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Arctic Research
Code of Conduct

Foreword

The idea of writing an Arctic Research Code of Conduct emerged from the recent will of ArcticNet to promote positive changes and cultural inclusion within the Arctic research community. Based on previously published Codes of Conduct (including the ones produced by the Association of Polar Early Career Scientists, Alfred Wegener Institute, British Antarctic Survey, National Science Foundation, International Network for Terrestrial Research - Monitoring and Education in the Arctic, and the Beaufort Lagoon Ecosystems - Long Term Ecological Research), a first version of this document was prepared by Pascale Ropars (ArcticNet), Lauren Thompson (APECS), Marianne Falardeau and Élise Gaia Devoie (APECS Canada). The final version includes ideas and comments from 18 Arctic research organisations from North America and Europe.

Each of the organizations listed below is committed to adhering to and promoting the principles set forth in the Arctic Code of Conduct:

Amundsen Science
ArcticNet
Arctic Institute of North America
Association of Canadian Universities for Northern Studies (ACUNS)
Association of Polar Early Career Scientists (APECS)
Association of Polar Early Career Scientists-Canada (APECS Canada)
Canadian Museum of Nature
Canadian Network of Northern Research Operators (CNNRO)
Centre for Northern Studies (CEN)
Churchill Northern Studies Centre
Institut Nordique du Québec (INQ)
International Network for Terrestrial Research and Monitoring in the Arctic (INTERACT)
Parks Canada
Polar Continental Shelf Program (PCSP)
Polar Knowledge Canada
Sentinel North
Study of Environmental Arctic Change (SEARCH)
Toolik Field Station – Institute of Arctic Biology

If you wish to join us, please feel to contact us at: conduct@arcticnet.ulaval.ca.

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Purpose

The Arctic Research Code of Conduct provides a framework for how research should be conducted in the Arctic. It aims to provide each signatory organization a common baseline of expected and unacceptable behavior in the field environment, including on vessels of any size, at campsites, at field stations, or within/adjacent to Arctic communities. Each of the signatory organizations seek to provide a productive, safe, and respectful environment for all participants regardless of gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, race, ethnicity, religion, disability, physical appearance, or career level. All participants including staff, faculty, northern and southern researchers, students, contractors, technicians, visiting classes, interns, guests, volunteers, and others are expected to abide by this Arctic Research Code of Conduct. In this document we use the term "Arctic". There is no simple definition of what area the Arctic encompasses. Rather, there are several definitions that commonly delineate the "Arctic" in climatic, botanical, marine, and political categories. In this document, the term "Arctic" embraces the High Arctic, the Low Arctic, and the Subarctic regions of the Northern hemisphere.

Working on Arctic Lands

First and foremost, all researchers who conduct research in the Arctic have to understand that they work on Indigenous lands where respect of local, regional, territorial, and Indigenous knowledge systems, norms and guidelines is of crucial importance for respectful and efficient fieldwork. We therefore recommend that you:

- Learn about histories, current realities, cultures, governance structures, and colonial histories of the regions and communities you work in.
- Respect laws, rules and guidelines from national, regional and local governance structures.
- Value the knowledge that the residents hold from their deep-rooted experiences with this environment. Respect intellectual property rights and give due credits to local residents providing services or data to your fieldwork/studies.
- Establish two-way communication with community members to share the purpose of your work and understand its significance within the context and history of the community.
- Be open to new viewpoints and be aware of and acknowledge differences and biases when discussing analysis and interpretation of data and observations with residents.
- Pay for services provided by local residents.
- Protect the Arctic region by minimizing pollution, preventing disturbance to flora and fauna, and other environmental risks and impacts.

This Code of Conduct does not intend to be a complete guide for research in and with Indigenous communities, but the topic being crucial to current and future Arctic research, we point to key guidelines and training that exist (see Appendix 1). We urge researchers at all career stages to develop the appropriate knowledge and skill sets required to work in respect of Indigenous lands and peoples.

Expected General Behavior of Members of the Science Community

- Promote a work environment that is safe, harassment-free, and inclusive.
- Act with integrity, and honor verbal and written commitments.

- Be accepting of diverse viewpoints and allow all team members to express their opinions openly without judgment, if viewpoints are not discriminatory.
- Allow all team members to partake in decision making and do not exclude any team members from meetings. Respect and be considerate of others' viewpoints and seek consensus among group members (if consensus cannot be reached, the team leader may need to make a decision, while providing justification to the team).
- Field activities are an extension of a work environment, and any interactions beyond professional ones (including intimate relationships) may be inappropriate especially in situations with a power imbalance. Follow any guidelines implemented by your home institution regarding appropriate, respectful, and safe relationships in a work setting, keeping in mind that consent (see an example definition in the glossary) is critical, and any activities affect not only the parties engaged but also the other members of the field team.
- Ask for help when you need it. Respect those who ask for help and assist in any way if you can. Recognize that people have different strengths and some disabilities are invisible.
- Be accountable: if you violate any forms of misconduct or fail to meet expectations in some way, be open with the team members, admit fault, and strive to do better.

List of Unacceptable Behavior

Unacceptable behaviors include, but are not limited to:

- Alcohol / drug misuse: substance abuse will not be tolerated under any circumstances in Arctic research. Furthermore, all participants are expected to respect the alcohol and drug policies of the community they are working in.
- Use of social or mainstream media to target others in a way that could harm their privacy and/or reputation.
- Physical or verbal abuse, harassment[1], or assault.
- Intimidation, bullying[1], coercion[1], or manipulation.
- Threats including, but not limited to, threats of violence, professional discreditation, unwarranted decreases in responsibilities, and public embarrassment.
- Gender, race-based, age-based, ability-based, or sexual harassment.
- Behavior that endangers the mental or physical health and safety of oneself or others.
- Sexual misconduct including the inappropriate use of nudity and/or sexual images in a public space.
  - Acts of sexual harassment are often under-reported and minimized due to a sense of culpability of the victim, or concerns of escalation or retaliation. In remote and isolated conditions, there is no room for sexual harassment, and reporting of any kind of sexual misconduct is strongly encouraged.
  - An anonymous and accessible contact system must be available to safely report misconduct, and resolve conflicts and misunderstandings.
- Acting as a bystander and not reporting misconduct, code of conduct violations or retaliation[1] against a person or group. All team members have the responsibility to report all instances of

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[1] See Appendix 2 for definition.

unacceptable conduct as defined above to the appropriate party. All instances of misconduct require reporting no matter the severity.

Reporting Process

Providing and communicating an effective reporting process is crucial.

It is each institution's responsibility to communicate expected behaviour in the field or at stations, as well as code of conduct rules and guidelines. Institutions should also track and monitor incidents and make changes to rules and guidelines when needed. Where an organization already has a reporting and resolution process in place (*e.g.*, federally regulated institutions who are subject to the Workplace Harassment and Violence Prevention Regulations under the Canada Labour Code), that reporting and resolution process will be used to report and resolve incidents of alleged violations of this Code.

Code of Conduct Committee

For organizations that don't have an established reporting and resolution process, we strongly encourage them to set up a Code of Conduct committee who is mandated to ensure that immediate safety concerns are addressed.

The following are recommendations for the terms of reference for a Code of Conduct committee:

1) Committee members will recuse themselves if there are strong conflicts of interest that would bias their decisions. A meeting amongst committee members will be arranged as soon as it is practical where neither the alleged harasser or target is present.

2) Multiple reporting avenues should be available, including an anonymous one to safely report misconduct. Every organization should provide a list of individuals who can be confidentially contacted when an incident is observed or experienced. This list should include individuals who can maintain communications throughout the field season and includes individuals in the field, at the home institution, and at the relevant research station. This list includes people of multiple genders and levels of seniority.

3) When an incident is reported, the Code of Conduct committee will assess the situation (talk with involved parties and bystanders) and take necessary steps to protect the victim(s) and the community in general from future harm. The response depends on the severity of the incident and may include:

    ● Administering a warning to the perpetrator of harm.
        o Upon repeated unacceptable behaviors, a second warning may be administered.
        o If unacceptable behaviors persist after a second warning, the perpetrator will be removed from the team/station.
    ● Immediate termination of the fieldwork and removal from the team/station.
    ● Remove responsibilities, privilege, or access.
    ● Temporary ban from team spaces.

- Permanent ban from team spaces.
- Recommendations for firing, demotion, or elimination of funding privileges.

4) Debriefings should be conducted with involved parties and others if needed, to ensure a common understanding of what happened and what decisions have been made by the Code of Conduct committee.

5) The Code of Conduct committee should assess whether the incident has caused psychological/mental health issues for involved parties and provide professional help if relevant.

Where occurrences involve staff from more than one organization, a coordinated and collaborative approach using both organizations reporting and resolution mechanisms should be employed.

Appendix 1: Training and guidelines for working in Indigenous territories

Training:
- Basic course on research ethics by the Tri-Council: https://tcps2core.ca/welcome.
- (Bilingual) MOOC Northern Quebec: issues, spaces, and cultures (Université Laval), (https://www.ulaval.ca/en/academics/mooc-massive-open-online-courses/northern-quebec-issues-spaces-and-cultures).
- MOOC Indigenous Canada (University of Alberta), (https://www.ualberta.ca/admissions-programs/online-courses/indigenous-canada/index.html).
- San'yas Indigenous Cultural Safety Training: https://www.sanyas.ca/training.
- Indigenous Awareness Certification: https://indigenousawarenesscanada.com/product/201-indigenous-awareness-certification/.
- Indigenous Corporate Training: https://www.ictinc.ca/training?hsCtaTracking=cf84739d-226f-4639-9412-f63383eaf57a%7Cf7736266-509d-4749-9c5d-0a647026207b.
- Erebia: https://erebia.ca/en/services/training/.
- OCAP training - the First Nations principles of ownership, control, access, and possession: https://fnigc.ca/ocap-training/

Guidelines:
- Association of Canadian Universities for Northern Studies (ACUNS). 1982. Ethical principles for the conduct of research in the North. ACUNS, Ottawa, Ontario. 9 p.
- Aurora Research Institute. 2011. Doing research in the Northwest Territories: A guide for researchers applying for a scientific research license. Aurora Research Institute, Aurora College, Yellowknife. 67 p.
- Aurora Research Institute. Working Together: Towards relevant environmental monitoring and research in the NWT. https://nwtresearch.com/sites/default/files/cimp_doc_final_low_res.pdf.
- (In French) Institut Nordique du Québec. 2017. Lignes directrices pour la recherche. Groupe de travail des premiers peuples de l'Institut nordique du Québec. 20 p.
- Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami (ITK). 2018. National Inuit Strategy on Research. 44 p. Stratégie nationale inuite sur la recherche. 48 p.
- Nunavut Research Institute (NRI) and Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami (ITK). 2007. Negotiating research relationships with Inuit communities: A guide for researchers. Edited by S Nickels, J Shirley, and G Laidler. Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami and Nunavut Research Institute, Ottawa and Iqaluit. 38 p.
- Yukon Research Centre. 2013. Protocols and principles for conducting research with Yukon First Nations. Yukon Research Centre, Yukon College, Whitehorse. 15 p.
- Inuit Circumpolar Council. 2022 Circumpolar Inuit Protocols for Equitable and Ethical Engagement. 34 p. https://www.inuitcircumpolar.com/project/circumpolar-inuit-protocols-for-equitable-and-ethical-engagement/

For more resources, you can consult this crowd-sourced, non-exhaustive, list of resources for researchers who are interested in working collaboratively with Indigenous communities: Resources for

[participatory and collaborative research](#), a crowd-sourced document maintained by Gwyneth Anne MacMillan, Allyson Menzies, and Marianne Falardeau.

Appendix 2: Definitions

Bullying – Abusive conduct involving threatening, humiliating, or intimidating behavior directed at one or more people by one or more perpetrators that interferes with ability to work and is intended to cause physical or psychological harm.

Coercion – The use of threats or one's positionality or power to persuade someone to do something.

Consent - "the voluntary agreement to engage in a contact or sexual activity and to continue to engage in the contact or activity. Consent means that all persons involved demonstrate, through words or actions, that they freely and mutually agree to participate in a contact or activity." (This is an example definition from the University of Victoria; for more information, see, for instance, the 'What is consent' page of UVic)

Harassment – Defined as any unwelcome verbal or physical conduct based on race, color, religion, sex (includes sexual harassment and discrimination based on pregnancy), disability, age, national origin, sexual orientation, gender identity, and protected genetic information that is so objectively offensive as to alter the conditions of the individual's employment. Harassment unreasonably interferes with an employee's performance and can create an intimidating, hostile, or offensive work environment.
- Harassment is a type of discrimination that consists of acts that are unwanted, unwelcome, demeaning, abusive, threatening, or offensive. Harassment commonly takes the form of a single intense and severe act, or of multiple persistent or pervasive acts. Examples of behaviour that constitute harassment include, but are not limited to: any form of degrading comments, verbal or otherwise, related to gender, sexual orientation, disability, physical appearance, body size, race, religion, ethnicity or national origin; the inappropriate use of nudity and/or sexual images; threats; unwanted touching or other hostile acts; the circulation of written or graphic material that denigrates an individual or a group; as well as minimizing or intentionally taking actions to reduce the credibility of a harassment victim.

Retaliation – Adverse employment, academic or other actions against anyone reporting a violation of this code.

Sexual Harassment – Includes unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature when the conduct is made as a condition of employment and when the conduct creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working environment.