

Department of Geological Sciences, East Carolina University

Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct

(This Code defers to all East Carolina University policies, regulations and rules.)

Preamble

As part of a public institution of higher education whose mission is “to serve”, the Department of Geological Sciences is committed to excellence in teaching, research, and service to the profession and the community. The department acknowledges that the quality of our departmental community is sustained by civility, respect for diversity, and tolerance of the ideas of others — values that must flourish within an atmosphere of academic freedom.

The department also concurs with the AAUP’s positions (1) that the freedom to expression of one’s views, regardless of their controversial or unpopular nature, must be protected as “an essential social responsibility of universities and colleges”; (2) that the protection of free speech is paramount in an academic environment; and (3) that although “civility and tolerance are hallmarks of educated men and women” and “serious breaches of civility” should be “condemn[ed]”, collegiality must not be confused with the expectation that a faculty member display “enthusiasm” or “dedication”, evince “a constructive attitude” that will “foster harmony”, or display an excessive deference to administrative or faculty decisions where these may require reasoned discussion ([On Collegiality as a Criterion for Faculty Evaluation](#) and [Ensuring Academic Freedom In Politically Controversial Academic Personnel Decisions](#)). These principles and the University’s position are codified in the ECU PRR “[Freedom of Expression Regulation](#).” Further, first amendment protection is codified in the Student Conduct Process, [Student Code of Conduct](#).

In this context and with this document, the Department of Geological Sciences outlines its expectations for professional conduct and affirms its expectation that all faculty, staff, and students in the department will work to develop and maintain a high degree of respect and civility for the wealth of diversity in which we are all fortunate to live and work. All departmental codes of conduct defer to ECU policies, regulations and rules (PRRs) and in the instance of any discrepancy or inconsistency, the University-wide ECU PRR shall prevail to the extent permitted by University-wide PPPs, and with deference to such PRRs.

Professional Behaviors and Responsibility in the Geological Sciences

It is the mission of the Department of Geological Sciences to prepare students for the workforce and to conduct high-quality teaching, service, and global, cutting-edge research related to Earth processes, materials, and resources that have societal impact and relevance.

In support of this mission, our faculty, staff and students have the responsibility to familiarize themselves with and behave according to the ECU [Regulation on Sexual and Gender-Based Harassment and Other Forms of Interpersonal Violence](#).

Further, the latest Geological Society of America (GSA) Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct was adopted on September 23, 2019. This Code deals with responsibilities of GSA members (faculty, students, professionals) with respect to scientific and research integrity, avoiding conflicts of interest, and promoting a culture of respect, fairness, and inclusivity. To avoid any inconsistencies, refer to the [Part VI, Section II of the ECU Faculty Handbook](#), which addresses research integrity. Refer also to the ECU PRR [Regulation on](#)

[Conflicts of Interest, Commitment, and External Professional Activities for Pay](#), which addresses conflicts of interest.

The faculty, staff, and students of the Department of Geological Sciences are expected to adhere to the [GSA Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct](#) (reproduced below in blue type). Students and staff will adhere to the parts of the Code that are pertinent to their positions. The GSA Code provides concise guidelines which are reproduced below. The guidelines are designed to address responsible behavior and conduct in all professional settings. In the instance of any inconsistency between the GSA Code and the University-wide PRRs, University-wide policies shall prevail.

Further, the Department of Geological Sciences at East Carolina University adheres to the GSA statement on [Removing Barriers to Career Progression for Women in the Geosciences](#), which “endorses the right for all to work in a safe, supportive, non-discriminatory, and reprimand-free environment where trust, respect, equity, fairness, accountability, and justice are honored. Data reveal that women are underrepresented in the geoscience workplace, and women of color even more so.”

Expected Behaviors

1. Faculty will strive to communicate their knowledge of the geosciences to the public; to promote proper stewardship of all natural resources in a manner that is environmentally and economically responsible; to effectively communicate their knowledge of natural hazards to the public; to apply their knowledge for the enhancement of public policy and land-use planning; and to support educational opportunities for students, the profession, and the public.
2. Faculty, staff and students will always behave in a courteous and professional manner, treating each other with respect, dignity, and consideration, in the spirit of valuing a diversity of views and opinions.
3. Faculty, staff and students will be considerate, respectful and collaborative in communications and actions.
4. Faculty and students will discuss differences and critique ideas in a non-confrontational manner with due regard for the viewpoints of others.
5. Faculty, staff and students will refrain from demeaning, discriminatory, or harassing behavior and speech.
6. Suspected inappropriate behavior shall be reported. [ECU PRR Regulation on Sexual and Gender-Based Harassment and Other Forms of Interpersonal Violence, outlines the duty to report by Responsible Employees.]
7. Faculty will treat students respectfully and without exploitation.
8. Faculty and students will strive to accurately represent an understanding and knowledge of the geosciences, avoiding and discouraging the dissemination of erroneous, biased, or exaggerated statements about the geosciences. All faculty and students will offer their professional advice and guidance only on those subjects in which they are informed and qualified through professional training or experience.
9. Faculty and students will strive to cooperate with other researchers whenever possible and appropriate to assure rapid interchange and dissemination of knowledge in the geosciences.
10. In publications, faculty and students should strive to differentiate facts, opinions, and hypotheses.
11. Faculty and students will not plagiarize in verbal or written communication and will give full and proper credit to the creativity, ideas, and efforts of colleagues and students. Faculty and students will not fabricate, falsify, or suppress results, deliberately misrepresent research findings, or otherwise

commit scientific fraud. [This is codified in the ECU *Student Code of Conduct* and the ECU *Faculty Manual*.]

12. Faculty and students will not attempt to injure the reputation or professional opportunities of another scientist by false, biased, or undocumented claims. Faculty and students will not seek employment, grants, or gain by offers of gifts or favors, or by any other malicious action.
13. Faculty and students will undertake reasonable efforts to ensure inclusiveness and will not discriminate against others in the course of their work based on race, sex, creed, age, sexual orientation, national origin, religion, and disability. All faculty and students will not practice or condone harassment in any form in any professional context. [This is codified in the ECU PRR “*Notice of Nondiscrimination and Affirmative Action Policy*”, ECU *Student Code of Conduct*, and the ECU *Faculty Manual*.]

Geoscientists’ Scholarly and Scientific Responsibilities

1. Advance all disciplines of the geosciences, understand the limitations of their knowledge, and respect objectivity and truth in their professional endeavors. Geoscientists should ensure that their scientific contributions, and those of their collaborators, are thorough, accurate, and unbiased in design, implementation, and presentation. Where appropriate, geoscientists should remain current with developments in their field, share ideas and information, keep accurate and complete laboratory records, maintain integrity in all conduct and publications, and give due credit to the contributions of others. Conflicts of interest and scientific misconduct, such as fabrication, falsification, omission/suppression of results, and plagiarism, are incompatible with this Code.
2. Mentor and encourage all students in a manner that is open-minded, objective and enthusiastic, promotes curiosity, and recognizes that education is a fundamental trust conferred by society for the promotion of the student's learning and professional development. Geoscientists should treat associates with respect, regardless of the level of their formal education, encourage them, learn with them, share ideas honestly, and give credit for their contributions.
3. Promote and protect the legitimate interests of our employers, perform work honestly and competently, fulfill obligations, and safeguard proprietary information. Geoscientists, as employers, should treat subordinates with respect for their professionalism and concern for their well-being, and provide them with a safe, congenial working environment, fair compensation, and proper acknowledgment of their scientific contributions.
4. Accept uncertainty and integrate information with a unique perspective involving time, space, and scale. Geoscientists should provide for, advise, and serve clients and end users in a manner that is honest, objective, competent, dependable, honorable, respectful, and fair.
5. Serve the public interest and welfare and to further knowledge of science for the benefit of humankind. Geoscientists should actively be concerned with the health and welfare of humankind and effectively communicate knowledge about potential natural hazards to the public. Public comments on scientific matters should be made with care and precision, without unsubstantiated, exaggerated, or premature statements.
6. Communicate their knowledge to protect the environment and to provide appropriate stewardship of natural resources. Geoscientists should also understand and anticipate the consequences of their work on the environment and natural resources.

Roles and Reporting

Because incivility and disrespect in the workplace can be a barrier to effective communication, workplace performance, and professional productivity, all members of the department must be prepared to participate in solving any incidents related to this Code or to incivility and disrespect in general. (For more information in the impact of incivility and disrespect in the workplace see [The Civility Web Site](#) at John Hopkins University and the [Guide to Civility](#), from Ryerson University.)

A large part of this participation involves educating one's self and others about the impact of words and actions on others. All parties involved in any incidents related to this Code have a responsibility to act in good faith, communicate openly, and listen to each other's points of view. Complaints should be resolved informally whenever possible.

Department Chair -- The Chair of the department is responsible for creating and maintaining a positive and productive work culture and ensuring that ECU's [Regulation on Sexual and Gender-Based Harassment and Other Forms of Interpersonal Violence](#) is adhered to within the department.

Faculty and Staff -- Whenever possible, faculty and staff should address incidents of incivility toward them directly with the individual responsible for the behavior. Faculty and staff may also seek advice from the Department Chair, Office of Equity and Diversity, or any other applicable university service.

Students -- If the individual is comfortable with doing so, students should address incidents of incivility toward them directly with the individual responsible for the behavior. Alternatively, students may seek advice from a faculty member or from the Department Chair.

Incidents of workplace violence, behaviors that may indicate a risk of workplace violence, or harassment (as defined by the ECU policy manual) must be reported as required by ECU Policy ([Regulation on Sexual and Gender-Based Harassment and Other Forms of Interpersonal Violence](#)).

Normally, incidents and complaints of uncivil behavior are handled by seeking advice, as outlined above. However, in the event that the faculty, staff member, or student is not comfortable with these remedies, that individual may seek advice, report incidents, or file a formal complaint of workplace harassment through official University channels (*e.g.*, the [Office of Equity and Diversity](#), the [Office of the Dean of Students](#), etc.).

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