

# Ice & Ocean Group at the University of Virginia | Guidelines and Code of Conduct

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The Ice & Ocean Group at the University of Virginia includes undergraduate, graduate students, and postdoctoral researchers who are conducting research under the supervision of Dr. Lauren Simkins. The group is open and inclusive, and functions as a space to respectfully support and encourage members both professionally and personally. These guidelines are *not* a legal document and do not replace the Department of Environmental Sciences, College and Graduate School of Arts and Sciences, and university-level policies and directives.

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## Inclusivity and Conduct Policies

An inclusive environment is supportive of people regardless of gender, gender identity and expression, sexual orientation, disability, physical appearance, race, ethnicity, age, religion, culture, and socioeconomic, educational status and backgrounds. Such an environment is necessary for maintaining personal well-being, fostering professional development, and producing high-quality research. We do not tolerate harassment or discrimination by and/or of members of our group in any form, and I (Dr. Simkins) ask all members to conform to the following conduct:

- All communication should be appropriate for a professional audience while maintaining self-authenticity, and be considerate of people from diverse backgrounds and points of view who may communicate and process information differently than you.
- Be kind to others, and contribute to discussions using a constructive, positive approach.
- Be mindful of talking over others and be willing to hear the ideas of others. Talking over others is disruptive and leads to unproductive interactions. Wait for others to pause or finish their train of thought before you begin speaking. Pause long enough between thoughts or explicitly invite others to respond when speaking so that others feel welcome to contribute.
- When in non-seated professional and social settings (e.g., not sitting at a conference table in Clark Hall), make sure that you are giving people explicit permission to join the conversation by following the pac-man rule - always leaving room for one person to join your conversation group when standing and, if possible, while seated.
- Behave professionally. Harassment and discriminatory, sexist, racist, or exclusionary actions and communication are not ever appropriate. If a group member is asked to stop these behaviors, they are expected to comply immediately, and disruptive and/or threatening incidents will be reported to the university's Office of Equal Opportunity and Civil Rights. Harassment includes offensive verbal comments related to gender, sexual orientation, disability, physical appearance, body size, race, religion; sexual images in public spaces; deliberate intimidation; bullying; stalking, following; harassing photography or recording; sustained disruption of discussions; inappropriate physical contact; and unwelcome sexual attention.
- Violence of any kind is not permitted, and will result in immediate formal reporting with the university and necessary officials and restriction from all group activities.

Discrimination, harassment, and retaliation are defined in the University's Preventing and Addressing Discrimination and Harassment policy ("PADH Policy") and the Preventing and Addressing Retaliation policy ("PAR Policy"). The PAR Policy not only prohibits retaliation against individuals who complain of discrimination and harassment under the PADH Policy, but also those who assist or participate in a resolution of such a

complaint, e.g., an investigative witness. Students and employees who believe that they have been subjected to discrimination, harassment, or retaliation under the PADH and/or PAR Policy or are aware of (i.e., you witness or hear about) such actions against others are encouraged to contact the EOCR office and/or report it immediately to the university through Just Report It, the University's online [reporting website](#) ("Just Report It) or by contacting EOCR at (434) 924-3200 or UVAEOCR@virginia.edu to speak with a member of the EOCR team. I have reported the Just Report It on several occasions for discrimination and harassment that I have been made aware of by victims or witnesses, and can help you through the process if you wish, keeping in mind that I am a "Responsible Employee" (discussed below).

Sexual Assault, Sexual Exploitation, Intimate Partner Violence, Stalking, Sexual or Gender-Based Harassment, Complicity, and Retaliation are prohibited by the University's Policy on Sexual and Gender-Based Harassment and Other Forms of Interpersonal Violence ("Title IX Policy"). The Title IX Policy has separate procedures for resolving prohibited conduct. Those who believe that they, or someone else, have been subjected to the above forms of conduct are encouraged to contact the Title IX office at (434)-297-7988 or [titleixcoordinator@virginia.edu](mailto:titleixcoordinator@virginia.edu). You may also report prohibited conduct through Just Report It or by contacting the Title IX office to speak with a member of the Title IX team. The Title IX Policy and Procedures are also available on the [EOCR website](#).

As a "Responsible Employee", **I am required to report any cases of sexual and gender-based harassment and other forms of interpersonal violence to EOCR, and I elect to report any incidences of discrimination and other forms of harassment.** "Confidential Employees" are licensed medical, clinical, or mental-health professionals who, when acting in that capacity, will not disclose information to the University's Title IX Coordinator without the student's permission. Examples of Confidential Resources are Counseling and Psychological Services ("CAPS") [(434)243-5150 or (434) 972-7004 for after hours and weekends], the Maxine Platzer Lynn Women's Center's Confidential Advocate [(434)982-2252], and the UVA Medical Center [(434) 924-0000]. Additional information about confidential resources can be found [here](#).

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### Individual Contributions

Although we collectively make up the Ice & Ocean Group and share research methods and progress with each other, your project is your own. You should feel ownership of it and take initiative to steer the project by pursuing ideas, developing the research plan, carrying out analyses, and making interpretations. You are a member of this group and your perspective, thoughts, and ideas matter! In science communication, we often refer to 'we' which encompasses all individuals directly involved in the development of the project and those who have made major contributions to the work. You should, however, acknowledge that you are leading the project. It is professionally courteous to acknowledge others involved in the project (e.g., your research supervisor(s) and, if applicable, and other collaborators), and it is professionally required to acknowledge funding sources (e.g., NSF grant number, fellowships, internal funding awards). Although timelines for your research involvement will vary, undergraduates will be with us for as little as one semester to up to 4 years, MS students should plan on defending a thesis and graduating in 2 to 2.5 years from your start date, and PhD students should defend their dissertation in 4 to 5 years. The duration of postdoc time in the Ice and Ocean Group will vary depending on funding sources and when opportunities for employment elsewhere arise.

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### Open & Collaborative Science

Members of the group should be open about their research and encourage feedback from others. Peer evaluation of products like conference abstracts, manuscripts, and proposals is highly encouraged before sending to Dr. Simkins, which means that you need to complete such products at least 1 week before the

deadline to allow for peer review and my review. Authorship on any manuscript or presentation will be openly discussed in group meetings and should, if possible, include everyone in the group who has made a significant contribution to the work, such as generating results or co-formulating analyses and interpretations. It is not expected that all members of the Ice & Ocean Group are included as co-authors on your work; however, it is possible that other researchers in the group will make significant contributions with your knowledge and support, and they should be included as co-authors. Sharing of methods, protocols, and code without contributions to the project is highly encouraged, but not automatic grounds for authorship.

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## Research Outputs

### Publications

**Undergraduate researchers** in the group should make significant contributions to a research project, and, if you work in the group for more than 3 semesters, you are expected to either author a peer-reviewed journal article as lead (which means you primarily draft the manuscript) or co-author a paper with others in the group. You should take ownership of your project and contribute to data integration and interpretations, not just methods and result generation. Authorship for undergraduate students is contingent on the amount/quality/nature of the work, and might fall outside of the timeframe of active involvement in the research. Except for in rare circumstances (i.e., you leave the program with incomplete research and are not actively involved in seeing the project through), you will be listed as first author on all presentations and publications based exclusively or primarily on your project. In the case that you are collaborating with others in the group and the project is ongoing and expands significantly since your last involvement, you may move in the author order but you will never be dropped as an author. For example, if you were mentored by a graduate student, they might continue to develop the project after you graduate or leave the research group; thus, the graduate student will have taken on a larger role in the project and it might be justified to move the graduate student to first author with you being second author. Undergraduate researchers in their senior year and who have completed one semester or summer of research in the group prior to their senior year, will be encouraged to pursue either the senior theses or distinguished majors (DMP) programs, both of which require a thesis proposal due near the end of the fall semester and a written thesis due at the end of the spring semester before you graduate.

**Graduate and postdoctoral researchers** are required to publish manuscripts in a timely manner. The scope of each graduate and postdoctoral research has been carefully selected so that the project stands alone (i.e., progress/output is not contingent on someone else's project). Having peer-reviewed journal articles demonstrates that you can see a project through, that you can communicate the project, and that you are capable of pushing the boundaries of science with new results, innovative methods, and thought-provoking ideas and questions. MS students must publish one peer-reviewed journal article, which should form the basis of the MS thesis and must be written in a form that is submittable to a journal by the time of your thesis defense. PhD students will publish three peer-reviewed journal articles, which will form the main chapters of the dissertation. One manuscript should be published by the time of dissertation defense and another must be submitted by your defense date, with the remaining manuscript (i.e., chapter) in a near-submittable form upon distributing your dissertation to your committee. It is in your best interest to publish prior to graduating because this makes you more competitive in whatever career path you choose to pursue. It is extremely hard to finish projects and write manuscripts once you graduate, begin a job, and physically/mentally/temporally distance yourself from your graduate research. Postdocs are expected to publish at least one peer-reviewed journal article as first author and at least one co-authored paper every year with Dr. Simkins and potentially other

collaborators. As a postdoc, it is completely acceptable to finish publishing your graduate research and prior research while working on new projects at the University of Virginia.

### Journals and authorship

Your peer-reviewed journal articles should be submitted to journals such as The Cryosphere, Geology, Nature family, Science family, Journal of Geophysical Research family, Journal of Glaciology, Sedimentology, Earth Surface Processes and Landforms, Marine Geology, etc. The choice of journal will depend on the type of study, length of manuscript, and fit within the journal scope, and with consideration of the target audience. For each manuscript, you and Dr. Simkins will agree where to send your manuscript and then ask for feedback on the journal choice from co-authors, if any. In order to prepare manuscripts for submission, we will have targeted discussion on scientific writing (which is much like non-scientific writing), figure/graphic drafting, and what components of your research project(s) should be presented as a cohesive story. Author order on manuscripts or presentations should be determined by the relative contributions made by each author rather than, for example, seniority or who secured project funding. Another consideration to establish author order could be the timing (first to last) of when collaborators began involvement in the project. Determining author order can be extremely tricky and there are no 'one-size-fits-all' guidelines; therefore, I can help you through this process. To help inform journal editors, reviewers, and readers of our papers, we will include an author contribution statement for each paper even if not required by journal policies. Along the lines of open and collaborative science described below, if there is an option to make the published articles open access, we will make every effort to do so.

### Conferences (including workshops)

Long-term undergraduates are expected to present their project at one regional or national meeting prior to graduation. Graduate students are expected to present their work at one regional, national, or international meeting per year. Postdocs are expected to present at two conferences per year. Dr. Simkins will cover your membership, abstract, and registration fees with grant funds, unless you have specifically obtained funding for such costs. You are expected to apply for all appropriate conference funding regardless of whether Dr. Simkins have funds available to you. Most conferences have award and feedback programs for student presenters. Students should elect to participate in such programs; for example, AGU's program is the Outstanding Student Presentation Awards (OSPA). Postdocs should participate as judges if allowable by the program specifications. You should conduct pre- and post-conference assessments, either verbally with Dr. Simkins or by writing your answers. The assessment questions are here as [.docx](#) and [.pdf](#) files. Please complete and send/discuss the pre-conference assessment to/with Dr. Simkins before the conference begins; complete the post-conference assessment and send to/discuss with Dr. Simkins shortly after the conference has ended.

### Data management

Research products (e.g., data, maps, code, documents) should be backed up daily or weekly - on an off-site, cloud-based storage system, such as Box offered to UVA students, staff, and faculty. Dr. Simkins will create a Box folder for each of you as a repository for all your research files that you update at least every semester. Research products used and described in published manuscripts should be made publicly available to the scientific community either as main-text figures/tables, supplemental files associated with manuscripts, and/or shared via an appropriate online data repository. You should discuss with me if you think there is good reason to keep research products exclusive.

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## Compensation

Undergraduates will either enroll in research credit (EVSC 4995 or 9999, if doing a thesis) for 1-3 credits upon approval from Dr. Simkins or be paid to conduct research. I will try my best to offer paid positions when possible at a rate of  $\geq$  \$15 per hour, and will never require you to work on research without receiving research credit and/or monetary compensation. I encourage you to seek out such compensation through internal university grants and programs, like the Double Hoo program, and I can help you find such opportunities and put your application materials together. Graduate students will be paid a 9-month stipend of at least \$20,000 through teaching assistantships and/or research assistantships, which include cover tuition, fees, and 12-month healthcare costs for yourself, and a 3-month summer salary of at least \$7,000. Through external proposals (e.g., NSF), I will request 12-month graduate stipends of \$30,000 and, if funded, try to offer those positions to everyone I possibly can. Postdoctoral students will be paid a 12-month salary of at least \$50,000 with full benefits and retirement.

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## Working Hours

Undergraduates enrolled in research credit should work on research activities 3-5 hours per week per unit credit. Graduate researchers taking courses *and* serving as a teaching assistant should work on research approximately 15-20 hours per week. Graduate researchers either taking courses *or* serving as a teaching assistant should work on research approximately 25-30 hours per week. Graduate and postdoctoral researchers not taking coursework *and* not serving as a teaching assistant or instructor should work approximately 40 hours per week.

I recognize that you have personal responsibilities and obligations in addition to your research and coursework. I appreciate that, at times, it can be difficult to balance those demands, and that a classic 9-to-5 day may not be optimal. Because of this, the exact hours you choose to work is up to you, but please discuss with Dr. Simkins if you are not able to work the above stated number of hours each week. Being on grounds between 11 AM and 4 PM EST most days will, however, help facilitate collaborative working and lead to a more fulfilling research experience. Undergraduate students should choose working hours between these times as well, and plan work in the lab or along-side other group members on a regular basis. Meetings will not be arranged outside these hours to allow participation by all group members. Work at night and on weekends is sometimes necessary especially before deadlines, but could likely lead to a drag on your overall productivity if it is a regular occurrence.

If you feel that you are having difficulty maintaining a healthy work-life balance, please let me know. Research and teaching are jobs that are never really done. Work tasks can seem to loom over your non-work time or lead to guilt in thinking that you should be working instead of relaxing, spending time with family/friends, etc. It takes drawing clear boundaries on when you work and when you don't, and protecting your dedicated work time for work, so that work doesn't easily creep into your non-work time. If you need help with creating some balance and being more efficient during your working hours, I am happy to share what I have learned along the way and what strategies help me.

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## Holidays

As 12-month researchers (e.g., graduate students, postdocs) in the Ice & Ocean Group, you are expected to take at least two weeks of time off per year beyond normal university holidays (e.g. federal holidays, fall/spring/winter breaks). All researchers should take all university holidays off during the academic year and one week over the summer if getting paid to work on research over the summer. You should take this time to relax, visit family and friends, generally unwind, and hopefully not open your computer! Please inform me in

advance when you plan to take holidays, if you will not be present at weekly meetings, or are taking planned time away from research.

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## Meetings

Graduate students and postdocs will have individual meetings with me each week at a scheduled and regular time. I will block an hour so that there is sufficient time, although we likely won't need a whole hour every week. Between my schedule and yours, it could be difficult to reschedule, so we need to stick to our scheduled time to the best of our ability. Undergraduate students will be paired with graduate students who are working on similar/complementary projects for their weekly meetings. These meetings are to be scheduled at a mutually agreeable time, and I will attend as often as possible. We will have a weekly group meeting at a scheduled and regular time. Everyone involved in research in the Ice & Ocean group should attend and contribute. Outside of the individual and group meetings, I am happy for anyone to come by my office or send me a slack message anytime with questions, concerns, and/or ideas.

Occasionally we will plan social activities outside of working hours and off-grounds. All members of the group will be invited and encouraged to attend, along with their family, friends, and significant others. Any activities you plan (e.g., study groups, happy hours) be as inclusive as possible given the nature of the activity.

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## Professional and personal development

Your time in the Ice & Ocean Group should also lead to your professional and personal development by learning transferable skills, developing scientific expertise, networking, taking advantage of formal professional development seminars, classes, and workshops, and getting involved in community-based activities and initiatives. To help guide your development, we will (together) complete semesterly [mentoring contracts](#) that will serve as individual development plans and a means to make expectations clear. For students only working over the summer, we will complete the mentoring contract at the start of your involvement in research. At the end of academic year (May), at the end of the semester (if only around for one semester), or at the end of the summer (if summer researchers), we will also do a [reflection on progress and performance](#) that you, myself, and graduate mentors (if applicable) will complete by writing answers for the four prompts/themes and sharing our answers with each other prior to meeting to discuss together. Just as a timeframe reference, I spent more than 2 hours completing each reflection.

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## Communication

Communication should primarily be via email, slack, or in person. You are not expected to answer email after normal working hours and should not expect others to do so. Communication regarding urgent matters should be relayed via email *and* texting or calling me at any time, especially if you are in the field, travelling, or in a dangerous situation.

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## Mental health and well-being

Graduate school, research positions, and, generally, scholarly life can be challenging for your mental health due to:

- Low pay and quality-of-life issues,
- Lack of community, and feeling distanced from family and friends,

- Feelings of isolation and uncertainty in your research,
- Uncertainty in your post-higher education career,
- Dealing with 'negative results' in your research, that are often more challenging to solve and leave you with little to show relative to time spent,
- Burnout by feeling the need to work endless, and the subsequent exhaustion.

Everyone should take an active approach to the maintenance of their mental health. I want to ensure that you have the time and resources you need to be successful and happy, but often I will not know if you are struggling with mental health or have difficulty coping with any of the above listed issues. I encourage you to talk to me if there is anything placing undue stress or preventing you from performing at your potential and causing you to be unhappy during your time here. You can also contact Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) on grounds: ([studenthealth.virginia.edu/caps](http://studenthealth.virginia.edu/caps)). The above issues and waning mental health are common in academic and research settings, but that does not mean it is acceptable to, nor should you, suffer and/or doubt yourself through the process.

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### Other guidelines and points

- If you are asking for recommendation letters, please send me deadlines, details and information (website) of the job, internship, program, or fellowship to which you are applying, and give me as much advance notice as possible but at least 2 weeks. Also send me your CV/resume and any other documents/statements that will be useful for me when I am writing your letter.
- When dealing with difficult/uncooperative collaborators, let me know immediately. Prior to any follow-up communication with the collaborator(s), we will meet to discuss a path forward. As these encounters are extremely distracting, I will help you learn and practice strategies to quickly process negative encounters with as little disruption to work as possible.
- You should be proactive about your research and in the pursuit of research and travel funding.
- Let me know if you are lacking resources/experiences that you need to successfully conduct your research and prepare for your future career.
- Graduate students and postdocs need to create and maintain a professional website, develop application materials (e.g., CV, research/teaching statement), and apply to at least two jobs prior to defending.
- I want all researchers in the group, especially graduate students and postdocs, to gain experience writing proposals, seeking funding, and communicating your science to varied audiences.
- By the time you defend your graduate thesis or dissertation, you should understand what the professional market is like and use your time within the group to train for your future career, not just to get the degree.
- Remember that I am an advocate for your success, well-being, and safety while you are here at UVA and beyond. There are behind the scene ways that I support you, and I am fully invested in your success. Please let me know if you need help beyond what is immediately perceivable.

Other Ice & Ocean Group documents you should review include:

- [Milestones and requirements for PhD students](#)
- [Field Safety Plan](#)
- [Medical Form \(for offsite research activities\)](#)
- [Recommended UVA courses](#)

At any time, you can leave anonymous feedback for me [here](#).