

WHITMAN COLLEGE

Safe and Inclusive Work Environment Policy for Off- Campus or Off-Site Research (NSF- Funded Projects)

Effective Date:	February 2, 2024
Last Updated:	February 2, 2024
Responsible Cabinet Officer:	Provost and Dean of the Faculty/ VP for Finance & Administration
Policy Owners:	Director of Grants & Foundation Relations
Policy Contact:	Grants & Foundation Relations
Total Pages:	5

Policy Contents

Policy Statement

This policy outlines Whitman College’s plan for creating a safe and inclusive work environment for off-campus or off-site research funded by the National Science Foundation.

Reason for Policy

This policy satisfies the requirement of the National Science Foundation that, for each proposal that proposes to conduct research off-campus or off-site, institutions must certify that they have a plan in place **for that proposal** regarding safe and inclusive work environments.

Who Should Read This Policy

All faculty who will be developing grant proposals to the National Science Foundation that involve off-campus or off-site research.

Policy

NSF's [2023 PAPPG](#) (Proposal & Award Policies & Procedures Guide), effective 1/31/2023, includes a new requirement for proposers to certify that they have a specific plan in place for creating and maintaining Safe and Inclusive (SAI) Working Environments for any Off-Campus or Off-Site Research project.¹

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.

Likewise, Whitman College is committed to providing a learning and working environment characterized by mutual respect and fair treatment among all members of its community. This is evidenced by institutional policies including the [Sexual Harassment, Discrimination, and Sexual Misconduct Policy and Procedure](#) and [Grievance Policy](#). Whitman College also has a [handbook](#) produced by Off-Campus Studies that outlines the policies and procedures governing off-campus academic trips led by Whitman faculty members.

Currently, several solicitations from BIO and GEO require the submission of a Safe and Inclusive Work Environments (SAI) Plan that will be considered as part of the Broader Impacts criteria during the review process. For all other proposals that propose to conduct research off campus or off site, the AOR must complete a certification 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.

¹ NSF defines off-campus or off-site research as data/information/samples being collected off-campus or off-site, such as fieldwork, or research activities on vessels and aircraft. Each organization must determine whether the proposed work is considered off-campus or off-site.

This 2-page supplementary Safe and Inclusive Plan must address the following four sections:

1. A brief description of the field setting and unique challenges for the team.
2. 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.
3. 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); 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.
4. The organizational mechanisms that will be used for reporting, responding to, and resolving issues of harassment if they arise.

The organization's plan must be disseminated to all individuals participating in the off-campus or off-site research prior to departure.

Whitman College Procedure for Developing an SAI Plan

1. Prior to proposal development, the PI must advise the Director of Grants & Foundation Relations (GFR) if any "off-campus or off-site research," as defined above, is planned for their proposed NSF project. This should be noted on the Proposal Development Form, which is required to be submitted one month prior to the proposal deadline.
2. If off-campus or off-site research is planned, the PI must prepare an SAI Plan, using the template provided. Please work closely with the Director of GFR to ensure that the plan complies with all internal policies governing off-campus activities (relevant policies and resources are listed below).
3. The PI is responsible for ensuring that everyone who will participate in the off-campus or off-site research activity receives and understands the SAI plan prior to those individuals leaving campus to engage in the off-site or off-campus research. Further, the PI is responsible for facilitating any pre-departure training. The PI must retain documentation of who received the plan and/or training and the SAI plan itself in their files.
4. If NSF requires submission of the project-specific SAI plan, the PI and Director of GFR will finalize the 2-page plan and submit it as a supplementary document with the grant proposal via research.gov.

Relevant Whitman College Policies and Resources

[Sexual Harassment, Discrimination, and Sexual Misconduct Policy and Procedure Grievance Policy](#)

[Bias Reporting and Response](#)

[Student Rights and Responsibilities](#)

[Faculty Code](#)

[Information on Faculty-Led Trips](#)

[Off-Campus Studies Faculty Leaders' Handbook](#)

[Title IX & Sexual Misconduct](#)

[Mandatory Reporting of Child Abuse and Neglect Policy](#)

[Grants Compliance Policies](#)

Related Information

Type	Name
NSF PAPPG	https://new.nsf.gov/policies/pappg/23-1

Additional Contacts

Subject	Name	Phone	Email
SAI Policy/Plan Questions	Rachna Sinnott	509-527-5990	sinnotr@whitman.edu

Forms

Form	Use	Location
Safe and Inclusive Work Environments Plan Template	NSF Proposal Principal Investigators	Insert Office name
Proposal Development Form	NSF Proposal Principal Investigators	

Responsibilities

- It is the responsibility of faculty members applying for an NSF grant involving off-campus or off-site research to notify the Director of Grants & Foundation Relations (this will be done through checking the box on the Proposal

Development Form) and then, if required, to work with the Director to develop an appropriate SAI plan.

- It is the responsibility of the College's AOR (AVP for Finance & Administration/Controller) to certify that an SAI plan is in place prior to proposal submission.
- If the grant is funded, it is the responsibility of the faculty member/PI to distribute the SAI plan to all individuals participating in the off-campus or off-site research prior to departure.

Who Vetted and Approved this Policy?

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Revision History

- February 2, 2024