

Safe and Inclusive Working Environments for Off-Campus or Off-Site Research

University of Rochester

Last updated: July 28, 2024

Procedure—applies to faculty in any UR school seeking NSF or NASA funding for off-site research, including co-PIs in collaborative proposals, whether or not UR is the lead proposer.

Any faculty member or group of faculty members planning a submission to NSF or NASA that will entail off-site¹ research activity will adhere to the following procedure, **which should occur as early as possible in the proposal development process:**

1. The PI will meet with the Associate Vice Provost for Academic Equity (AVP Beth Olivares) or her designee (Pia Møller) to discuss the proposed project. The PI should provide the entire proposal to the AVP or designee, to ensure that the plan developed is fully appropriate. This conversation and proposal review will include a discussion of the scope, location(s) and anticipated number and kind of participants in the off-site project. The AVP or designee will familiarize the PI with the Plan for Off-Site Research Activities, 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.
2. If the off-site research to be proposed includes any international travel or sites, the PI should seek guidance from the Office of Global Engagement and/or the Center for Education Abroad. If international work is required, the PI should relate either their communication with the Office of Global Engagement or background information (e.g. evidence of longstanding collaborations with international institutions and individuals who are partnering in the work and who are identified in the proposal) to the AVP or designee in composing the initial plan. Any general questions in international research related to proposals should be brought to the applicable school dean overseeing research.
3. The PI will submit to the AVP a draft plan for safe and inclusive off-site environments.
4. Once the plan has been reviewed, the AVP or designee will provide approval of the plan, if appropriate, and indicate such to the relevant Office of Research. This approval will be copied to the relevant department chair.
5. On submission of the proposal to the Office of Research and Project Administration, the inclusion of off-site fieldwork will be flagged for the Dean of Research, for final review and approval prior to submission.
6. A flag in IORA will trigger notification of the AVP and Dean of Research if award is funded.
7. Once the proposal is funded, the PI should reach back out to the AVP so as to complete any necessary training, prepare and implement the project-specific Participant Agreement (below), and disseminate this plan across all participants regardless of home institution.
8. All PIs will include a summary description of their processes in completion of the plan in each Annual Report as required by the agency. This section of the annual report should also be provided separately to the department chair for compliance monitoring.
9. Field specific paperwork for funded projects will be held by the department in accordance with the university's [records retention policy](#).

Of note, the NSF directorates of Geology and Biology, as well as NASA, are all requiring these plans to be submitted as part of the proposal (and for NSF will be reviewed as part of the broader impacts of the project). Others require that these plans be certified by the institution, but not submitted.

¹ For the purposes of this requirement, the university defines “off-site” to include any space not owned or leased by the University of Rochester.

University of Rochester Participant Agreement
Off-Site Research and Training
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Name of participant:

Dates of off-site research/training:

I affirm that:

- I have read and understand the applicable University rights, rules and responsibility documents (for faculty, the University's [Faculty Handbook](#) and the [Policy Against Discrimination and Harassment \(PADH\)](#) and for students the [Code of Conduct](#)).
- 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 been given the means to contact and notify a campus advocate in case unwelcome situations arise. My campus advocates have the power and the means to extricate me from such situations as expediently as possible. 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 the University's policies as set forth in the Faculty Handbook, Student Code of Conduct, or the Policy Against Discrimination and Harassment.
- I have had the opportunity to discuss any issues with trip organizers and fellow travelers. 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.
- 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.

I am signing and dating this document without coercion and filing with the relevant academic department, where it shall remain on file for the indefinite future.

Signature of participant:

Signature of the field or activity leader/PI: _____

Date: _____