

Turkana Miocene Project Code of Conduct

The Turkana Miocene Project (TMP) is committed to upholding a safe and professional environment, and to fostering a nurturing and vibrant research group founded upon the fundamental dignity and worth of all of its members. This Code of Conduct outlines principles that should guide interactions among members of the TMP.

Workplace misconduct such as harassment, bullying, incivility, hostility, or microaggressions can have a profound impact on the well-being, productivity, and career expectations of individuals, and is inconsistent with our values. The TMP community is committed to fostering a supportive environment in which all members of the project can fulfill their obligations and aspirations. At the same time, TMP acknowledges the rights of individuals to free expression that adhere to the principles of a professional and collegial workplace.

All members of the TMP are responsible for creating a safe and professional working environment, with an expectation of integrity, respect, fairness, trustworthiness, and transparency across all organizational levels and endeavors, whether they be on a university campus, in the field, or while attending professional meetings. Individual conduct that does not meet these expectations is contrary to TMP's commitment to professional interactions among colleagues.

Supervisors, managers, principal investigators, and academic advisors need to be especially proactive in fostering an environment of support and cooperation, especially, but not exclusively, as it concerns the careers of junior colleagues. All members of the TMP are expected to recognize the importance and complementary nature of the roles and responsibilities of individuals who work at different levels and job types across the project.

The TMP works closely with staff and researchers from the Turkana Basin Institute (TBI). TBI has a Human Resources manual that covers expectations and outlines the Code of Conduct for their employees in Section 2 of the manual.

Annexes to this Code of Conduct offer guidelines, resources, and additional information:

Annex 1: Guidelines for Professional Conduct During Fieldwork

Annex 2: Processes for Reporting and Investigating Misconduct (Institution specific)

Annex 3: Advisor-Advisee Discussions for Undergraduate Students

Annex 4: Advisor-Advisee Discussions for Graduate Students

Annex 5: Mentor-Mentee Discussions for Postdoctoral Scientists and Fellows

Annex 6: Policies and Information for the TMP Community

Annex 7: A Glossary of Terms Pertaining to Misconduct in the Workplace
Annex 8: Charge and Members of the Committee on Professional Conduct

This Code of Conduct is adapted from the Lamont Code of Conduct (2019) with the permission of the primary author, Dr. Kuheli Dutt (<https://diversity.ldeo.columbia.edu/codeofconduct>).

Annex 1: Guidelines for Professional Conduct during Fieldwork

Fieldwork is an important part of professional learning and advancement in the geosciences. Harassment and misconduct during these trips has a profound impact on victims, who experience both professional and psychological damage. In addition to using the formal home institution policies and procedures for reporting harassment that each TMP member should become familiar with, members of the TMP should actively foster a supportive environment and promote best practices that impact the mental and physical wellbeing of participants in the field. Some guidelines include (but are not limited to) the following:

- 1) To the extent possible, Principal Investigators (PIs) will try to ensure that there are at least three (3) people on any field trip, including a Co-PI or senior researcher.
- 2) Prior to departure, it is important to ensure that everyone is aware of his or her expected roles and responsibilities during the trip. **Co-PIs or senior researchers will hold a pre-trip meeting to outline expectations.** They should give each participant a roster with roles and responsibilities outlined for all individuals. Tasks should be assigned or rotated in a way that avoids gendered or unequal divisions of labor. All logistics, including sleeping arrangements, bathroom arrangements, cooking and cleaning turns, and responsibilities for carrying luggage/equipment should be clearly spelled out. If a participant is uncomfortable about a sleeping arrangement or chore, they should raise the topic with the group leader or other members of the group.
- 3) In the field, while plans can sometimes change unexpectedly, leadership should make every effort to inform group members in advance of long hikes or any other expected strenuous physical activity.
- 4) In the field, harassment awareness should be included as a part of the routine safety briefing with all staff and scientists in the party, with information on who someone can turn to if they have been harassed or have concerns.
- 5) Leadership structure: Co-PIs or senior researchers are expected to outline the leadership structure, decision making, and hierarchies within the group so that people know to whom they can report any incidents of harassment or any other problem. In the event that a Co-PI or senior researcher is perceived as the harasser, the participant should have an option to leave the trip immediately and/or report it to any fellow participant(s). To the extent feasible, everyone on a field trip should have constant access to a cell or satellite phone.
- 6) Pre-trip training: Field trip participants (including PIs) are expected to take pre-trip training on safety and Title IX from their own institution. During these training sessions, it is important for participants to learn what they should do in the event of a problem.

- 7) Following every field trip, when participants return to their home institution, they will be expected to take a survey where they provide feedback on their experience during the trip. These surveys will allow TMP to track field experiences and identify any persistent patterns.

Annex 2: Process for Reporting and Investigating Misconduct

TMP members are expected to be familiar with and adhere to their home institution policies, channels, and procedures for investigating and adjudicating matters pertaining to discrimination, harassment, and any other form of misconduct. Scientists, faculty, staff, students, and administrators, who believe they have been subjected to discrimination, harassment, or any other form of misconduct, including gender-based misconduct, should be aware of the channels and procedures at their home institution and, if appropriate, notify TMP leadership. Below, as an example, are the reporting obligations and procedures from one TMP institution, Columbia University. While other US-based home institutions are likely to have similar policies in place, the Columbia policies provide a general overview of typical scope and procedures :

Reporting Obligations:

- All TMP faculty/ staff/ employees are under obligation to report any instance of harassment/ discrimination/ misconduct brought to their attention by any member of their home institution. The TBI HR Handbook does not mention a duty to report for its employees.
- TMP students are not mandatory reporters unless they are in a Teaching Assistant (TA) capacity, but reporting is highly encouraged (NB: mandatory reporting guidelines will vary by institution, so make sure you are in compliance with your home institution).

Where to File a Complaint:

TMP members are responsible for seeking out the appropriate reporting channels at their home institutions. Those listed below are examples of the pathways for reporting at Lamont-Doherty Earth Observatory of Columbia University:

- Office of Equal Opportunity and Affirmative Action (EOAA): For complaints about any kind of discrimination, misconduct, and/or harassment in the workplace
Visit: <http://EOAA.Columbia.edu> for more details
- Gender Based Misconduct (GBM) Office: For gender-based misconduct involving students. Visit: <http://studentconduct.columbia.edu/gbm.html> for more details
- Title IX Coordinator: To report any gender misconduct (assault, harassment, discrimination, etc.). Visit <https://sexualrespect.columbia.edu/columbias-title-ix-coordinator> for more details.
- Columbia Compliance Hotline: To report any kind of unethical, illegal, or suspicious behavior, including harassment and discrimination. Reports can be made anonymously. Visit <http://www.compliance.columbia.edu/hotline.html> for more details

- Ombuds Office: For any workplace concerns or grievances. Note that the Ombuds Office has no authority to enforce any action. Visit: <http://ombuds.columbia.edu/> for more details

How to File a Report:

For Students: If you are a student, you can file a report with the Gender Based Misconduct (GBM) Office at: <https://sexualrespect.columbia.edu/university-policy> Note that GBM is not a confidential resource. If you would like a *confidential resource*, you can avail of the following:

- Sexual Violence Response: <https://health.columbia.edu/sexual-violence-response>
- Counseling Services: <https://health.columbia.edu/counseling-and-psychological-services>
- Ombuds Office: <http://ombuds.columbia.edu/>

For faculty, researchers, and staff: If you would like to file a report, you can file one on the EOAA website: <http://EOAA.Columbia.edu> . Note that if your student or any other member of the Lamont/Columbia community shares any incident(s) of harassment you are required to report it. The reporting guidelines are listed on the EOAA website.

In addition, on the Lamont Campus, you can also report an incident to Lamont's Title IX liaisons:

- Kuheli Dutt (Lamont Directorate) – kdutt@ldeo.columbia.edu
- Victoria Nazario (Lamont Finance & Administration) – vicky@admin.ldeo.columbia.edu

Note: These are not confidential resources - Lamont is required to follow CU Title IX policies and procedures.

At most institutions, acts of sex-based misconduct will be covered under and handled through the Title IX office (and officers). Here are example web pages of Title IX offices from some TMP-linked institutions:

Appalachian State University: <https://titleix.appstate.edu>

Hamilton College: <https://www.hamilton.edu/offices/communitystandards>

Mercer University: <https://titleix.mercer.edu/titleix.cfm>

Rutgers University: <https://uec.rutgers.edu/programs/title-ix/>

Salem State University

<https://www.salemstate.edu/offices-and-services/human-resources-and-equal-opportunity/title-ix>

Stony Brook University: <https://www.stonybrook.edu/commcms/oea-titleix/>

SUNY Potsdam: <https://www.potsdam.edu/about/safety/title-ix>

University at Albany

<https://www.albany.edu/equity-compliance/title-ix-sexual-misconduct>

University of Michigan: <https://oie.umich.edu/>

Wake Forest University: <https://titleix.wfu.edu>

Annex 3: Advisor-Advisee Discussion for Undergraduate Students

TMP recognizes the significant contributions of undergraduate students to our community. These students represent the future of our scientific disciplines and thus mentorship of students from all project members (grad students, postdocs, faculty) is essential. Advisors are responsible for facilitating these mentorship webs and thus are expected to take advantage of the resources available to them and seek out training opportunities to ensure that they are performing this aspect of their job adequately. Beginning the advisor-advisee relationship with a conversation to set clear expectations and goals is necessary for the success of this relationship. In general, the following list of questions should be addressed:

- What are the advisor's expectations and goals?
- Student's expectations and goals?
- What is the time commitment anticipated with this project and how is that distributed during the year (summer vs academic year)?
- What training will the student be required to complete as part of their involvement in this project?
- What are the safety risks associated with the students' field and/or lab project?
- How will the student be evaluated? What are the expected end products, course credit(s), honors thesis/graduation requirements associated with the undergraduate's completion of the work?
- If there is a disagreement/issues in the lab or field (e.g. between students, between student and lab tech, between a student and advisor, etc.), how will those disagreements/issues be addressed? This includes pointing students to internal and third party resources such as institution ombudsmen and/or organizations such as [The Fieldwork Initiative](#).
- What are the opportunities for presenting research at conferences and or being involved in publishing papers on the findings? What contributions are expected in order to be considered a co-author on a publication (point to TMP Guide for publication and co-authorship)?
- What are the student's goals post-graduation?

We recommend all TMP members who directly supervise undergraduates frame the above conversations around an undergraduate research contract (examples provided in TMP GoogleDrive) to help codify expectations and responsibilities from all parties.

Annex 4: Advisor-Advisee Discussion for Graduate Students

A graduate student's professional relationship with their advisor is critical for their learning and development as a new scientist. In addition, maintaining a productive and supportive student-advisor relationship is critical to the future success of the advisee in their academic career. Open communication is required for a mutually beneficial and productive learning environment for both advisee and advisor. Mentorship of students is a part of a research scientist's job description; as such, advisors should be expected to take advantage of the resources available to them and seek out training opportunities to ensure that they are performing this aspect of their job adequately. Beginning the advisor-advisee relationship with a conversation to set clear expectations and goals is necessary for the success of this relationship. In general, the following list of questions should be addressed. Please note that guidelines and procedures for some of these topics may be provided in your home institution's student handbook, which both advisor and advisee should familiarize themselves with.

- What are the student's career goals, and what do they expect and want to get out of their Masters or PhD project?
- What are the advisor's goals, and what are they looking for in a graduate student?
- Where else should students get the advice and support to achieve shared goals?
- Has a specific project been outlined (and/or funded) for the student already? If so, what is the time frame that the student is expected to finish the project?
- How much flexibility will the student have in designing their own research projects? What avenues of funding are available for the student to explore these ideas?
- What first-authored publications will a student be expected to produce on a given project, vs. how much work will go into non-first-author publications?
- Has the student written a paper for a peer reviewed publication before? If not, how does the advisor expect to guide the student through the writing process?
- If the advisor has collaborators with students, which student will be doing which part of the work, and which student will be expected to produce first-author publications?
- How much time does the advisor expect for the student to spend on grad-school related activities during a given week? While the balance may shift over the course of the program, how much total time is expected, including coursework, TA duties, and research?
- How much vacation time does the advisor think is reasonable for the student to take/does the student feel they need to stay happy and healthy? How will mental health needs be addressed?
- How often do the student and advisor feel they should meet? Is it okay to hold meetings outside of working hours/weekends?

- Does the advisor expect for the student to be in the lab every day (with the exception of days during which the student has class), or is working from home okay? Does the advisor need to know when the student plans to be on campus for the day?
- What's the expected response time for emails on general topics (for both sides)? What about draft revisions?
- How much time/notice should the student give the professor to provide letters of recommendation, comments on a draft, etc. before a given deadline?
- What lab techniques does the student need to learn from the advisor before they feel comfortable in the lab unsupervised? What specific laboratory training is necessary to ensure that the student is safe in the lab and does not incur any health effects from e.g. working with hazardous chemicals?
- If there is a disagreement in the lab (e.g. between students, between student and lab tech, etc.), how does the advisor plan to address such disagreements?
- Is the student expected to fund meeting attendance on their own (e.g., student grants), or does the advisor have money to send them?
- How familiar is the advisor with the requirements of the graduate program? If they are not familiar, who/where should the student get the advice and support from?
- If the student feels that they must switch advisors, what is the appropriate course of action that the student should take and who would be the first contact to negotiate such a switch?
- What are the criteria for the annual review with the advisor to check the progress and do they fairly evaluate the student's academic performance?

As the answers to these questions may change over time (e.g. at the beginning of the graduate program it may be necessary for the student and advisor to meet weekly, while closer to the end fewer meetings may be necessary), these questions should be re-visited annually in a student advisor meeting or as requested by the student. It is recommended that, outside of the formal committee meetings, advisor and advisee meet at least once per semester to evaluate the student's progress, determine if they are meeting expectations, and discuss what is and what is not working about the advisor/advisee relationship.

These guidelines are adapted from resources provided by Dr. Katherine Huntington (UW) at <http://faculty.washington.edu/kate1/resources.html>.

Annex 5: Mentor-Mentee Discussion for Postdoctoral Scientists

For postdoctoral scientists (regardless of the source of funding), the relationship with one's advisor can play a critical role in advancing or hindering one's career. At the very outset of the postdoc-advisor relationship, the following topics should be addressed wherever applicable:

- How much time should the postdoc spend on publishing PhD work versus pursuing new projects?
- Is the postdoc expected to mentor anyone else, such as a student or an intern? If so, is there a formal agreement or is it *ad hoc*? If this interferes with the postdoc's research time and productivity, what can she or he do about it?
- How long would the advisor take to give feedback to the postdoc, especially for time-sensitive things such as proposals and publications?
- Would the advisor inform the postdoc about various opportunities, such as workshops, fieldwork, teaching, etc. or is the postdoc expected to find out about these on his or her own?
- Does the seniority of the advisor play a role in any way, be it positive or negative?
- Where can a postdoc get funds from if they want to attend a conference or submit a publication, if the advisor doesn't have funding for it?
- Should advisors spend time showing postdocs how to write a proposal, instead of giving very general guidelines and expecting the postdoc to figure it out?
- Postdocs on external fellowships (such as NSF) typically develop a mentoring plan as part of their fellowship application. How should this be incorporated once they receive the fellowship and come to the postdoc institution?
- Should the advisor and postdoc have formally agreed upon time schedules? For example, is she or he expected to come in everyday (outside of urgent or exceptional situations) when some portion of the work could be done remotely?
- What skills does the postdoc currently have, and what skills does she or he need to develop?
- How can an advisor provide a postdoc with teaching opportunities? Even if it is not a regular class, can a postdoc have an opportunity to give a lecture sometimes?
- Given time and resource constraints, what can a postdoc reasonably be expected to do in order to receive an excellent performance review?
- If the postdoc did not receive a satisfactory score (or as good a score as she or he had hoped for) in the annual merit review, what could she or he have done better, and were these conveyed to the postdoc at the outset?

Annex 6: Policies and Information for the TMP Community (based on Columbia University and TBI policies)

Essential Policies for the Columbia Community: <http://www.essential-policies.columbia.edu/>

Gender Based Misconduct Policy for Students:
<http://www.columbia.edu/cu/studentconduct/documents/GBMPolicyandProceduresforStudents.pdf>

Non-Discrimination Statement and Policy: <http://eoaa.columbia.edu/columbia-university-non-discrimination-statement-and-policy>

Employee Policy on Discrimination, Harassment, Sexual Assault, Domestic Violence, Dating Violence, and Stalking <http://www.essential-policies.columbia.edu/policies-and-procedures-discrimination-and-harassment>

Anti-Retaliation Policy: <http://policylibrary.columbia.edu/columbia-university-nonretaliation-policy>

Consensual Romantic and Sexual Relationship Policy: <http://eoaa.columbia.edu/eoaa-policies-and-procedures/consensual-romantic-and-sexual-relationship>

Members of the TMP should be familiar with the [Turkana Basin Institute \(TBI\) Human Resource Manual](#), which outlines a variety of policies for the Institute.

Inclusive Terminology:

TMP is committed to inclusive language in all communication and publication. The following is a list of common terms that should be avoided, and suggested replacements, based on this guide from Rider University: <https://online.rider.edu/online-bachelors-degrees/liberal-studies/guide-to-using-inclusive-language/>

- Biological sex, opposite sex (when referring to extant humans) → Gender assigned at birth, other sex
- Mankind, manpower, and similar gendered nouns → Humanity, workforce (avoid use of “man” when referring to general concepts)
- He/She when describing an unknown or hypothetical person → They
- Tribe → Group, ethnic group
- Impoverished, poor, starving, and similar references to economic status → People experiencing poverty and/or food insecurity

- Crippled, handicapped, special needs, and terms defining people by health or disability status → People diagnosed with and/or experiencing [specific conditions]
- Overweight, obese → Larger bodied or plus-size
- Old person → Elder

Information:

The US State Department provides the following information regarding Kenyan laws that pertain to the LGBTQ community. This information can be found at

<https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/international-travel/International-Travel-Country-Information-Pages/Kenya.html>

LGBTI Travelers: Kenyan law criminalizes same-sex sexual activity.

- The Kenyan penal code criminalizes “carnal knowledge against the order of nature,” which is interpreted to prohibit consensual same-sex sexual activity and specifies a maximum penalty of 14 years’ imprisonment.
- A separate statute specifically criminalizes sex between men and specifies a maximum penalty of 21 years’ imprisonment.
- Police have detained persons under these laws, particularly suspected sex workers.
- LGBTI advocacy organizations, such as the Gay and Lesbian Coalition of Kenya, have been permitted to register and conduct activities. However, societal discrimination based on sexual orientation is widespread.

The TMP supports all project members regardless of sexual orientation, age, race, ethnicity, gender, gender identity, origin, disability, pregnancy, HIV status, or marital, familial and veteran status. As such, the TMP stands in opposition to the Kenyan laws that criminalize same-sex sexual activity. Furthermore, our colleagues in Kenya have historically been supportive of LGTBO researchers. We encourage TMP members, especially those new to the project and traveling in Kenya for their first time, to reach out in confidence to the DEI Committee with any questions or concerns relating to these laws.

Annex 7: A Glossary of Terms Pertaining to Misconduct in the Workplace

For the purpose of all TMP activities, this section provides the definitions for terms and concepts used to describe misconduct in the workplace.

Discrimination: Unequal or unfair treatment in professional opportunities, education, benefits, evaluation, and employment (such as hiring, termination, promotion, compensation) as well as retaliation and various types of harassment. Discriminatory practices can be explicit or implicit, intentional or unconscious. Under federal discrimination laws, protected classes include age, race, ethnicity, gender, origin, disability, pregnancy, HIV status, and veteran status. In addition, many state laws prohibit discrimination on additional attributes, including sexual orientation, gender identity, marital status, and familial status.

Harassment: A type of discrimination that consists of an act or acts that 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: This includes any unwanted and/or unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors or contact, and other verbal, physical, visual conduct of a sexual nature.

Gender-Based Harassment: This includes acts of aggression, intimidation, stalking, or hostility based on gender or gender stereotyping, threats or non-consensual disclosure of a person's gender identity (i.e. "outing").

Bullying: This is the use of force, threat, or coercion to abuse, intimidate, or aggressively dominate others in the professional environment that involves a real or perceived power imbalance. These actions can include abusive criticism, humiliation, physical and verbal attacks, isolation, undermining, and professional exclusion of individuals through any means.

Incivility: This is a form of behavior that is rude, discourteous, and/or insensitive towards others. Defined as low-intensity deviant behavior with ambiguous intent to harm the target¹, what separates incivility from other forms of mistreatment of others is the notion

of ambiguous intent. Examples of incivility include disrupting meetings, not giving someone credit for their work, losing one's temper, giving someone the "silent treatment," and having side conversations during a meeting or presentation. Research shows that women are more likely than men to experience workplace incivility and its associated harmful consequences.

*Microaggressions*²: These are everyday verbal, nonverbal, and environmental slights, snubs, or insults, whether intentional or unintentional, which communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative messages to target persons based solely upon their marginalized group membership. In many cases, these hidden messages may invalidate the group identity, demean them on a personal or group level, threaten and intimidate, or relegate them to inferior status and treatment.

¹ *Andersson, Lynne M.; Pearson, Christine M.: Tit for Tat*

² *Derald Wing Sue: Microaggressions in Everyday Life: Race, Gender and Sexual Orientation*

Annex 8: TMP DEI Committee and Professional Conduct

Following the large number of harassment incidents in STEM academic disciplines (including paleoanthropology and the geosciences) that have been brought to light in recent years, members of the TMP DEI committee expressed a need to raise awareness on such topics within the TMP. This would formalize the efforts to work towards raising awareness on these issues, including meeting regularly to discuss gender and diversity issues. The DEI Committee will serve as a platform for the continued discussion of these issues. Accordingly, the charge for the TMP DEI committee is to:

- Raise awareness within the TMP on topics such as harassment and misconduct (including sexual harassment and gender misconduct)
- Promote best practices and stimulate a cultural change with the community
- Provide a forum for discussion
- Share examples of best practices
- Identify particular issues pertaining to the TMP
- Advise the TMP leadership team (Co-PIs) on issues to address
- Assess / follow-up on activities and their outcomes within the TMP

Note: This committee does **not** have the authority to adjudicate any incidents of harassment or misconduct. This must be done through the procedures and governing bodies of your home institution. The focus of this committee is on raising awareness.