

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

Northern Illinois University (hereafter “NIU” or “university”) is committed to addressing harassment and promoting safety, accountability, equal access, and ethical behavior in the university's educational and workplace 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 NIU has a plan in place **for that proposal** that describes how the following types of behavior will be addressed:

- (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

Note: For the purposes of this requirement, off-campus or off-site research is defined by NSF as data/information/samples being collected off-campus or off-site, including fieldwork and research activities on vessels and aircraft, and observatories and other facilities.

KEY POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

NIU creates safe environments by using and adhering to the below policies and procedures. To ensure compliance with the new NSF policy, Principal Investigators must create a project specific plan that aligns with university expectations and provide a copy of that plan to each participant in off-campus or off-site research prior to departure.

Nondiscrimination, Harassment, and Retaliation Policy and Complaint Procedures (“Nondiscrimination Policy”) and [*Sexual Misconduct Policy and Complaint Procedures \(“Sexual Misconduct Policy”\)*](#),

**PROJECT SPECIFIC INFORMATION
PLAN FOR OFF CAMPUS OR OFF-SITE RESEARCH**

Plan Date or Version (enter date the plan was prepared or updated, or a version number):

Preparer Name:

NIU Proposal Number (ex: 23-XXX)

NSF Grant Number:

NIU Award Number (ex: 44-XXXXXX)

Principal Investigator Name (plus Cell Phone and Email):

Off-Campus Location:

Description of off-campus research activity (fieldwork, research activities on vessels or aircraft, work in an off-campus location, etc.):

Estimated Departure and Return Dates:

Will participants have regular internet or cell service available? (If not, describe what alternate arrangements are in place for participants to report suspected misconduct.):

Yes No

Will participants from other entities (governmental, company, sponsor, educational institutions, subrecipients) be involved? If yes, identify any special arrangements or guidance these participants will need to make sure they know they should also report misconduct involving these individuals?

Yes No

Designated contact for any suspected misbehavior (note: participants remain free to use this contact or any other contact they prefer to report misconduct; more than one contact may be listed):

Identify any unusual circumstances that necessitate special plans (e.g., participants are at sea or other remote locations without ability to contact 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 unusual circumstances exist, what arrangements are in place to manage them?

Provide other comments or information that participants may find useful. (e.g., contact information for local police and medical services numbers; for international trips, embassy/consulate contact information should be provided)

Available Resources

- **File Title IX Report/Complaint:** Individuals can file a sexual misconduct report or complaint with the university. There are important differences between what happens when a report or a complaint is filed.
 - **Title IX Complaint:** An individual who has been subjected to sexual misconduct has the right to file a formal complaint with the university. A complaint triggers the university's formal grievance process. You may file a sexual misconduct complaint online at [File a Sexual Misconduct Report or Complaint - NIU - Ethics and Compliance Office](#), or by contacting the Title IX coordinator in-person, over the phone or via email or mail to discuss what happened.

NIU Title IX Coordinator
Sarah Garner
titleixcoordinator@niu.edu
Health Services Building 230
815-753-5560
 - **Title IX Report:** Any third-party who witnesses or learns of actual or suspected sexual misconduct may submit a report. A report informs the harmed party of their rights and options to address what they have experienced. You may file a sexual misconduct report online at [File a Sexual Misconduct Report or Complaint - NIU - Ethics and Compliance Office](#), or by contacting the Title IX coordinator in-person, over the phone or via email or mail to discuss what happened.
 - **Responsible employees:** All employees of the university, unless deemed confidential, are considered responsible employees and are required to report actual or suspected sexual misconduct to the Title IX coordinator. **Responsible employees are required to submit reports.**
- **File Discrimination/Harassment Complaint:** Any individual who experiences or witnesses possible acts of discrimination or harassment by an NIU employee as defined by the university's *Nondiscrimination Policy* has the right to report the activity. You may file a complaint online at [Discrimination/Harassment - NIU - Ethics and Compliance Office](#), or by contacting the ECO, over the phone or via email or mail to discuss what happened.
- **Confidential:** An individual may request to remain completely anonymous or that their name or details surrounding the incident not be disclosed during the investigation process, which is called a request for confidentiality. If requested, the Title IX coordinator will determine if confidentiality can be afforded. An NIU confidential advisor can also provide assistance with accessing and navigating campus and local health and mental health services, counseling and advocacy services. To speak with a confidential advisor, contact the Center for Student Assistance, at 815-753-8300 and ask to speak to Andrea Drott. Questions may also be referred to the U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights, by contacting OCR.Chicago@ed.gov.

- **External Agencies:** Filing a report or complaint with the university does not constitute filing a police report. To file an official police report for incidents occurring off-site, please contact the appropriate local police department where the prohibited conduct occurred.