Policy brief & purpose
Our sexual harassment policy aims to protect men and women in our field school from unwanted sexual advances and give them guidelines to report incidents. We will also explain how we handle claims, punish sexual harassment and help victims recover.

We won’t tolerate sexual harassment in our workplaces and living spaces in any shape or form. Our culture is based on mutual respect and collaboration. Sexual harassment is a serious violation of those principles.

Scope
This policy applies to every person on our project regardless of gender, sexual orientation, level, function, seniority, status or other protected characteristics. We are all obliged to comply with this policy.

Also, we won’t tolerate sexual harassment from inside or outside of the field school. Employees, volunteers, contractors, visitors and everyone else interacting with our team members are covered by the present policy.

Policy elements
What is sexual harassment?
Sexual harassment has many forms of variable seriousness. A person sexually harasses someone when they:

- Insinuate, propose or demand sexual favors of any kind.
- Invade another person’s personal space (e.g. inappropriate touching.)
- Stalk, intimidate, coerce or threaten another person to get them to engage in sexual acts.
- Send or display sexually explicit objects or messages.
- Comment on someone’s looks, dress, sexuality or gender in a derogatory or objectifying manner or a manner that makes them uncomfortable.
- Make obscene comments, jokes or gestures that humiliate or offend someone.
- Pursue or flirt with another person persistently without the other person’s willing participation. Also, flirting with someone at an inappropriate time (e.g. in a team meeting) is considered sexual harassment, even when
these advances would have been welcome in a different setting. This is because such actions can harm a person’s professional reputation and expose them to further harassment.

The most extreme form of sexual harassment is sexual assault. This is a serious crime and our project will support team members who want to press charges against offenders.

Our organization’s rules on sexual harassment

- **No one has the right to sexually harass our team members.** Any person on our project who is found guilty of serious harassment will be dismissed, whether they are head staff or new volunteers. Also, if representatives of our partner universities and similar organizations sexually harass our employees, we will demand that the institution they work for takes disciplinary action and/or refuse to work with this person in the future.

- **Sexual harassment is never too minor to be dealt with.** Any kind of harassment can wear down employees and create a hostile workplace. We will hear every claim and punish offenders appropriately.

- **Sexual harassment is about how we make others feel.** Many do not consider behaviors like flirting or sexual comments to be sexual harassment, thinking they are too innocent to be labeled that way. But, if something you do makes your colleagues uncomfortable, or makes them feel unsafe, you must stop.

- **We assume every sexual harassment claim is legitimate unless proven otherwise.** We listen to victims of sexual harassment and always conduct our investigations properly. Occasional false reports do not undermine this principle.

- **We will not allow further victimization of harassed employees.** We will fully support team members who were sexually harassed and will not take any adverse action against them. For example, we will not move them to undesirable field tasks or allow others to retaliate against them.

- **Those who support or overlook sexual harassment are as much at fault as offenders.** Directors and staff members especially are obliged to prevent sexual harassment and act when they have suspicions or receive reports. Letting this behavior go on or encouraging it will bring about disciplinary action. Anyone who witnesses an incident of sexual harassment or has other kinds of proof should report to a director.

How to report sexual harassment

If you are being sexually harassed (or suspect another person is being harassed), please report it to any field school faculty lead or any ACMS staff. We acknowledge it’s often hard to come forward about these issues,
but we need your help to build a fair and safe workplace for you and your colleagues.

If you want to report sexual harassment within our project, there are two options:

- **Ask for an urgent meeting with your field school faculty lead.** Once in the meeting, explain the situation in as much detail as possible. If you have any hard evidence or witnesses, bring it with you to the meeting.
- **Ask to meet with another staff member.** If you are uncomfortable addressing the issue with your faculty lead, please contact another staff member about your issue.

If you report assault to the police, our project will provide any possible support until the matter is resolved. In any case, we will ensure you are not victimized and that you have access to relevant evidence admissible in court.

**Inadvertent harassment**
Sometimes, people who harass others do not realize that their behavior is wrong. We understand this is possible, but that doesn’t make the perpetrator any less responsible for their actions.

If you suspect that someone doesn’t realize their behavior is sexual harassment under the definition of this policy, let them know and ask them to stop. Do so preferably with a witness so that you can have corroboration. Please do not use this approach when sexual harassment goes beyond the boundaries of off-hand comments, flirting or jokes.

In the above cases, report to a faculty lead or another staff member as soon as possible.

**Disciplinary action and repeat offenders**
Team members who are found guilty of sexual assault will be dismissed after the first complaint and investigation.

Team members who are found guilty of sexual harassment (but not assault) the first time may:

- Be reprimanded
- Get a “below expectations” performance review.
- Be banned from group activities
We may also transfer harassers to other teams or take other appropriate action to protect their victims. We will dismiss repeat offenders after the second claim against them if our investigation concludes they are indeed guilty.

We apply these disciplinary actions uniformly. Team members of any sexual orientation or other protected characteristics will be penalized the same way for the same offenses.

Staff responsibilities
First and foremost, staff should try to prevent sexual harassment by building a culture of respect and trust. But, when sexual harassment occurs and a team member makes a complaint, staff must act immediately.

Staff should explain our project’s procedures to their team member who made the complaint.

When a staff member receives a complaint that an team member harasses another team member, they will:

- Ask for as many details and information as possible from the person or people making the complaint.
- Keep copies of the report with dates, times and details of incidents and any possible evidence in a confidential file and will update this file with all future actions and conversations regarding this complaint.
- Launch an investigation.
- Check if there have been similar reports on the same person.
- Inform the harassed team members of our project’s procedures and their options to take legal action if appropriate.
- Take into account the wishes of the harassed team member. Some might want the matter to be resolved informally and discreetly, while others might expect more radical actions (e.g. transferring the perpetrator.) Staff should consider the circumstances and decide on appropriate action.
- Contact the harasser and set up a meeting to explain the complaint and explicitly ask for this behavior to stop, or,
- Arrange for mediation sessions with the two team members (harasser and perpetrator) to resolve the issue, if the harassed team member agrees or,
- Launch a disciplinary process depending on the severity of the harassment. In cases of sexual assault or coercing someone to sexual favors under threats, we will dismiss the harasser immediately. We will terminate team members who are found guilty in a court of law of sexually assaulting another team member, even if the staff has not conducted its own investigation.
Staff members must not, under any circumstances, blame the victim, conceal a report or discourage team members from reporting sexual harassment.

We welcome any feedback or complaints about our procedures and how our staff handled each case.

Helping harassment victims
Apart from investigating claims and punishing perpetrators, we want to support the victims of sexual harassment. If you experience trauma, stress or other symptoms because of harassment, consider taking some time to yourself, seeing professional therapists or the like when you return home.

Speak up, we listen
Sexual harassment can exhaust those who endure it. Speaking up about this issue is often tough for fear of not being heard, upsetting staff and challenging field research culture.

Please don’t let these fears deter you. Our field school will do everything possible to stop sexual harassment and any other kind of harassment from happening, while supporting harassed team members. We need to know what’s going on so we can act on it. And by raising your voice on this issue, you help our field school create a happy field research environment and thrive.