



PennState

Plan for Off-Campus or Off-Site Research

Background

Penn State is committed to fostering a research environment free from discrimination, harassment, and other forms of misconduct for all students and employees. The National Science Foundation (NSF) has also established policies requiring institutions to foster safe and harassment-free environments wherever science is conducted (Chapter XI.A.1.g.). NSF’s policies recognize 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. The University’s mission and values align with the [NSF policy](#) described in the NSF Proposal and Award Policies and Procedures Guide (NSF 23-1) to foster safe and harassment-free environments. Accordingly, for each proposal that proposes to conduct research off-campus or off site, Penn State’s Authorized Organization Representative (AOR) must complete a certification that the organization has a plan in place for that proposal that addresses misconduct. Grantees are required, effective with proposals submitted 1/30/2023 or later, to certify that there is a plan in place to ensure that measures have been taken in an effort to prevent misconduct, and to adequately address misconduct should it occur. This includes proposals for NSF funding submitted through other organizations. All plans must outline how the Principal Investigator (PI) will address the following:

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

NOTE: This safety plan relates only to the above NSF requirement. PIs will still be required to register their international travel plans with the University via PennState Global’s Travel Service Network (TSN) for approval.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR NSF PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATORS

The Principal Investigator must answer the following Question(s):

NSF defines “off-campus or off-site research” as “data/information/samples being collected off-campus or off-site, such as fieldwork and research activities on vessels and aircraft.” Will you be performing any off-campus or off-site research as part of this project (Y/N)?

Yes _____

No _____

- **If you answered “No,” please sign below under the “NO SAFETY PLAN REQUIRED” section and submit this form to the individual in your College Research Office who is assisting with your proposal submission. A copy of this form will need to be uploaded into the official proposal file.**
- **If you answered “Yes,” please proceed to the “SAFETY PLAN REQUIRED” section and follow the instructions to complete the required plan.**

NO SAFETY PLAN REQUIRED:

By signing below, I am indicating that my research team will not be performing any off-site/off-campus work as a part of this project. If an off-site/off-campus component is later added to the project or additional personnel are added to the off-campus component, I will contact the Affirmative Action Office (AAO) at aao@psu.edu to complete or update my safety plan. **I understand that failure to implement a safety plan prior to performance of an off-site/off-campus research activity means that I am not in compliance with NSF policy.** Non-compliant investigators may be prohibited from serving as PI on NSF projects.

Name of Principal Investigator

Signature of Principal Investigator

Date

SAFETY PLAN REQUIRED:

Instructions: If project personnel will be performing off-site or off-campus research, please read and complete all sections below. The completed form must be emailed to aao@psu.edu prior to the proposal being submitted to NSF. Please also send a copy of your completed form to the College Research Office assisting with your proposal submission, so they can upload a copy of your DRAFT plan into the official proposal file.

The Principal Investigator is responsible for:

- 1) **Providing project-specific information describing how you will ensure an environment that is free from discrimination, harassment, or other misconduct by answering the questions** in this document and submitting the information to the Affirmative Action Office (AAO) for approval. PI is required to sign this document in the space provided. You will receive an email from the AAO indicating whether the plan has been approved or needs further revision. This document will become your “safety plan”.
- 2) **Reviewing the *approved* safety plan, including the University policies/offices listed below,** with everyone who will participate in an off-campus or off-site research activity prior to those individuals leaving campus to engage in the off-site or off-campus research. *All current and future research participants are to be given a copy of the plan prior to departure as well.*
- 3) **Retaining the safety plan and the documentation of who received the plan** (email or sign-up sheet is sufficient) in their grant files or in the departmental grant file.

The safety plan should not be submitted to NSF unless requested. Plans may be re-used and re-distributed for multiple off-campus research activities but must be updated if the specific content needs to change.

KEY POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

The University meets NSF requirements (as well as its own expectations) by using the policies and procedures outlined below and as further amplified to cover special circumstances as dictated by the PI in the project-specific information shown in this document. **The Principal Investigator is responsible for distributing a copy of this plan to each participant in off-campus or off-site research prior to those individuals leaving campus to participate in the off-campus or off-site activities.**

As a reminder, all University staff, faculty, and student workers are required to complete the **Annual Compliance Training** by accessing the [Learning Resource Network](#). In addition, the University has a robust policy system designed to enforce the expectations for a safe and healthy work environment. The following is a list of applicable policies. Note that the hyperlinks are publicly accessible and easy to view.

Administrative Policies and Procedures:

- [AD91 Discrimination and Harassment and Related Inappropriate Conduct](#)
- [AD85 Title IX Sexual Harassment](#)
- [AD102 Consensual Relationships](#)
- [AD67 Disclosure of Wrongful Conduct and Protection From Retaliation](#)
- [AD88 Code of Responsible Conduct](#)
- [Field Research Safety Plan](#)

How to Report?

[Affirmative Action Office – Consult or Report discrimination, harassment, and/or retaliation](#)

[Office of Sexual Misconduct Prevention and Response Submit a Report – Consult or Report sexual misconduct](#)

[Office of Ethics and Compliance Penn State Hotline – Report concerns and/or misconduct](#)

[Office of Student Accountability and Conflict Response – Consult or Report student misconduct](#)

[Human Resources Strategic Partner and Consultant Directory – Consult or Report employee misconduct](#)

**NSF Safe and Inclusive Working Environment
Plan for Off-Campus or Off-Site Research**

Project Specific Safety Plan

Please complete each of the sections below and submit to the AAO at aao@psu.edu

<p>Safety Plan Date or Version (<i>enter date the plan was prepared or updated, or a version number</i>). Preparer name should also be entered:</p>	
<p>OSP Number or NSF Proposal/Grant Number:</p>	
<p>Principal Investigator Name(s) and Department/Unit (<i>plus Cell Phone and Email</i>):</p>	
<p>College/Unit Sponsored Research Office Contact (<i>if known</i>):</p>	
<p>List all individuals who will participate in the off-site/off-campus research. If some of the individuals have not yet been identified, please describe them (<i>e.g., "one or more graduate students to be named at a later date"</i>):</p>	
<p>Off-Campus/Off-Site Location:</p>	
<p>Description of off-campus/off-site research activity (fieldwork, research activities on vessels or aircraft, work in an off-campus location, etc.):</p>	
<p>Estimated Departure and Return Dates (<i>begin and end dates of off-campus/off-site research</i>):</p>	
<p>Identify steps you will take on this particular project to nurture an inclusive off-campus or off-site working environment (<i>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</i>). Please refer to the links in the section above for relevant Penn State policies and offices that are available as resources:</p>	
<p>Describe how participants will have regular access to internet or cell service (<i>including how often they will have such access</i>). If regular internet or cell access is not available, describe what alternate arrangements are in place for participants to report concerns or misconduct to the University:</p>	4

<p>Indicate whether participants from other entities will be involved in the project (<i>e.g., governmental, company, sponsor, educational institutions, or other subrecipients</i>) and whether there are any special arrangements needed to make sure that concerns or misconduct involving these individuals can be reported to the University or elsewhere:</p>	
<p>Name(s) and contact information of on-site project personnel to report any concerns or misconduct to and steps that will be taken if a report is received (<i>note: participants remain free to use this contact or any other contact they prefer to report misconduct to; more than one contact may be listed</i>):</p>	
<p>Indicate whether there are particular circumstances that necessitate special plans (<i>e.g., participants are at sea or in other remote locations without the ability to make contact with University reporting offices; only a single satellite phone is available for the group; there are physical or other barriers that may require special attention to ensure full participation; no local transportation to a safe space is likely to be available; variance in cultural norms might necessitate advance awareness training</i>), and identify what arrangements are in place to manage these special circumstances.</p>	
<p>Other comments or information that participants may find useful.</p>	

By signing below, I agree to abide by the safety plan as articulated above. I will consult with the AAO at aao@psu.edu prior to making any changes or updates to the safety plan. I understand that it is my responsibility to disseminate the approved plan to all individuals participating in the off-campus or off-site research prior to departure. This includes individuals who may be added to the project at a later date. **I understand that failure to implement a safety plan prior to performance of an off-site/off-campus research activity means that I am not in compliance with NSF policy.** Non-compliant investigators may be prohibited from serving as PI on NSF projects.

Signature of Principal Investigator

Date

Approval of Penn State's Affirmative Action Office

Date