

British Antarctic Survey (BAS) Polar Code of Conduct

1. Introduction

Living and working in the Polar Regions presents unique challenges, requiring the highest standards of conduct to ensure a safe, respectful, and effective environment.

This code is a statement of our shared commitment and responsibility to uphold the ethical, professional and legal standards incorporated within UK Research and Innovation (UKRI), Natural Environment Research Council (NERC) and BAS policy frameworks. This is done in compliance with The Government of the British Antarctic Territory's (which is administered in London by the Polar Regions Department) frameworks and policies. Additionally, this adheres to our obligations under the Antarctic Treaty and the UK's Antarctic Act, under which the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) lead on the permitting regime for those planning to travel to Antarctica.

This code of conduct outlines expected behaviours and actions applicable to employees, contractors, and visitors to British Antarctic Survey (BAS) research stations and vessels. It integrates the principles from the UKRI Code of Conduct and reflects the unique conditions of remote, close-knit living and working environments in the Polar Regions.

All British Antarctic Survey employees and others under our care, (e.g. research associates, scientists, students, collaborators and visitors), must be familiar with and adhere to the provisions of this code of conduct, the UKRI Policy Framework and BAS cultural values and behaviours.

Failure to adhere to this code may result in disciplinary action, including potential dismissal and repatriation, and may be referred to relevant authorities where necessary.

2. Expected standards of conduct

2.1 Professional behaviour

- Act with integrity, honesty, and responsibility at all times, both on and off duty.
- Respect the authority of the Station Leader, ship's Master, or designated senior team member.
- Maintain a cooperative, respectful, and inclusive working environment.

2.2 Respect for others

- Ensure interactions are courteous, inclusive, and appropriate, fostering a positive culture.
- Harassment, bullying, discrimination, or intimidation are strictly prohibited.
- Be mindful of the impact of your behaviour on others, especially in confined or isolated conditions.
- Comply with UKRI's Equality & Diversity policy and, in particular, you have a personal responsibility to prevent your behaviour having an unfair or discriminatory effect on others. This means that any form of harassment (including related to a protected

characteristics such as gender, race, age, disability), or sexual harassment will be considered a disciplinary offence and addressed appropriately under the UKRI Performance and Conduct policy.

- The use of hate speech directed at a minority group including comments about a person's gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, disability, physical appearance, body size, race, religion, or national origin, will be considered a disciplinary offense and addressed appropriately under the UKRI Performance and Conduct policy.

2.3 Alcohol and drug use

- Alcohol consumption must comply with the BAS Alcohol and Drug Policy and where relevant the BAS Rothera Alcohol Protocol.
- Individuals must:
 - Drink responsibly and remain in a fit state to respond to emergencies.
 - Avoid operating machinery or performing safety-critical roles under the influence of alcohol.
 - Be aware that local alcohol limits and additional restrictions may apply in high-risk environments.
- The use, possession, or distribution of illegal drugs is strictly prohibited and will result in disciplinary action and possible repatriation.

2.4 Conduct in living spaces

Living and working together in a remote environment requires additional care and respect:

- Respect personal space and communal living arrangements.
- Avoid excessive noise, especially during rest periods.
- Clean up after yourself in shared facilities and follow cleaning duty rosters.
- Respect boundaries related to personal relationships, ensuring no undue pressure or influence in close quarters.

2.5 Conflict resolution

- Address disputes in a calm and constructive manner.
- If issues persist, report concerns to the Station Leader, HR, or designated welfare officer.

2.6 Health and wellbeing

- Be mindful of your own wellbeing and that of colleagues.
- If you have concerns about a colleague's mental health, you may wish to suggest to them that they can speak to a Mental Health First Aider (MHFA) or BAS Health and Wellbeing Manager in confidence. Alternatively, if you do not feel comfortable approaching the colleague yourself, you may contact the MHFA or Health and Wellbeing Manager directly.
- Access BAS welfare services when experiencing mental health concerns or personal challenges. See section 7 for a list of support services.

2.7 Confidentiality and social media

- Respect the confidentiality of personal and privileged information and do not pass information to the media, post on social media, or pass to other external parties, unless within the scope of employment duties or otherwise authorised to do so, as per Appendix B of The UKRI Code of Conduct.

2.8 Data protection

- Comply with the obligations set under the Data Protection Act and in line with the UKRI Data Protection Policy.

2.9 Use of BAS facilities

- Facilities must be used responsibly with appropriate authorisation. The unauthorised taking, possession, modification, destruction or use of BAS property or the property of others will be regarded as a breach of this code of conduct and the UKRI Code of Conduct.
- Unauthorised entry, use or occupancy of BAS facilities or misuse of IT and Communications systems will be regarded as a breach of this code of conduct and the UKRI Code of Conduct.
- You are expected to work collaboratively with us and act in a way that supports our values and not to bring BAS into disrepute by your actions (or inactions), statements, or neglect of your responsibilities. Depending on your role, you are expected to follow the professional codes of conduct set in the Universal Ethical Code for Scientists and the UKRI Policy and Guidance on the Governance of Good Research Practice.

3. Inappropriate conduct

The following actions are prohibited and will be treated as serious breaches of this Code:

- Physical or verbal aggression, threats, or violence.
- Harassment, bullying, or discriminatory language or behaviour.
- Theft, misuse of BAS property, or vandalism.
- Actions that risk safety, security, or environmental harm.
- Persistent failure to comply with station rules or leadership instructions.
- Use of hate speech

4. Reporting procedures

- All employees and visitors should report misconduct.
- Reports may be made to the Station Leader, HR, or through confidential reporting tools such as Vault.
- Serious allegations such as assault, sexual misconduct, or criminal offences will be referred to the appropriate authorities.

5. BAS response to breaches of the Polar Code of Conduct

BAS takes breaches of this Code seriously and will follow a clear and consistent response process:

- **Investigation:** Reports of misconduct will be investigated thoroughly and impartially by HR or designated personnel. Witness statements and relevant evidence will be collected.
- **Interim measures:** Where appropriate, individuals may be repatriated pending an investigation.
- **Outcomes:**
 - Formal action under the UKRI Managing Performance and Conduct Policy and associated sanctions applies only to BAS employees.
 - For non-employees (such as contractors or visitors), disciplinary action will be the responsibility of their respective employer or organisation. BAS may require their immediate repatriation from the station or vessel, pending further investigation by their employer.

6. Inclusive culture

As an organisation, BAS is committed to embrace diversity and foster an inclusive culture where different views are respected. We prioritise creating a safe environment which incorporates physical safety, mental health and social wellbeing. This helps to build a culture of openness and learning that benefits everyone.

Individuals may experience and be affected by a situation in different ways depending on their past experiences. Everyone under our care has the responsibility to create safer spaces which value listening and honest feedback, but equally everyone must take responsibility for their own individual learning.

The Inclusive Behaviours – A UK Polar community guide aims to enhance the understanding of what constitutes bullying and harassment, racial discrimination, ableism and differences in sexual and gender identities together with setting expectations of acceptable behaviours.

7. List of main contacts and support services

Below is a list of main contacts within BAS and its wider organisation. Changing work arrangements may lead to changes in your specific points of contact. Your contact in the HR team will be able to advise on information that is most relevant for you. We advise that you check this information before setting off on remote working assignments.

- Captain: SDAMaster@bas.ac.uk
- Station Leader: use station specific email addresses
- HR Team: HR@bas.ac.uk, 0771 101 8239

If you experience, or witness inappropriate behaviour, you may find it helpful to talk to someone about how the event affected you and seek advice and support. BAS offers a wide range of welfare resources which are listed below. These resources are also available to the alleged perpetrator.

- Designated Mental Health First Aiders on station, on vessels, and in Cambridge (if you cannot access the link provided then please contact the Wellbeing Manager for details)
- Health and Wellbeing Manager: Gemma Douglas gemas@bas.ac.uk

- EDI Manager: Anette Grindsted edi@bas.ac.uk
- EAP: PAM Wellness 0800 882 4102, pam-assist.co.uk, [Employee Assistance Programme](#) (if you cannot access the link provided then please contact the Wellbeing Manager for details)
- UKRI Wellbeing Ambassadors Network [UKRI Wellbeing Ambassador Network](#)
- [Charity for Civil Servants](#) (UK, Falkland Islands, Stations and Ship)
- [Togetherall](#) (UK, Falkland Islands, Stations and Ship)