

*“‘Come home. Come home friends. Maybe get all the work done.’
paraphrasing of a great maxim from the famous British Everest climber, Roger Baxter-Jones”
(Woodgate et al. 2018)*

UW Biology Equity in Fieldwork Planning Worksheet:

These prompts are to encourage you to engage with a variety of subjects that are recommended for preventing race and gender-based harassment and assault in the field. This includes any department-sponsored field trip, whether research or instructional. This is not a replacement for other critically important safety planning (e.g. planning for extreme weather, injury, bites/stings, travel to field sites, medical evacuation, etc. and other issues required by UW’s Field Safety Operations Manual

<https://www.ehs.washington.edu/resource/uw-field-operations-safety-manual-1110>).

☐ **Pre-trip team discussion:**

Rationale: Among all sources consulted, clear communication and group discussions about these topics before the field season begins is considered critical. Many of the items below can and should be addressed at these meetings.

- ☐ Action Item: Meet to discuss your equity and safety plan *well before* embarking. All team members should engage and discuss these action items.

☐ **Identify and reinforce community values and expectations of behavior:**

Rationale: Clearly defined and communicated rules and expectations for behavior are associated with safer and more productive field experiences (Nelson et al. 2017).

- ☐ Action Item: Provide a fieldworker “Charter of Rights” to each team member. See University of Alaska Fairbanks for an example [[link](#)]
- ☐ Action Item: Create and communicate a statement of values, expectations for behavior, and list of responsibilities. Policies to include in this code of conduct:
 - ☐ Sexual Harassment (the stringent sexual harassment policies of UW also apply to all field sites)
 - ☐ Alcohol use (and other substances, e.g., marijuana, tobacco)
 - ☐ Anti-discrimination (e.g., in regards to race, ethnicity, ability)

☐ **Assess risk at fieldwork localities:**

Rationale: An inclusive risk assessment considers how local laws and attitudes, such as those related to race, gender, and sexual orientation, may impact the safety of individuals in the field (Prior-Jones et al. 2020). Conducting inclusive risk assessments helps supervisors and their team to consider the experiences of higher risk identities and to identify and react to incidents faster and more effectively (Anadu et al. 2020).

- ☐ Action Item: Conduct an inclusive risk assessment. Example: [link](#)

☐ **Reduce potential for gatekeeping:**

Rationale: Gatekeepers are people whose goodwill is essential for access to the field site (e.g. local contact, land owner, ship captain, etc.). Diffusing the power that gatekeepers hold can reduce challenges associated with isolation (Woodgate et al. 2018)

- ❑ *Action Item:* Consider access to communication. Ensure all team members have private access to communication devices. If a satellite phone is the only communication device, consider having someone in a lower-power position be responsible for charging, carrying it in the field, etc. Give everyone a copy of important contact information for emergency services (e.g., local hospital, Coast Guard, PI contact information, Dept. Chair & Research Committee Chair, *not any personal emergency contact information, which should be private*).
- ❑ *Action Item:* Ensure all team members have private access to medical supplies. Woodgate et al. (2018) recommend that “...these supplies need to be made freely available to the science party (i.e., not via a PI or other gatekeeper), without the necessity of someone making a formal complaint of assault.”
- ❑ **Reporting an incident/asking for help:**
 - ❑ Ensure fieldworkers know more than one pathway for reporting outside of lab-group chain of command. [Link to conflict resolution page on UW Bio website]
- ❑ **Gear, supplies, and shelter:**
 - ❑ *Action Item:* Make sure field workers know what personal gear is necessary. Does your field crew know about the [UW Biology Gear Co-op](#)?
 - ❑ *Action Item:* Consider the medical supplies you will provide. When working in remote, isolated areas, Woodgate et al. (2018) recommend “fieldtrips be equipped with medical supplies to deal with assault (sexual or non-sexual) in the field (e.g., emergency medicines, including emergency contraception).”
- ❑ **Allow individuals to make informed safety decisions:**
 - ❑ *Action Item:* Ensure all participants have enough awareness of all site-specific safety issues to make informed decisions about their own ability/want to participate. Different people may have different acceptable levels of risk with regard to potentially dangerous tasks like animal interactions (e.g., risk of zoonosis), water activities, etc. It can be difficult for less-experienced participants to “say no” in-the-moment. (This is in addition to meeting UW safety requirements.)
 - ❑ *Action Item:* Discuss potential sleeping, living, hygiene, and eating/drinking arrangements and privately ensure each individual feels safe with the accommodations.
- ❑ **Provide materials to increase perceived “credibility” of researchers:**

Rationale: Anadu et al. (2020) recommend that P.I.s “provide materials to clearly identify researchers and their purpose (for example, signs for vehicles and field sites, safety vests and so on).” Demery and Pipkin (2021) recommend that researchers carry, “an official

letter of support for researchers doing fieldwork with contact information. This provides additional credibility to the researcher, if and when they are approached and challenged.”

❑ *Action item*: Consider what materials will you provide to your field crew.

❑ **Interactions with the local community:**

❑ *Action Item*: “Before field trips, team leaders should reach out to local authorities, businesses, and community leaders, especially in white communities, to provide early notice of the diverse nature of their teams.” (Anadu et al. 2020)

❑ *Action Item*: “Team leaders should be present in the field to introduce all of their team members to the host community and other stakeholders.” [need to look up this citation]

Closing note:

The purpose of this document is to provide field-going PIs/supervisors with concrete, attainable deliverables that we hope will contribute to a safe, equitable, and inclusive field experience for all. There is a growing body of resources [link to UW Bio field research page] available with other best practices (e.g. self education, bystander training, antidiscrimination training, allyship training, implicit bias tests), and we hope that you will consult these resources as well.

If you would like to have additional conversation or information surrounding these topics, please reach out to: The Biology Research Committee Chair.

Literature Cited:

Anadu, J., H. Ali, and C. Jackson (2020), Ten steps to protect BIPOC scholars in the field, Eos, 101, <https://doi.org/10.1029/2020EO150525>. Published on 10 November 2020.

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Clancy, K. B. H., R. G. Nelson, J. N. Rutherford, and K. Hinde. (2014) Survey of Academic Field Experiences (SAFE): Trainees report harassment and assault. PLoS ONE 9:1–9.

Demery, A.J.C., Pipkin, M.A. Safe fieldwork strategies for at-risk individuals, their supervisors and institutions. Nat Ecol Evol 5, 5–9 (2021). <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41559-020-01328-5>

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<https://anthrosource.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/pdfdirect/10.1111/aman.12929>

Prior-Jones, M., Pinnion, J., Millet, M.-A., Bagshaw, E., Fagereng, A., Ballinger, R. (2020) An inclusive risk assessment tool for travel and fieldwork. European Geosciences Union General Assembly 2020, Vienna/online.

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Woodgate, R., Fitzhugh, B., Harrington, S., Litchendorf, T., St John, H., Buick, R., Friedman, C., Brencic, D., Basu, B., Lazzar, R., Boget, E. (2018) Preventing Harassment in Fieldwork Situations. Report from the University of Washington's Respect and Equality in Fieldwork (REIF) 2017 Committee.

http://psc.apl.washington.edu/HLD/REIF/RespectandEqualityinFieldwork_RecommendationsandReportUW_Jan2018.pdf

Related to safety, but less exclusively about racial and gendered experiences:

- Are any certifications required (WFA, SCUBA, etc.)? When will team members take the training (i.e. individually or as a group?)
- Field communication plan:
 - o What method of communication with the crew use?
 - o How often will they communicate with the lab (daily is recommended if researchers are conducting fieldwork alone)
- ❑ Develop a clear leadership plan: ...
 - o What is the chain of command? Do you have a plan for every combination of crew members that will be at the field site over the entire season?

Resources for the website:

Questions about this document:

- Who is the target reader? Supervisors/PIs? Or the research team more broadly?
- Are these recommendations or requirements? Do we pose action items in the form of recommendations or questions that should be answered and filled in?

