

# NSF Safe and Inclusive Work Environment Plan for Off-Campus or Off-Site Research

The University of North Texas is committed to addressing harassment and fostering a safe and healthy work environment. Policies and expectations for proper conduct apply to UNT employees whether on-campus or working, doing research, or engaging in scholarly activities or study at an off-site location.

In addition, it is NSF policy to “foster safe and harassment-free environments whenever science is conducted.” [NSF 2023 PAPPG Guide II-E.9]. Grantees are required, effective with proposals submitted 1/30/23 or later, to certify that a plan is in place that addresses:

- (1) 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; and
- (2) Conduct that is unwelcome, offensive, indecent, obscene, or disorderly

UNT will maintain academic, research, housing, and work environments that are free from discrimination, harassment, and retaliation, and has a policy system designed to enforce the expectations for a safe and healthy work environment, and overall standards of ethical conduct wherever the university mission and activities are conducted. The university has the below Policies in place and Resources available to address NSF’s policy and support a Safe and Inclusive Working Environment for Off-Campus or Off-Site Research.

The University meets NSF requirements by using the policies and resources outlined below. Additionally, the PI has provided information for a project-specific plan. **Per NSF policy, principal Investigators are responsible for distributing a copy of this plan to each individual participating in off-campus or off-site research prior to those individuals leaving campus to participate in the off-campus or off-site activities.**

## POLICIES AND RESOURCES

The university’s commitment to excellence demands a culture of ethical, honest, and lawful decision making and conduct. Equal Opportunity & Title IX (EO) is the primary office at the University of North Texas responsible for enforcing the University’s equal opportunity policies and for investigating complaints of discrimination, harassment and retaliation.

The University of North Texas (University) prohibits discrimination and harassment because of race, color, national origin, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, age, disability, genetic information, veteran status, or any other characteristic protected under applicable federal or state law in its application and admission processes; educational programs and activities; employment policies, procedures, and processes; and University facilities. The University takes active measures to prevent such conduct and investigates and takes remedial action when appropriate. The University also prohibits and takes actions to prevent retaliation against individuals who report or file a charge of discrimination, harassment, or sexual misconduct; participate in an investigation, or oppose any form of discrimination, harassment, or sexual misconduct.

All UNT staff, faculty, and student workers are required by University policy to complete the Preventing Discrimination, Harassment, Sexual Misconduct & Retaliation course. In addition, UNT has policies designed to enforce the expectations for a safe and healthy work environment. The following is a list of UNT Policies and Available Resources to support a Safe and Including Working Environment for Off-Campus or Off-Site Research:

UNT Policies:

- [Prohibition of Discrimination, Harassment, and Retaliation](#)
- [Prohibition Against Sexual Misconduct and Retaliation](#)
- [Code of Student Conduct](#)
- [Ethics](#)
- [CARE Team](#)

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Resources Available:

- [Student Resources for Sexual Assault, Sexual Misconduct, Relationship Violence, and Stalking](#)
- [Employee Assistance Program](#)
- [CARE Team](#)

## REPORTING OBLIGATIONS

Every member of the university community has a responsibility to keep the environment free of discrimination and harassment. The University can take corrective action only when it becomes aware of problems. Therefore, the University encourages persons who believe that they have experienced discrimination or harassment to come forward promptly with their inquiries, reports, or complaints and to seek assistance from EO staff. Supervisors have a responsibility to notify EO when they receive complaints of discrimination or harassment from parties within their units.

Anyone who is aware of a suspected violation of the policies prohibiting discrimination/harassment is obligated to notify EO.

Faculty and staff should report suspected violations to their immediate supervisor and Equal Opportunity & Title IX.

Students should report violations to the administrative director or chair of the department in which the alleged incident occurred and Equal Opportunity & Title IX.

In addition to reporting suspected violation of university policies prohibiting discrimination, harassment, and retaliation to the Office of Equal Opportunity, the university demonstrates its commitment to overall standards of ethical conduct with its [Trust Line](#), a third-party resource that encourages employees and other individuals to report suspected noncompliance with laws, rules, regulations, and policies, and includes an anonymous reporting option.

## REPORTING SUSPECTED MISBEHAVIOR

Anyone who believes that they have been the victim of discrimination, harassment, or retaliation in violation of University policies may consult with EO for advice and/or to file a complaint. You may contact EO at 940-565-2759 or via email at [oeo@unt.edu](mailto:oeo@unt.edu)

Report: <https://idea.unt.edu/file-complaint>. Reporting may be done anonymously.

## INSTRUCTIONS FOR NSF PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATORS

NSF PIs are responsible for:

- (1) Determining whether any “off-campus or off-site research” will occur on their NSF-funded award** (see definition below). Plans are only required for NSF-funded awards containing research that is conducted off-site or off-campus. “Off-Campus/Off-Site Research” should be indicated on the NSF Proposal Cover Sheet in Research.gov.
- (2) Completing the Project Specific Plan** on the following pages.
- (3) Distributing (“the Plan”)** to 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.
- (4) Retaining documentation of who received the plan and the plan itself** in their grant files or in the departmental grant file.

The plan should not be submitted to NSF unless requested but must be provided to UNT’s Grants & Contracts Administration (GCA), prior to proposal submission.

NSF defines “off-campus or off-site research” is defined for the purposes of this requirement as *“data/information/ samples being collected off-campus or off-site, such as fieldwork on research vessels and aircraft.”*

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## PROJECT SPECIFIC PLAN

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Name of Lead/Contact Principal Investigator: \_\_\_\_\_  
PI Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_ PI Email: \_\_\_\_\_  
NSF Proposal # \_\_\_\_\_  
Date Prepared: \_\_\_\_\_  
Off-Site Location(s): \_\_\_\_\_

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**Description of Field Setting and any Unique Challenges for the Team (Must be Project Specific):** Provide a description of the off-campus/off-site activities being performed, including estimated departure dates, and participants involved (students, subrecipients, external collaborators, etc.)

**Promoting an Inclusive Off-Campus/Off-Site Working Environment (Must be Project Specific):** Provide a description of how the PI(s) will nurture an inclusive working environment for this specific project in the proposed off-campus/off-site settings. This may include 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 development events.

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**Communications (Must be Project Specific):** Provide a description of how the PI(s) will promote communication between and among on-campus and off-campus/off-site personnel as well as other organizations/third parties in the work environment. Describe how PI(s) will minimize singular points within the communication pathway (e.g., a single person overseeing access to a single satellite phone), as well as the *process or method that will be used to make and respond to incident reports*. Plans for how this Plan will be disseminated to individuals participating in off-campus and off-site research prior to departure should also be discussed.

**Special Circumstances and Considerations (if applicable):** Identify any special circumstances, such as involvement of multiple organizations or the presence of third parties in the working environment that should be taken into account (e.g.: remote location without ability to make contact with University; only a single satellite phone available; variance in cultural norms; etc.). Describe what arrangements are in place to manage these special circumstances.

**PI Certification:**

By submitting this plan to Grants & Contracts Administration (GCA) and/or with this proposal, the PI(s) of this proposed project agree that, should this proposal be funded, the PI(s) will follow the University policies, processes, and project safety procedures described in the above Plan and the Plan will be disseminated to individuals participating in the off-campus/off-site research prior to departure. The PI(s) also will notify all project participants and describe any changes that are made to the Plan during the course of the project, and a copy of the revised Plan also will be provide to GCA for inclusion in the award record. The PI(s) understand that the Plan must be provided to NSF upon request.

I understand that it is my responsibility to implement this plan and to uphold the University of North Texas' related policies. Should reports need to be made to the NSF according to their [reporting requirements](#), this plan may be used as part of related investigations.

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Principal Investigator (PI) Signature

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Date