

NSF Safe and Inclusive Work Environment

The University of Rhode Island (URI) is committed to addressing harassment and fostering a safe and healthy work environment. Policies and expectations for proper conduct apply to all staff, faculty and students 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 we have a plan in place that addresses:

- 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 written form; and
- Conduct that is unwelcome, offensive, indecent, obscene, or disorderly

Principal Investigator Responsibilities

Principal investigators (PIs) who are planning off-campus or off-site projects must complete a project-specific plan, distribute it to all participants and retain documentation of those who received the plan.

PIs are responsible for:

- Determining if the proposed research includes any “off-campus or off-site research”, as defined by NSF (see below). NSF-funded proposals, and subsequent awards, including off-campus or off-site research activities are required to have a project-specific plan for creating and maintaining a safe and inclusive working environment ("the plan").
- Completing the project specific information in this form which must be signed by the PI(s). The completed document, including referenced policies and procedures, comprises the plan.
- Submitting the plan as part of the funding proposal in InfoEd. The plan should be a separate document (pdf) as it will be retained by URI and will not be submitted to NSF unless requested.

- If funded, distributing the plan to everyone who will participate in off-campus or off-site research activities prior to those individuals leaving grounds or engaging in supported off-campus or off-site research activities.
- Retaining documentation of who received the plan (email or signup sheet is sufficient) in InfoEd or departmental grant files. These records are subject to the same retention schedule as other grant-related administrative records.

URI 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. Furthermore, all employees, including principal investigators, are required to complete periodic Preventing Sexual Harassment Together Training, and other trainings listed in the subsequent section of this document.

In addition, URI Global Initiatives offers training for faculty managing off-campus research projects. This training is required for PIs offering credit bearing research experience that includes domestic or international travel.

Contact Information:

Questions regarding the administration of sponsored projects shall be directed to:

Elizabeth A. Buchanan, CIP, Ph.D
Associate Vice-President, Research Administration

Elizabeth.buchanan@uri.edu; 401.874.2636

Questions regarding civil rights compliance shall be addressed to:

Dorca P. Smalley,
Director, Office of Equal Opportunity (OEO), ADA Coordinator

Dorca_paulino@uri.edu; 401.874.4929

Reporting suspected behavior:

URI Ethics Hotline: 1-855-222-0764

[URI Ethics Hotline Website](#)

Regular business matters and employment-related concerns should continue to be reported to your supervisor, local HR representative, or to the Assistant Vice President for Human Resources.

Reporting Title IX Violations:

Title IX is a federal law that prohibits discrimination based on sex (gender) and includes prohibition of sexual harassment and sexual violence. Sexual misconduct can be reported in various ways. Please see all available support options and reporting resources on [URI's Sexual Violence Prevention and Response website](#).

[URI Sexual Violence Prevention and Response Website](#)

Learn about available support and ways to report Title IX violations.

International Travel Emergencies:

If an emergency occurs while traveling internationally, URI has established an emergency hotline for students, faculty, and staff. Please call the number below for 24/7 support during an international crisis.

International Travel 24/7 Emergency Hotline:

(401) 874-4100

NSF Resources:

- [NSF Frequently asked questions regarding preparation and submission of Plans for Safe and Inclusive Working Environments under the BIO/GEO Pilot](#)
- [Safe & inclusive working environments requirements virtual office hour](#)
- [Safe and Inclusive Working Environments for Off-Campus or Off-Site Research](#) — *Proposals with field work need to have a plan in place to deal with harassment. The plan need not be submitted to NSF unless the specific program announcement calls for it.*

Training:

- [Civil Rights Compliance: Promoting Access and Preventing Discrimination in Service Delivery](#)
- [Mandatory Sexual Violence Prevention training](#)
- [Civil Rights Compliance Training for Employee Recruitment, Selection, and Hiring](#)
 - The Employee Recruitment, Selection, and Hiring Training is provided virtually in Brightspace and is "discoverable" for the URI community. Employees can access the training by logging into Brightspace and selecting "Discover" in the blue menu at the top of the screen, entering "Employee Recruitment, Selection, and Hiring" in the search bar to locate the training, and self-enrolling in the course.

KEY POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

URI has a robust policy system designed to enforce the expectations for a safe and healthy work environment. The following is a list of applicable institutional policies.

Policies and Procedures:

- [Affirmative Action Compliance at the University of Rhode Island](#)
- [Affirmative Action Plan and Policy Statements on Affirmative Action and Nondiscrimination](#)
- [ADA Compliance at the University of Rhode Island](#)
- [Language Access Plan and Policy on Language Access](#)
- [Diversity Resources](#)
- [Policy on Consensual Relationships](#)
- [Policy on Reporting Violations of Law, Regulations or University Policy or Procedure](#)
- [University of Rhode Island Nondiscrimination Policy](#)

Other Policies:

- [Sexual Misconduct Policy](#)
- [University Student Handbook](#)
- [Information on creating an accessible and inclusive work environment](#)
- [Violence in the Workplace Prevention Policy](#)
- [Jurisdiction for Off-Campus Conduct](#)
- [Policy on International Travel](#)

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

PROJECT SPECIFIC INFORMATION

Plan Date or Version (<i>enter date the plan was prepared or updated, or a version number</i>). Preparer name may also be entered.
NSF Grant Number:
Principal Investigator Name (plus Cell Phone and Email)
Off-Campus Location (Please note that faculty, staff, and students must register in URI's travel portal for all international travel).
Description of off-campus research activity (<i>fieldwork, research activities on vessels or aircraft, work in an off-campus location, etc.</i>)

Names and titles of individuals who will be working offsite in performance of this project.
Estimated Departure and Return Dates (<i>begin and end dates of off-campus research</i>). <i>It is permissible to leave this blank if dates are not yet available.</i>
Will participants have regular internet or cell service available? (<i>If no, what alternate arrangements are in place for participants to report suspected misconduct?</i>)
Will participants from other entities (governmental, company, sponsor, educational institutions, subrecipients) be involved? <i>If yes, are there any special arrangements or guidance participants need to make sure they know they should also report misconduct involving these individuals?</i>
Recommended contact for any suspected misbehavior (<i>note: participants remain free to use this contact or any other contact they prefer to report misconduct; more than one contact may be listed</i>).
How will these misbehaviors be addressed for personnel working offsite for any portion of this project? (<i>abuse of any person, including but not limited to, harassment, stalking, bullying or hazing of any kind, and any conduct that is unwelcome, offensive, indecent, obscene or disorderly</i>)

What steps will be taken to nurture an inclusive off-campus or off-site working environment for this project? *(examples include: trainings, processes to establish shared definitions of roles and responsibilities, culture, codes of conduct, field support, regular check-ins)*

Describe how you will ensure all affected employees have access to this plan and any relatable resources.

Any special circumstances that necessitate special plans *(e.g., participants are at sea or other remote locations without 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;)*. If yes, what arrangements are in place to manage these special circumstances?

Other Comments or Information that participants may find useful.

If known, include local police and medical services numbers; for international trips, it is wise to include embassy/consulate contact information if not already provided. May leave blank if information is not available.