

University of Utah Department of Geology and Geophysics Professional Ethics Policy

The Geology and Geophysics Professional Ethics Policy is derived from the American Geophysical Union policy on Scientific Integrity and Professional Ethics (2017) and is adapted herein for an educational institution, as consistent with the policies and procedures of the University of Utah. Links to the AGU policy and other resources on professional ethics and scientific integrity are provided in Appendix B.

I. SUMMARY

The purpose of the Geology and Geophysics Department (GEO) at the University of Utah (UU) is education and discovery in Earth science for the benefit of humanity. Scientific integrity and ethics are fundamental to scientific advancement and science cannot flourish without the respectful and equitable treatment of all those engaged in the scientific community. The GEO Professional Ethics Policy is a set of principles and practices for professional behavior regarding the practice, learning, training, publishing, and communication of science which governs all GEO faculty, students and staff, as well as anyone participating in GEO sponsored programs and activities. The Policy includes a code of conduct that broadens the definition of professional misconduct to include discrimination, sexual harassment, and bullying. The Policy identifies standards for professional behavior and outlines processes for reporting and addressing violations.

Key provisions of this Policy pertinent to all GEO faculty, students, staff, and anyone participating in GEO sponsored programs and activities include:

- GEO's affirmation of the principle that the free, open, and responsible practice of science is fundamental to scientific advancement and human and environmental well-being;
- Definition of misconduct to include professional ethics policy code-of-conduct violations towards others;
- Definitions of discrimination, harassment (including sexual harassment) and bullying as it applies to this Policy;
- The applicability of this Policy to all GEO program activities, including classroom, office, lab, field trip and any department function setting;
- A clear and detailed process for reporting and investigating misconduct;

II. DEFINITIONS

Discrimination means unequal or unfair treatment in professional opportunities, education, benefits, evaluation, and employment (encompassing hiring, termination, promotion, and compensation) as well as retaliation and various types of harassment. Discriminatory practices can be explicit or implicit, intentional, or unconscious. Harassment is a type of discrimination that consists of a single intense and severe act, or of multiple persistent or pervasive acts, which are unwanted, unwelcome, demeaning, abusive, or offensive. Offensive conduct constitutes harassment when 1) it becomes a condition of an opportunity, education, benefit, evaluation, or employment or 2) the conduct is severe or pervasive enough to create a work or educational environment that most people would consider intimidating,

hostile, or abusive. These acts may include epithets, slurs, or negative stereotyping based on gender, race, sexual identity, or other categories, as protected by U.S. federal law. Also included are threatening, intimidating, or hostile acts; denigrating jokes and displays; or circulation of written or graphic material that denigrates or shows hostility or aversion toward an individual or a group. Sexual harassment includes any unwanted and/or unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical harassment of a sexual nature. Bullying is the use of force, threat, or coercion to abuse, intimidate, or aggressively dominate others in a professional environment that involves a real or perceived power imbalance. These actions can include abusive criticism, humiliation, the spreading of rumors, microaggressions, physical and verbal attacks, isolation, undermining, and professional exclusion of individuals through any means.

If you are unsure whether you've experienced or witnessed discrimination or a bias event you can report it anonymously to the University of Utah Office for Inclusive Excellence, and they will help you categorize what type of bias event may or may not have transpired.

II. PREAMBLE: GEO PROFESSIONAL ETHICS POLICY

The GEO Professional Ethics Policy is a set of principles and practices for professional behavior that governs all GEO faculty, students, staff, as well as anyone participating in GEO sponsored programs and activities. GEO sponsored programs and activities take place in classroom, office, lab, field trip, research and social settings.

This Policy is designed to establish and enforce code-of conduct expectations, and to provide additional education and awareness on how to change culture and behavior to address such issues. In so doing, the policy will prevent the development and/or escalation of activities or actions that have a negative impact on personal and professional development.

GEO affirms the international principle that the free, open, and responsible practice of science is fundamental to scientific advancement and human and environmental well-being. As a member of the scientific community and enterprise, GEO is committed to fostering a safe and professional environment in order to learn, conduct research, and communicate science with integrity, respect, fairness, trustworthiness, and transparency at all organizational levels and in all scientific endeavors. This includes all professional interactions within the scientific community and with members of the public. Failure to uphold these principles harms our profession, our scientific credibility, and the well-being of individuals and the broader community. The culture of science differs internationally, yet integrity must remain inviolate. It is the responsibility of all individuals covered under this Policy to ensure the integrity of our educational and scientific practice and to work to prevent actions contrary to the spirit of the above principles.

GEO will educate and reinforce positive behavior in the scientific and learning environment, including the classroom, field settings, laboratory, office and professional meetings. These guidelines for scientific research and professional conduct hold no meaning if they are breached without consequence. Therefore, a process to guide the resolution of reported violations, and commensurate sanctions are important components of this Policy.

III. CODE OF CONDUCT

All GEO members are expected to aspire and adhere to the following standards of behavior:

A. Principles

- Excellence, integrity, and honesty in all aspects of departmental sponsored activities and settings. All GEO members are representatives of the University of Utah and should act responsibly in accordance.
- Personal accountability in the conduct of learning, teaching, and research in regards to department-sponsored activities.
- Professional courtesy, equity, and fairness in working with others
- Freedom to responsibly pursue education and science without interference
- Unselfish cooperation and active efforts to foster inclusiveness in learning, teaching and research

B. Responsibilities

1. Integrity: GEO faculty, students, staff and all participants in departmental sponsored activities will act with honesty in the interest of the advancement of education and science, take full responsibility for the trustworthiness of their work, and treat others with courtesy, equity, and fairness.

2. Adherence to Regulations: GEO faculty, students, staff and all participants in department-sponsored activities will be aware of and adhere to this professional ethics policy, herein, and University regulations governing student, staff and faculty conduct.

3. Environment: GEO faculty, students, staff and all participants in departmental sponsored activities are responsible for creating and upholding a safe, open, and professional environment for learning, conducting, and communicating science with integrity, respect, fairness, trustworthiness, and transparency at all organizational levels and in all educational and scientific endeavors. This should include active efforts to create an inclusive environment.

4. Misconduct: GEO faculty, students, staff and all participants in department- sponsored activities will not engage in discrimination, harassment, bullying, dishonesty, fraud, misrepresentation, coercive manipulation, censorship, or other misconduct that compromises the learning or research missions of the department. An expanded discussion of this topic appears below.

5. Societal Considerations: GEO faculty, students, staff and all participants in departmental sponsored activities have an ethical obligation to weigh the societal benefits of their teaching and research against the costs and risks to human and animal welfare, heritage sites, or other potential impacts on the environment and society.

C. Student–Advisor Relationship

The relationship between a student and the student advisor is a unique one in the learning and research environment. This relationship requires heightened awareness on the roles and responsibilities of faculty advisors in demonstrating and promoting ethical behavior. Key principles include:

- promote an environment that is intellectually stimulating;
- promote an environment that is free of harassment;
- maintain open communication; problems commonly arise when one or both parties communicate too infrequently and/or not effectively;
- be supportive, equitable, accessible, encouraging, and respectful;
- recognize and respect the cultural backgrounds of students;
- be sensitive to the power imbalance in the student–advisor relationship;

Students and student advisors are encouraged to be aware of responsibilities of the advisor, the student, and the institution in these special circumstances.

D. Harassment, Bullying, and Discrimination

University of Utah Non-Discrimination Policy: The University of Utah does not discriminate against individuals on the basis of race, ethnicity, color, religion, national origin, age, disability, sex, sexual orientation, gender, gender identity, gender expression, genetic information, or protected veteran’s status (“protected class”), in employment, treatment, admission, access to educational programs and activities, or other University benefits or services. Additionally, the University provides reasonable accommodations to ensure equal access to qualified persons with disabilities. Retaliation against individuals for engaging in protected activities, such as filing a discrimination complaint or participating in a discrimination complaint process, is prohibited.

GEO works to maintain an environment that allows science and scientific careers to flourish through respectful, inclusive, and equitable treatment of others. As a statement of principle, GEO rejects discrimination and harassment by any means, based on factors such as ethnic or national origin, race, religion, citizenship, language, political or other opinion, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, disability, physical appearance, age, or economic class. In addition, GEO opposes all forms of bullying including threatening, humiliating, coercive, or intimidating conduct that causes harm to, interferes with, or sabotages scientific activity and careers. Discrimination, harassment (in any form), and bullying create a hostile environment that reduces the quality, integrity, and pace of the advancement of science by marginalizing individuals and communities. It also damages productivity and career advancement, and prevents the healthy exchange of ideas.

We affirm that discrimination, harassment (including sexual harassment), or bullying in any scientific or learning environment is unacceptable, and constitutes professional and scientific misconduct under the GEO Professional Ethics Policy. Such behavior should be reported and addressed with consequences for the offender, according to section F below.

F. Reporting and investigating incidences of misconduct

If you are the subject of unacceptable behavior or have witnessed any such behavior, please immediately notify a faculty member, teaching assistant or anyone else in a designated leadership position, including the Department Chair. If, as a student, you feel reticent in reporting an incident, consider asking another student to assist in making a report.

If you feel you have experienced or witnessed a bias event, you can report it anonymously to the Office for Inclusive Excellence <https://inclusive-excellence.utah.edu/report-form.php>. The office there will help you categorize the bias event. This is a tool to monitor University of Utah campus climate and so is critical, but only if it is used.

Formal complaint of sexual misconduct or discrimination may be made to the University Office of Equal Opportunity and Affirmative Action. In addition the following resources are **confidential** which means that disclosure of an allegation of sexual misconduct will not result in a University investigation without the complainant's agreement: University Counseling Center, University Hospital Chaplains, Center for Student Wellness, Sexual Assault Victim Advocacy Office, Women's Resource Center.

In some cases, an allegation may be resolved informally, such as through an apology and assurance that the action will not happen again (especially in cases of the respondent unknowingly causing offense). If an alleged violation of the Department Policy on Professional Ethics is not informally resolved by proximate faculty or administrators, a formal complaint of misconduct will be referred to and reviewed by the appropriate University entity.

- Discrimination or sexual misconduct: The rules for complaints of discrimination or sexual misconduct apply to all academic and administrative units of the University, and to all members of the University community, including all faculty, staff, students, and participants in University programs or activities. Allegations of discrimination or sexual misconduct will be referred to the Office of Equal Opportunity and Affirmative Action.
- Other forms of misconduct:
 - Student misconduct: Allegations of behavioral misconduct will be referred to the Office of the Dean of Students. Allegations of academic misconduct will be referred to the College Appeals Committee
 - Faculty misconduct: Allegations of violation of the Faculty Code are governed by University Policy 6-011: Functions and procedures of the Senate Consolidated Hearing Committee.
 - Staff misconduct: Issues of staff misconduct will be handled in accordance with University of Utah Regulations, Rule 5-111 – Corrective Action and Termination Policy for Staff Members.

Appendix A. Department Code of Conduct for Field-Related Activities

Department of Geology and Geophysics (GEO) field experiences, including curricular and extracurricular field trips, field courses, and research-related fieldwork, are central to the department's educational and scientific missions. GEO promotes, provides, and expects a professional and respectful atmosphere in the conduct of all its activities in any venue. All students, staff, faculty, and other participants in GEO-sponsored field activities are expected and required to maintain professional, collegial, and respectful behavior at all times, and to be governed by the GEO Professional Ethics Policy.

Expected Behavior

All students, staff, faculty, and other participants in GEO-sponsored field activities are to:

- Be treated with respect and consideration.
- Be considerate, collegial, and collaborative.

- Communicate openly, with civil attitudes, critiquing ideas rather than individuals.
- Avoid personal attacks directed toward any other participants and non-participants as well.
- Obey the rules and safety policies pertaining to the particular field activity.
- Alert designated leadership personnel if you notice someone in distress, or perceive a potentially dangerous situation, or witness a dangerous situation.
- Act as stewards of the preserved natural environment at field sites and practice leave no trace principles. For instance, clean up trash, preserve outcrop condition, and remediate sites for the benefit of future visitors.

Unacceptable Behavior includes but is not limited to:

- Harassment, intimidation, or discrimination.
- Sexually explicit, inappropriate or demeaning language.
- Physical or verbal abuse of any participant.
- Making inappropriate comments whether verbal or digital related to gender, gender identity and expression, age, sexual orientation, disability, physical appearance, body size, race, ethnicity, religion (or lack thereof), national origin, or other legally protected group status or characteristics
- Intentional, uninvited physical contact of any form.
- Threats (implied or real) of physical or professional harm.
- Disruption of field-related activities.
- Inadequate outcrop site preservation or remediation.
- Audio and video recording of an individual's oral field presentation without the presenter's permission.

Consequences of Unacceptable Behavior

- Anyone requested to stop unacceptable behavior is expected to immediately cease and desist.
- Designated GEO leadership personnel shall take action(s) deemed necessary and appropriate. Actions may include immediate removal from the field trip, field course, or field research venue without warning or refund.
- Serious allegations of misconduct will be dealt with as provided in the GEO Professional Ethics Policy on reporting and investigating incidences of misconduct.

Reporting Unacceptable Behavior

If you are the subject of unacceptable behavior or have witnessed any such behavior, please immediately notify the field trip leader, a faculty member, teaching assistant or anyone else in a designated leadership position, including the Department Chair.

Appendix B. Resources for Ethics and Scientific Integrity

American Geophysical Union: Policy on Scientific Integrity and Professional Ethics
<https://ethicsandequitycenter.org/>

Singapore Statement of the World Integrity Conference (2010):
<https://wcrif.org/guidance/singapore-statement>

Geological Society of America: GSA Events Code of Conduct (2017)

<https://www.geosociety.org/GSA/Events/EventConductCode/GSA/Events/Conduct.aspx?hkey=7f3f608e-442a-466d-81bf-1f78d55f53d4> HYPERLINK

["https://www.geosociety.org/GSA/Events/EventConductCode/GSA/Events/Conduct.aspx?hkey=7f3f608e-442a-466d-81bf-1f78d55f53d4"](https://www.geosociety.org/GSA/Events/EventConductCode/GSA/Events/Conduct.aspx?hkey=7f3f608e-442a-466d-81bf-1f78d55f53d4)

American Geophysical Union: AGU Meetings Code of Conduct (2018)

<https://fallmeeting.agu.org/2018/agu-meetings-code-of-conduct/>

Pennsylvania State University College of Science's Guidance for Advisor-Graduate Student Interactions

<http://science.psu.edu/graduate-students/advisor-graduate-student-interactions> HYPERLINK ["http://science.psu.edu/graduate-students/advisor-graduate-student-interactions"](http://science.psu.edu/graduate-students/advisor-graduate-student-interactions).edu/graduate-students/advisor-graduate-student-interactions

University of Utah Nondiscrimination Statement

<https://www.utah.edu/nondiscrimination/>

University of Utah Nondiscrimination Policy 1-012

<https://regulations.utah.edu/general/1-012.php>

University of Utah Office for Inclusive Excellence bias event report

<https://inclusive-excellence.utah.edu/report-form.php>

American Geosciences Institute: AGI Guidelines for Ethical Professional Conduct (2016)

<http://www.americangeosciences.org/community/agi> HYPERLINK

["http://www.americangeosciences.org/community/agi-guidelines-ethical-professional-conduct"](http://www.americangeosciences.org/community/agi-guidelines-ethical-professional-conduct) HYPERLINK ["http://www.americangeosciences.org/community/agi-guidelines-ethical-professional-conduct"](http://www.americangeosciences.org/community/agi-guidelines-ethical-professional-conduct)guidelines-ethical-professional-conduct

Council on Undergraduate Research: Code of Ethics for Undergraduate Research (2017)

https://www.cur.org/assets/1/7/Code_of_Ethics.pdf

Chan, M.A. and Kamola, D.L., 2017. Classic Geologic Outcrops: Preservation and Future Accessibility. GSA Today, v. 27, 3 p. doi: 10.1130/GSATG343GW.1

<https://www.geosociety.org/gsatoday/groundwork/G343GW/GSATG343GW.pdf>