Statement of Purpose

The Field Research Safety Manual is designed to provide information and strategies for WSU students, staff, faculty, and researchers working in the field where there may be a possibility of discrimination or harassment. This guide acknowledges that some individuals encounter dangerous situations in the field due to their identities, and it is important to minimize the chance of conflict or harm between researchers and communities at field sites. The safety and security of WSU field researchers is a top priority, and this guide is intended to supplement the support and guidance researchers receive from their departments or the WSU Office of Research. The responsibility to reduce conflict and harm is collective and involves the institution, researcher, supervisor, and department.

Relevant Policies

WSU's policies apply to work on campus and in the field. WSU researchers are expected to follow all WSU policies regarding conduct in the field and deserve to work safely. Additionally, researchers have a right to request accommodations for field work through the campus Access Center (for student researchers) or HRS Disability Services (for employee researchers). Below is a list of relevant policies or websites.

- WSU Executive Policy (EP) Manual
- WSU Business Policies and Procedures Manual (BPPM)
- WSU Safety Policies and Procedures Manual (SPPM)
- Compliance and Civil Rights Policy Website
    - File a Complaint
- Access Center
    - Pullman and Global
    - Spokane
    - Tri-Cities
    - Vancouver
    - Everett
- HRS Disability Services

Field researchers are encouraged to contact their department or the relevant university office for concerns occurring in the field. Relevant to this guidance document, field researchers have the right to report concerns of discrimination and discriminatory harassment, including sexual harassment, sexual assault, stalking, domestic violence, and dating violence, to WSU's Compliance and Civil Rights (CCR). Participants in CCR's process have

options, including consultations, formal grievance options, and supportive measures or referrals.

Potential for Risk in Field Research

Field Research may present unique risks to researchers and community members. It is important to consider possible risk factors before entering the field. Some factors to consider include:

- Acute issues facing marginalized communities, especially those with visible indicators of:
  - Race/ethnicity
  - Sexual Orientation
  - Disability
  - Gender identity or Expression
  - Religion
  - Sex
  - Immigration Status
  - National or ethnic origin

- Issues which may impact any field researcher:
  - Working alone or in remote locations with limited support
  - Being unfamiliar with the area or community
  - Having limited institutional or peer support
  - Working with problematic team members
  - Having insufficient situational awareness

Field researchers may experience identity-based harm or treatment which can manifest in a number of ways. Some examples of harm that an individual may experience based on their identity could include:

- Confrontation by the general public or law enforcement in rural or urban areas
- Police Called
- Intimidating displays or brandishing of firearms

- Hate symbols displayed in area
- Discrimination in housing
- Discriminatory refusal of services
- Verbal abuse or harassment based on identity
- Stalking
- Sexual harassment or assault
- Targeted vandalization of equipment
- Increased risk for domestic violence or dating violence, where a researcher is isolated from protective support or structure

Researcher Risk Reduction

Field researchers and program leaders can take steps to reduce risk while working in the field. Many at-risk individuals may already consider how they will handle misconduct. In addition, WSU Departments and supervisors have a responsibility to inform the individuals conducting field work of potential risks and to make available resources and protocols for filing complaints and accessing training well before the risk presents itself. WSU recommends researchers and/or program leaders should consider the following basic steps:

- Engage in a thorough risk assessment before entering the field
  - o Consideration should be given to the identity of the researcher, local laws and customs, and historical context of the field site.
  - o Risk may be higher at international field sites (ex. Certain identities may be criminalized) – note local laws, current politics, and establish emergency plan, and work with International Programs for insurance and safety planning.
- Develop a Risk Reduction plan with your supervisor and/or other relevant departments.
  - o Consideration should be given to the identity of the researcher.
  - o Participants should develop mitigation strategies, plans of action, and ensure all participants are aware of available reporting and safety resources
- Consider WSU's responsibility to not engage in harmful behavior towards others as well.
  - o For example, if working with a Native nation, ensure you consult with the Executive Director for Tribal Relations, per EP 41, and engage in appropriate conduct as requested by the community.

Assessing risk and developing a risk reduction strategy should include the participation of the field researcher, who may have additional experiential insight based on their identity, and the program leader. Some research may involve assumption of some risk – researchers should be informed and aware of risk before stepping into field work. At times, risk reduction will require consultation with university departments, such as the Office of Research, International Programs, Risk Management, or the WSU Division of the Attorney General's Office.

Some examples of risk reduction strategies that could be considered include:

- Creating community agreements with field locations in long-term situations

- Working with another researcher if possible or have consistent point of contact to know your location/schedule each day
- Regular check-ins with supervisor
- Creating a Safety Plan
- Contacting others who have used the field site and documenting known cases of risk
- Taking advantage of training opportunities prior to entering the field
- Knowing who manages the field site and informing them of when/where you will be at the location
- Introducing yourself to neighbors of the field property or leaving a note about your research. Be sure to include contact information.
- Carrying credentials in case folks challenge why you are at a site (ID, permits, etc.)
- Wearing University apparel or uniforms
- Contacting your supervisor for support or modification of the project, if you feel unsafe.
- Supervisor meetings with all trainees or new field researchers to discuss these risk reduction guidelines
- Fostering a department-wide discussion on safety during fieldwork for all researchers
- Creating and integrating contextualized safety guidelines for researchers in lab, departmental, and institutional resources.
- Encouraging individuals to report misconduct and be aware of employee reporting requirements identified in EP 15.
- Ensuring adherence to WSU expectations while working in the field
  - Be respectful of the community you are working in
  - Engage in a professional manner
- Producing a pre-expedition checklist tool designed for harassment prevention and response planning
- Developing and sharing metrics for 'DEIJ accreditation' at field sites.
- Re-evaluating practices to remove barriers to inclusion in safety practices
- Training and Resource Development
  - Conduct scenario-based risk assessment and safety trainings prior to going into the field.
  - Make general field safety, harassment and first aid course training available/mandatory.
  - Supervisors should self-educate on team member's identity and corresponding risk (do not ask researcher to relive trauma as an educational source).
    - Attend WSU's Equity Workshop Series

- o Train supervisors on mentoring mentees of different identity groups.
- o Develop list of resources for researchers
- Considering the safety risk for field researchers, as well as legal, social, and reputational risk of failure to consider safety risks.
- Reviewing available hate crime information on all active or newly established field sites
  - o Statistics can be found at the following resources:
    - ▪ https://www.justice.gov/hatecrimes/hate-crime-statistics
    - ▪ https://crime-data-explorer.fr.cloud.gov/pages/explorer/crime/hate-crime
    - ▪ https://www.splcenter.org/hate-map
- Site-specific Risk Reduction Steps:
  - o Contact relevant institutional offices for risk management prior to fieldwork to identify resources and risks.
  - o Create field risk management plan
  - o Designate a diverse set of people for researchers to report to in the field
  - o Review and agree upon safety plans with researcher before start of work.
  - o Assist researchers in establishing safe housing accommodations (travel, food, points of contact).
    - ▪ Ensure field course locations/housing are appropriate, safe, and equitable by soliciting regular feedback.
  - o Make communication devices and emergency transportation available to all staff
  - o Introduce researchers (in person or email) to field site manager
  - o Provide materials, such as signs, safety vests, and paperwork, for researchers to clearly identify themselves and their purpose.
  - o Supply official letter of support for researchers doing fieldwork with the department's contact info
  - o Ensure all department/WSU managed field sites are clearly labeled as part of WSU
  - o Frequent check-ins throughout semester on fieldwork safety concerns
  - o Regular conversations with all research team members on risks and preparations to minimize risk.
  - o Validate experiences and assist in modifying projects in researchers have complaints/ concerns about safety

While the expectation is that field researchers will work collaboratively with their programs to develop risk assessments and risk reduction strategies, there may be instances where a supervisor or program is not supportive or aware, or is unwilling to

acknowledge, potential risk in the field. Where this occurs, field researchers are encouraged to:

- Share their concerns with leadership over the program.
- Contact WSU's Risk Management for assistance
- Form support group to document risk, gather witnesses (peers, counselor, etc.)
- Report discrimination and harassment to Compliance and Civil Rights (CCR)
- Call 911

If You Experience Harm in the Field …

Reporting Options:

- If you are at immediate risk or have experienced criminal conduct, do not hesitate to contact 911, if you feel safe doing so.
- Individuals experiencing discrimination or harassment, including sexual assault, dating violence, domestic abuse, and stalking, can share information with Compliance and Civil Rights (CCR) and/or with the Lead Title IX Coordinator by calling 509-335-8288 or emailing ccr@wsu.edu.
- Supervisor/Advisor
- Local agencies/law enforcement/hotlines

Supportive Measures available through CCR:

- Upon reporting, supportive measures may be facilitated with consideration to an individual's preferences and safety needs, as reasonably available. The range of supportive measures includes, but is not limited to:
    - Academic Measures
    - Referrals to care providers (counselors, hotlines, medical providers, etc.)
    - Safety Planning
    - Modification of research assignment
    - Altered housing accommodations
    - Transport out of field area
- CCR will work collaboratively with field researchers and their departments for effective faciliation of supportive measures.
- For more information on supportive measures, see EP 15.

Legal Resources:

- Contact your local state bar for attorney referrals
- Northwest Justice Project Free Legal Hotline (CLEAR)

- o Northwest Justice Project (NJP) is Washington's largest publicly funded legal aid program. NJP provides critical civil legal assistance and representation in cases affecting basic human needs such as family safety and security, housing preservation, protection of income, access to health care, education and other basic needs. NJP operates a toll-free intake and referral hotline called CLEAR (Coordinated Legal Education Advice and Referral). CLEAR serves as the statewide, centralized point of access for clients seeking free legal help, including advice, education, limited legal services, self-help materials and, where available, referrals to other legal aid and local volunteer lawyer programs. Central line is 1-888-201-1012
- WA Law Help
  - o Washington Law Help is a guide to free civil legal services for low-income persons and seniors in Washington. This site provides legal education materials and tools that give you basic information on a number of legal problems, and in some cases, detailed instructions and forms to help you represent yourself in court. You can also locate information on free legal aid programs in Washington, including basic eligibility and contact information.
- National Institute of Health Anti-Harassment initiatives
- National Science Foundation Anti-Sexual Harassment initiatives