



## **National Science Foundation Safe and Inclusive Working Environment for Off-Campus and Off-Site Research (Effective Date: January 30, 2023)**

The National Science Foundation has policies in place to foster safe and harassment-free environments wherever science is conducted. Effective January 30, 2023, the NSF extends this policy<sup>1</sup> to cover research conducted off-campus or off-site.

### **Definition of Off-Campus or Off-Site Research**

For purposes of this requirement, off-campus or off-site research is defined as data, information, and/or samples being collected off-campus or off-site, such as fieldwork and research activities on vessels and aircraft.<sup>2</sup> Smith College further defines this to extend to any project team member, including subrecipients and other collaborators, when they are performing research outside of property owned by the institution(s). Attendance at off-campus meetings and conferences do not qualify unless the collection of data, information, and/or samples occurs for research purposes.

### **Plan Requirements**

All plans must address how the following types of behavior will be addressed:

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

Plans should include four sections:

- Field Setting description, including any unique challenges
- Steps to nurture an inclusive off-campus or off-site research environment
- Communication processes for the off-site team that provides multiple points of communication methods
- Mechanisms for reporting and responding to harassment if it occurs

### **Required Timing for Developing a Plan**

At the time of submission to the NSF, Smith College is required to certify that there is a project-specific plan in place for ensuring a safe and inclusive working environment off-campus or off-site. The college's grant proposal routing form now includes a question regarding off-campus or

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<sup>1</sup> <https://beta.nsf.gov/policies/pappg/23-1/ch-2-proposal-preparation#2E9>

<sup>2</sup> [https://beta.nsf.gov/policies/pappg/23-1/ch-2-proposal-preparation#\\_ftn44](https://beta.nsf.gov/policies/pappg/23-1/ch-2-proposal-preparation#_ftn44)

off-site research activities. If a “YES” response is selected, then a plan will need to be developed and shared with the grants and sponsored research team *prior* to submission of the proposal, and updated as needed prior to acceptance of an award and commencement of off-campus or off-site research activities. A template is available.

For collaborative, multi-institutional proposals, it is expected that a joint plan be written and shared with all involved institutions. If research will take place at a non-U.S. institution, a plan will be required if the non-U.S. entity does not have established policies and procedures for reporting discrimination and harassment.

As of March 2023, some BIO and GEO NSF grant opportunities are piloting the submission of the plan as part of the proposal. Specific requirements will be noted in those opportunities.