

Guidance to PIs on NSF's Safe and Inclusive Working Environments Plan

Several solicitations from NSF's Directorates for Biological Sciences (BIO) and Geosciences (GEO) will soon require the submission of a [Safe and Inclusive Working Environments Plan](#) for any proposals that include research to be conducted off-campus or off-site¹. This document will be required in lieu of the plan and certification described in the Proposal and Award Policies and Procedures Guide (PAPPG; [NSF 23-1, Chapter II.E.9](#)) and is discussed in an NSF video available [here](#).

For solicitations with this new requirement and with due dates (i.e. Biodiversity on a Changing Planet (BoCP, [NSF 23-542](#)), Pathways into the Geosciences (GEOPaths, [NSF 23-540](#)), and Cultural Transformation in the Geosciences Community (CTGC, [NSF 23-539](#))) the plan is required at proposal submission. Always refer to the program solicitation for details.

For solicitations with this new requirement and without due dates (i.e. BIO core solicitations in Division of Environmental Biology ([NSF 23-549](#)), Division of Integrative Organismal Systems ([NSF 23-547](#)), Division of Molecular and Cellular Biosciences ([NSF 23-548](#))) the plans must be included with proposals submitted *after April 18, 2023*. For proposals submitted *before* April 18, 2023, PIs are expected to have a plan in place to obtain the required certification from the campus Authorized Organizational Representative (AOR) as currently outlined in the PAPPG [Chapter II.E.9](#). UCSB's AOR is the [Sponsored Projects Office](#).

The Safe and Inclusive Working Environments plan ([Template available here](#)) may be no longer than two pages and must include:

- A brief description of the field setting and unique challenges posed for the team
- The steps the proposing organization will take to nurture an inclusive off-campus or off-site working environment, including processes to establish shared team definitions of roles, responsibilities and culture, e.g. codes of conduct, trainings, mentor/mentee mechanisms and field support that might include regular check-ins, and/or developmental events
- communication processes within the off-site team and to the organization(s) that minimize singular points within the communication pathway (e.g. there should not be a single person overseeing access to a single satellite phone)
- The organizational mechanisms that will be used for reporting, responding to and resolving issues of harassment if they arise.

¹ *Off-campus* and *off-site* are defined as data/ information/sample collection off-campus or off-site, including but not limited to fieldwork and research activities on vessels and aircraft. For additional guidance, please find a full explanation of what qualifies as off-campus [here](#). If you are unsure if your plans qualify as "off-campus", contact Jim Fong at fong@research.ucsb.edu

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The Safe and Inclusive Working Environment Plan will be reviewed under the Broader Impacts Criteria. Reviewers will be instructed to evaluate the plan and whether it addresses the four points above in a clear, thorough and compelling manner. NSF will specifically instruct reviewers to consider the following questions:

- Is there a compelling plan (including the procedures, trainings, and communication processes) to establish, nature and maintain inclusive off-campus or off-site working environments?
- Does the proposed plan identify and adequately address the unique challenges for the team and the specific off-campus or off-site setting(s)?
- Are the organizational mechanisms to be used for reporting, responding to and resolving issues of harassment, should they occur, clearly outlined?