all proposals submitted or due on or after January 30, 2023, involving off-site research or training to have a plan ensuring a safe and inclusive environment. Given that the preponderance of NSF grants are awarded to AS&E, AS&E has proactively outlined a process and is making tools available to **all** NSF funded investigators. Any University of Rochester employee, regardless of school or unit, planning a submission to NSF that will entail such off-site work should follow the procedures outlined below.

1. As soon as possible before any NSF proposal submission involving off-site research, the PI should meet with the Dean for Diversity in AS&E (Beth Olivares, beth.olivares@rochester.edu), or her designee, to discuss the program scope, location(s) and anticipated number and kind of participants. The Dean or designee will familiarize the PI with the University of Rochester *Code of Conduct for Off-Site Research Activities (currently in draft)*, including the reporting, investigation and follow up processes involved if the policy is violated. The PI will receive guidance on training available to and required of them and establish a timeline for completion of said training should the proposal be funded (see also item 5 below).
2. The PI will obtain permissions as needed, familiarize themselves with best practices and, in the case of PIs who have not yet led off-site field research, connect with faculty members either within their fields or in different fields who have established successful sites for mentoring and additional help.
3. The Dean for Diversity or Designee will review the plan and communicate to the relevant school office of research, or if appropriate, the University Office of the Vice President for Research, that the PI has completed the necessary initial requirements for NSF submission.
4. On submission of the proposal to ORPA, the inclusion of off-site fieldwork will be brought to the attention of the relevant school Dean of Research or Dean. Final review and approval prior to submission to NSF will be required by the designated individual in the Dean's office.

5. Based on the consultations described above (#1), and when the grant is funded, the PI will compose a final plan to address the requirements of the University of Rochester *Code of Conduct for Off-Site Research Activities*. This should include a timeline of activities and may include review, group training and pre-trip meetings with representatives of relevant University offices (e.g., Global Engagement). This written plan will form documentation that initial NSF requirements to ensure a safe and inclusive working environment for off campus/off site research have been addressed. The final plan should be filed with the AS&E Dean for Diversity office.

6. The plan and attendant paperwork (e.g., participant Code of Conduct for Off-Site Research form; Acknowledgement of Risks if needed) will be held in the relevant Department.

Note: While this is a requirement for grants submitted on or after January 30, 2023, best practice suggests that the procedures outlined here should also be adopted retroactively to all PIs who have off-site research or training funded by NSF. If other research sponsors implement similar requirements, the Office of the Vice President for Research will work with the University schools/colleges to implement processes and tools that will similarly be available to investigators and research administrators.

Best regards,
Steve

Steve Dewhurst, PhD
Interim Vice President for Research