**Climate and Atmospheric Science for Action (CASA) Group**

**Handbook**

**1. Introduction**

* 1. **About the Group**

Welcome! We are the Climate and Atmospheric Science for Action (CASA) Group at the School of Earth and Environmental Science at Cardiff University, an earth-system modeling and remote-sensing group exploring how human actions and natural processes impact the climate, atmospheric composition, human health, and equity. If you’re passionate about working towards a more sustainable, healthier, and equitable future than you’re in the right place!

* 1. **About the Handbook**

This handbook was developed to simplify learning about the group and its norms through setting out expectations and addressing commonly asked questions. We acknowledge and thank the authors of other handbooks that were used as references and credit them at the end of this document in the “resources” section. While this handbook was drafted with new members in mind, we hope that it is also useful for more tenured members of the group to refer back to. This handbook is a living document that benefits from different perspectives and constant updates; regardless of who you are, whether you are an undergraduate student or a postdoctoral researcher, we welcome ideas and suggestions for how this document could be improved to ensure that our group is a place of respect, conscientiousness, and good science! University Policies are not included in this document – unless they are specifically relevant to a lab norm – but links to them are provided in the resources section. We encourage reviewing these if you haven’t already.

**2. Expectations**

**2.1 Expectations of Omar**

Thank you for choosing to work with me, I am honored to have the opportunity to mentor you and support you in developing your career. Chiefly, my commitment to all groups members is to foster a group that is a welcoming, supportive, and inclusive environment for good science. I am committed to your success, whether that is completing your education or following your desired career path within or outside of academia and commit to regularly working on your career development with an agreed upon cadence (see work policies). I commit to providing an environment that is emotionally supportive, safe, equitable, intellectually stimulating, and

free of harassment. I will regularly provide feedback on your research project(s) to ensure our science is of the best quality and to support you in achieving your goals.

Feedback for me is critical and always appreciated. For any issues, even minor ones, please let me know. When you have any questions or concerns you are always welcome to communicate with me and I commit to responding to you in a timely manner. In an emergency, be it research-related or personal, please don’t hesitate to call me for assistance. For any issues with individuals within or outside of the lab, I will guide you to the appropriate resources to deal with this within the School and University. While I hope that this is never the case, if you have a specific problem with me that you feel uncomfortable communicating to me, please seek the help of another PI in the School or discuss the issue with human resources.

**2.2 Expectations of All Group Members**

**2.3 Expectations of Graduate Students and Postdocs**

**2.4 Expectations of Undergraduate Students**

**Wellness**

**Equality, Diversity, and Inclusivity**

**Bullying & Harassment**

**Research Philosophy**

**Work Policies**

**Data Management**

**Leaving the Lab**

**Introduction**

Fostering an inclusive group that is welcoming of diverse perspectives is a focus of CASA. Through inclusivity, we ensure that all individuals enjoy their time as part of our community while still prioritizing the development of the skills that are needed to succeed professionally. This code of conduct is in place to formalize expectations for our group culture and work practices. It is a living document that benefits from different perspectives and constant updates; whether you are an undergraduate student researcher or a postdoc, we welcome ideas and suggestions for how this code of conduct could be improved to ensure that our group is a place of respect, conscientiousness, and good science!

**Working Hours and Location**

We recognize that the typical “9-to-5” working schedule does not work for everyone given personal commitments and non-work responsibilities. Our core expectation is that all members contribute approximately 35 hours per week to their work with the group; there is flexibility in *when* and *where* individuals work.

Members can choose their own hours; however, when possible, we recommend being available from 10-4 to promote collaboration within the group. However, we understand that individual schedules may vary due to personal commitments, academic deadlines, and other factors. There may be weeks where you work more than 35 hours given some deadline and there may be weeks where you work less given other non-work responsibilities. While there is technically no “upper-limit” on your work hours, we strongly encourage work-life balance and taking time away from work to do things that relax you to avoid fatigue and burn-out.

If you expect your schedule to deviate from typical hours over an extended period of time (e.g., working remotely from a different time-zone), please communicate that to the group. While you have flexibility, certain meetings may be scheduled during core hours that require attendance. These will be communicated in advance.

Given the nature of our research – predominantly computational and not field based work – working remotely is a possibility. While team members are encouraged to take advantage of remote work when it is beneficial, we expect that all members will maintain proximity to Cardiff University (CU) in case in-person meetings, collaborations, or other on-site activities are required.

**Bottom of Form**

**Work-life Balance**

Academic life and research are demanding, and they can have detrimental effects on your mental health if you are not careful and don’t take a mindful approach to work. Specifically, look out for the issues indicated in the graphic developed by Dr. Zoe Ayres:

A poster with text and symbols

Description automatically generated

While this graphic was specifically developed for PhD students, many of the issues posed here are common across all levels of academia. If you find yourself becoming anxious or depressed regarding some aspect of your research, please reach out to Omar as early as possible.

I strongly suggests that all group members take a preemptive and mindful approach to their mental health; specifically, I encourage developing a work schedule that does not add unneeded stress on your life and to take frequent breaks as outlined in the Holiday policy below. Also, it is encouraged to take sick days for mental health days if you are encountering a major issue. Additionally make sure you look out for your other group members and to encourage them to seek out support if you think it may be helpful.

Please also familiarize yourself with campus resources:

* [Cardiff University Counselling and Wellbeing](•%09https:/www.cardiff.ac.uk/study/student-life/student-support/counselling-and-wellbeing)
* [Cardiff Student Union – Minds Matter](https://www.cardiffstudents.com/your-voice/campaigns/mindsmatter/)
* [Careers and Employability](https://www.cardiff.ac.uk/study/student-life/student-support/careers-and-employability)

**Holidays**

Cardiff University offers either 32 or 37 days of leave per year for staff (not including bank holidays), depending on their specific appointment; you can refer to your welcome packet for the specific terms for your position. We strongly encourage all group members to take as much time off as needed to recharge and avoid work burnout.

Please communicate planned time off in advance to Omar (preferably at least two weeks) especially for longer holidays by email or slack. Additionally, please add this information to the group google calendar. Generally, permission isn’t needed to take time off, but please be mindful of deadlines and work by other research members that could be affected and take the necessary considerations beforehand. When going on vacation for extended periods, please put an away from office message on your email that encourages urgent needs to contact Omar.

**Meetings**

Group members will organize a standing one-on-one meeting with Omar in which research updates will be discussed along with progress on papers, conference presentations, funding proposals, and more. The date and time will be organized at the beginning of each semester (Spring, Summer, and Fall) by Omar. Meetings can be scheduled remotely or in person depending on convenience. The first one-on-one meeting of the semester will partially be dedicated to discussing specific research and professional development goals. Additionally, the final one-on-one will be an “end-of-semester” professional development and performance assessment meeting, in which we will discuss progress towards your current professional goals, how Omar can best support them, specific areas you wish to develop, and discuss progress towards the goals set at the onset of the semester. It is preferable that these meetings are conducted in person.

Group members are able to cancel or reschedule one on one meetings if there’s some scheduling issue or little research updates to discuss; however, it’s generally best practice to keep them even if you are encountering roadblocks in your research to work through them together. Additionally, you are always welcome to bring a journal article or two to discuss with Omar if there are only minor updates on research.

Generally, Omar expects to meet with postdocs once every two weeks and everyone else weekly; however, if you have a specific need to meet at greater or less frequency for a semester or extended period of time please indicate that. You are also encouraged to schedule additional meetings outside of these standing one-on-ones if there are specific urgent deadlines (e.g., paper reviews due).

**Publications**

Congrats if you’ve reached the stage of writing up your research! Before writing, please reach out to Omar to discuss specific audiences and journals to target for submission. You are encouraged to bring the names of a couple of journals. Once you’ve selected a journal, if it is your first time writing an article for a scientific journal it’s strongly encouraged to read *Writing Science* by *Joshua Schimmel* and to carry out the exercises in the book for your specific journal article. Please reach out to Omar if you would like to borrow a copy.

Through “Read and Publish” agreements Cardiff University supports open access publishing without any fee in specific journals that the University has agreements with through JISC. It is required that if you have a paper ready for submission that you submit to one of these journals that can be found through this intranet page unless you have a specific reason to select a journal not covered by this agreement in which case you should discuss this with Omar.

When writing or co-authoring on your first publication it is strongly encouraged to generate an ORCID if you do not have one already to track your publications. Additionally, I suggest that you are mindful of how your name is listed to choose a format you like and stick with it!

A list of recommended journals grouped by generalist or specialist with impact factors in parentheses that are covered by this agreement are included below:

*General Audience:*

* Nature (50.5)
* Nature Climate Change (30.3)
* Nature Communications (14.7)
* npj Climate and Atmospheric Science (8.5)
* Aerosol and Air Quality Research (2.5)

*Specialist Audience*

**Conference Travel**

**Data Storage**

**Communication**

**Social Media**

**Service**

**Equality, Diversity & Inclusivity**