

NSF Safe and Inclusive Work Environment Plan for Off-Campus or Off-Site Research¹

OVERVIEW

Outline of how the SUNY RF and SUNY work together to ensure a safe and inclusive working environment for Off-Campus or Off-Site Research. A note for NSF grant application requirement compliance.

It is NSF policy (see Chapter XI.A.1.g.) to foster safe and harassment-free environments wherever science is conducted. NSF's policy recognizes 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. Accordingly, for each proposal that proposes to conduct research off-campus or off site^[44], the AOR must complete a certification^[45] that the organization has a plan in place for that proposal that describes how the following types of behavior will be addressed:

- a. 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; or
- b. Conduct that is unwelcome, offensive, indecent, obscene, or disorderly.

The SUNY RF established its [policy](#) for the prevention of sexual harassment to ensure a safe, inclusive, and respectful work environment that is free of Sexual Harassment, and to provide a means to address such misconduct. The Research Foundation ("RF") does not tolerate any form of Sexual Harassment and all employees are required to conduct their work in a manner that prevents Sexual Harassment in the workplace. This policy is one component of the RF's commitment to a discrimination-free workplace environment. This policy applies to all employees, applicants for employment, paid or unpaid interns, contractors, students, those with RF responsibilities, those who carry out business in the name of the RF, and third-parties conducting business with the RF.

This policy provides a process to allow anyone to report any occurrence of sexual harassment or retaliation through multiple avenues including an anonymous [hotline](#). The policy then provides the process for investigating complaints of Sexual Harassment.

Any employee or individual covered by the Sexual Harassment Prevention Policy who is found to have engaged in Sexual Harassment or Retaliation will be subject to remedial and/or disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment pursuant to the RF's Progressive Discipline Policy.

Additionally, SUNY RF has an Equal Employment Opportunity and Antidiscrimination Policy, which provides for equal employment opportunities for all qualified persons, and prohibits discrimination in employment on the basis of any characteristic protected under federal, state and local law. The Policy establishes that discrimination and harassment on the basis of any

¹ For purposes of this requirement, 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.

protected characteristic is unlawful and will not be tolerated in the workplace and also prohibits retaliation against individuals who report violations and those who participate in an investigation relating to violations of the Policy. The Policy applies to all employees, applicants for employment, paid or unpaid interns, contractors, students, those with SUNY RF responsibilities, those who carry out business in the name of SUNY RF, and third-parties conducting business with SUNY RF.

SUNY RF also has a Resolving Discrimination, Harassment, and Retaliation Complaints Procedure, which provides for a process to allow anyone to report any occurrence of discrimination, harassment, or retaliation through multiple avenues of complaint, including an anonymous hotline. The Procedure indicates that the RF will ensure a prompt review of any such complaints.

All SUNY RF employees are expected to comply with the Equal Employment Opportunity and Antidiscrimination Policy and the Resolving Discrimination, Harassment, and Retaliation Complaints Procedure, to take appropriate measures to ensure that prohibited conduct does not occur, and to report any suspected policy. An employee's obligations under this Policy include reporting any violations witnessed by the employee, regardless of whether the employee was the victim or target of the offending conduct. SUNY RF will take appropriate disciplinary action against any employee who violates this policy. Based upon the seriousness of the offense, disciplinary action may include verbal or written counseling, suspension, or termination of employment.

Finally, SUNY RF also maintains a Code of Conduct, which includes the 10 Pillars of Conduct for all RF actors, which demonstrates our commitment to promoting a safe, secure and healthy workplace, adherence to relevant law rules and regulations, high standards of professional conduct, mutual respect, and an inclusive workplace free of harassment and discrimination. Specifically, the Pillars include, inter alia,:

- *Following the Law and reporting suspected violations;*
- *Acting Ethically and With Integrity, which includes acting according to the highest occupational and professional standards of conduct;*
- *Respecting our Community and Environment, which includes treating others in a thoughtful and courteous way; and*
- *Promoting a Diverse, Inclusive and Transparent Workplace, which includes being polite, fair and respectful, and avoiding all forms of discrimination, harassment, threats or violence.*

The Code of Conduct reinforces that RF SUNY does not tolerate any form of abuse, intimidation, discrimination, retaliation, or harassment. Offensive, derogatory, harassing, discriminatory, and sexually explicit comments and behavior are not acceptable and will not be tolerated. Such behavior may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment. The Code encourages employees to report suspected violations through multiple avenues, including an anonymous hotline.

The Code applies to, among others, the RF SUNY Board of Directors, Officers, Operations Managers and Deputy Operations Managers, RF employees, SUNY faculty acting in the capacity of a Principal Investigator, or SUNY RF representative for a sponsored program or other activity administered by SUNY RF, or any other person acting on behalf of or representing

SUNY RF. The RF policies and procedures are complemented by SUNY system and particular campus policies, procedures and trainings.

This plan should also identify steps the proposing organization will take to nurture an inclusive off-campus or off-site working environment, 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.

As referenced above, the RF has a Code of Conduct that reinforces the RF's commitment to a work environment free from abuse, intimidation, discrimination, retaliation or harassment. The RF Sexual Harassment Prevention Policy requires that "All employees at all operating locations must complete Sexual Harassment training annually. New hires must complete Sexual Harassment training as soon as possible after hire." Training for Supervisors requires within the first 30 days that the new supervisor: review and certify the [RF Code of Conduct](#); review and certify adherence to the [RF Employee handbook](#); pass the training on Sexual Harassment Prevention Policy; and review the [RF Travel Handbook](#). RF SUNY subscribes to the CITI Program providing research ethics education to all members of the research community. The RF also develops and makes available additional trainings such as but not limited to "[Saying 'No' to Power](#)" which provides training on: Recognizing the value of a strong ethical culture; identifying both unethical and ethical cultures in action; recognizing the consequences of both ethical and unethical cultures; and applying RF ethical principals in the workplace, and "[Power and Privilege in the Workplace](#)".

Communications within team and to the organization should be considered in the plan, minimizing singular points within the communications pathway (e.g., a single person overseeing access to a single satellite phone), and any special circumstances such as the involvement of multiple organizations or the presence of third parties in the working environment should be taken into account. The process or method for making incident reports as well as how any reports received will be resolved should also be accounted for.

RF Policies apply to all employees, applicants for employment, paid or unpaid interns, contractors, students, those with RF responsibilities, those who carry out business in the name of the RF, and third-parties conducting business with the RF. The policies and procedures are intended to be portable- e.g. the protections and tools are available to faculty, staff and students wherever they are undertaking RF administered work.

The organization's plan for the proposal must be disseminated to individuals participating in the off-campus or off-site research prior to departure. Proposers should not submit the plan to NSF for review.

PLAN DETAILS

The Research Foundation (RF) is committed to promoting a work environment that supports diversity, inclusion, and respect for individual differences, and promotes and maintains a work environment free of Discrimination, Harassment, or Retaliation. In addition, SUNY Oswego is committed to creating an inclusive environment free of discrimination and sexual harassment. Within the SUNY Oswego commitment, we have developed preventative services, investigative services, and resources for victims of sexual violence.²

Further, 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 on or after 1/30/23, to certify that we have a plan in place that addresses:

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

The RF, SUNY and SUNY Oswego mission, values, policies and procedures meet the NSF requirement for a Safe and Inclusive Work Environment. Each plan will use the policies and procedures outlined below, and each plan will be further amplified to cover special circumstances as dictated by the PI in the project-specific information shown in this document. Principal Investigators are responsible for distributing a copy of this plan to each participant in off-campus or off-site research **a minimum of 7 days prior** to those individuals leaving campus to participate in the off-campus or off-site activities.

KEY POLICIES, PROCEDURES AND MANDATORY TRAINING

RF, SUNY and SUNY Oswego have a robust policy system designed to enforce the expectations for a safe and healthy work environment.

<p><i>Research Foundation for the State University of New York (RF)</i>³ Sexual Harassment Prevention Policy Code of Conduct⁴ Preventing Discrimination, Harassment and Retaliation for Managers Online Course (login required)</p>	<p><i>SUNY Oswego & State University of New York (SUNY)</i> Sexual Harassment Response and Prevention Policy Statement Sexual Assault & Violence Response (SAVR) Resources</p>
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² <https://ww1.oswego.edu/title-ix/>

³ RF Policies apply to all employees, applicants for employment, paid or unpaid interns, contractors, students, those with RF responsibilities, those who carry out business in the name of the RF, and third-parties conducting business with the RF. The policies and procedures are intended to be portable- e.g. the protections and tools are available to faculty, staff and students wherever they are undertaking RF administered work.

⁴ The RF Code of Conduct and Employee Handbook will continue to govern the professional conduct of Research Foundation employees and representatives while traveling on RF related business.

<p>Resolving Discrimination, Harassment, and Retaliation Complaints RF's Ethics Hotline</p> <p>REQUIRED for Supervisors:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review and certify the RF Code of Conduct; • Review and certify adherence to the RF Employee handbook • Pass the training on Sexual Harassment Prevention Policy; and review the RF Travel Handbook. 	<p>SUNY Sexual Harassment Response and Prevention Policy Statement Student Code of Responsibility Discrimination and Sexual Harassment Complaint Procedure Student Conduct Policies Incident Reporting Title IX Training Domestic Violence and the Workplace Policy Preventing Workplace Violence, Domestic Violence Prevention in the Workplace, Child Sexual Abuse Reporting, Preventing Discrimination and Harassment (Mandatory compliance for all employees)</p>
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PROJECT SPECIFIC INFORMATION

In addition to the policies, procedures and training listed above, this plan will involve the following, as described below.

Plan Date or Version (enter date the plan was prepared or updated): ⁵	
Principal Investigator:	
NSF Proposal/Award ID# (you may also include myR FP or RF#)	
Description of Off-Campus/Off-Site Location(s) & Activities:	
Estimated Departure and Return Dates (begin and end dates of off-campus research): ⁶	
Will participants have regular internet or cell service available? (If no, what alternate arrangements are in place for participants to report suspected misconduct?)	
Please identify a recommended contact for any suspected misbehavior (note: participants remain free to use this contact or any other contact they prefer to report misconduct)	

⁵ Plans are subject to institutional review and approval at time of award. Plan may require revision pending changes to the scope of work and/or conditions at the off-site location.

⁶ Update information upon award and/or as travel plans are finalized.

<p>Will participants from other entities (ie Subrecipient, contractor, collaborator) be involved? If yes, are there any special arrangements needed to make sure any misconduct is reported involving these individuals?</p>	
<p>*Recommended that participants be provided with local police, medical services and if international trips, recommended to include embassy/consulate contact information. (note: participants remain free to use this contact or any other contact they prefer to report misconduct)</p>	

I _____, as the Principal Investigator, agree to disseminate this plan to all individuals participating in the off- campus or off-site research a minimum of 7 days prior to the commencement of the work, and certify that:

- All participants have completed applicable RF, SUNY Oswego, and/or SUNY required trainings, and
- All participants have reviewed and certified the RF Code of Conduct; and have reviewed all relevant policies & procedures listed above.

Please note that at the time of award notification and/or prior to departure for the off-site/off-campus research activity, the RFSUNY reserves the right to ask for documentation (i.e. participant signature sheet) that the plan was disseminated to all participants.