

Gulf Coast Repository (GCR) Workshops - Information for PIs



This document summarizes the key elements of a visit to the GCR for you and your group. While it is extensive, there are likely aspects of your particular event that may need special consideration.

Location: The Gulf Coast Repository is on the campus of Texas A&M University (TAMU). It's physical address is 1000 Discovery Drive, College Station, TX, USA 77845

Website: <https://gcr.tamu.edu/>

Workshop Point of Contact: Laurel Childress, childress@tamu.edu

Pre-proposal/Proposal

- **Scheduling:** It is always best to consult with the GCR as early as possible about scheduling your event. Even during the proposal phase it is useful for the GCR to have an idea about what significant events might take place. Once your proposal has been funded, contact the GCR as soon as possible to secure dates and reserve access to instrumentation and conference/meeting rooms. Planning *at least* six (6) months in advance is recommended, although longer lead times are more conducive to reserving your preferred dates.

Scheduling far enough in advance is also critical to either avoid or prepare for conflicts with other major events in town. Examples include: TAMU Football home games, TAMU graduation ceremonies, TAMU Holidays, TAMU Fall dorm move-in, and Texas Annual Fire Training School. If you are planning an event at the GCR that coincides with any other major event in town it will be critical to make plans and reservations (flights, hotels, lunch catering, car rentals, restaurants, etc.) as soon as possible.

- **Funding:** In your proposal (unless you have alternate funding), we suggest that you include funds for any instrumentation at the GCR that you want to use. A GCR facility price list can be found at: https://gcr.tamu.edu/_assets/GCR_rates.pdf.

In addition to standard funding for travel (airfare, hotels, etc. - see below [Accommodations](#) for additional information on per diem rates), please also consider that the GCR is not located within walking distance of restaurants/food. We suggest that you budget for daily lunch catering to the GCR for your participants (see below [Meals/Snacks](#) for further details).

- **Letters of Support:** Where appropriate, we can provide a letter of support for proposal submission. Please contact us well in advance of submission to discuss this.

Planning Your Visit - General Logistics

- Getting to College Station
 - Easterwood Airport (CLL), College Station, TX: daily flights on American Airlines are available with a connecting flight through Dallas, TX.
<https://flyeasterwood.com/>
 - George Bush Intercontinental Airport (IAH), Houston, TX: A variety of carriers fly to IAH daily. Transportation from IAH to College Station is available via rental car (<https://www.fly2houston.com/iah/ground-transportation/rental-cars/>) or from a company called Ground Shuttle (<https://www.groundshuttle.com/>). Ground Shuttle will bring you to the Ground Shuttle Office (1450 Old Arrington Rd, College Station, TX, 77845), from which point you can take a rideshare (e.g., Uber, Lyft) to your local destination. For an additional fee, Ground Shuttle will drop-off passengers at a specific location in College Station. From College Station to IAH, passengers will need to take a rideshare/taxi to the Ground Shuttle Office. Do be aware that Ground Shuttle does not run 24/7 and flights to IAH should be coordinated to align with the Ground Shuttle schedule. Specific Ground Shuttle runs can also fill, so scheduling in advance at their website is highly recommended.
 - Other Texas Airports: Flights to other airports are possible. However, completing the final leg of your journey to College Station will require additional effort. A rental car is typically the best solution to get from these airports to College Station..
 - Austin-Bergstrom International Airport, Austin, TX (~2 hour drive)
 - Dallas Fort Worth International Airport, Dallas, TX (~3 hour drive)
- Local Transportation (Large Groups)

These are several examples of how large groups have handled transportation. Other options may be available.

 - Caravan from Houston: Some groups have organized incoming flights to IAH to arrive within very specific time windows. These groups of ~5-6 arriving participants have then used a rental van to (1) drive from IAH to College Station, (2) drive to/from the GCR during the visit, and (3) drive from College Station to IAH. Please note that this option requires a good degree of coordination and planning by the PI.
 - Local Van Rental: Vans (up to at least 12 passengers, maybe larger) can be rented locally from one of several national brands at Easterwood Airport (CLL).
<https://flyeasterwood.com/transportation/>
 - Local Charter Service: Charter service via Sprinter Van for groups is available from Ground Shuttle (<https://www.groundshuttle.com/CharterService>).

- Local Transportation (Individuals/Small Groups)

College Station (and neighboring Bryan, TX) is very much a “car town”. However, there are some alternative means of transportation.

- Rental car: cars can be rented locally from one of several national brands at Easterwood Airport (CLL).
<https://flyeasterwood.com/transportation/>
- Uber/Lyft: available through individual apps. <https://www.lyft.com>;
<https://www.uber.com>
- Veo Bike: pedal & throttle e-bikes in partnership with Texas A&M University. However, do be aware that there is a limited geofence of operation and this does not extend very far off campus.
<https://transport.tamu.edu/Alternative/bicycles/bikeshare.aspx>
<https://transport.tamu.edu/WebFS/Transport/Maps/Alternative/VeoGeofenceDaily.png>
- Public Transportation: The Brazos Transit District (<https://www.btd.org/>) offers bus service in Bryan/College Station. Routes are limited but rates are very reasonable.
- Sustainable Transportation at Texas A&M University has additional information about local and regional transportation.

Note: If facilitators and/or participants are going to be driving rental vehicles, it is important to verify that they have enough insurance—either personally or purchased from the rental company—to cover accidents and damage. Also, vehicles that can carry more than 12 passengers may require the driver to have a special license. Check local laws at the time that you are planning your visit.

- Accommodations

- There are many hotels in the College Station/Bryan area. A hotel often used for workshops at the GCR is:

Homewood Suites by Hilton College Station (950 University Dr E, College Station, TX 77840; <https://www.hilton.com/en/hotels/clhwhw-homewood-suites-college-station>), but please note that this is by far not the only hotel and this is not an endorsement for any particular hotel.

- Airbnb (<https://www.airbnb.com>) and Vrbo (<https://www.vrbo.com>) are also available in the area.

- Check <https://www.gsa.gov/travel/plan-book/per-diem-rates> using zip code 77845 for the most current U.S. Federal per diem rates for College Station.
- Local Maps
This [Google Map](#) of local restaurants and other facilities is offered as a starting point. It is not all inclusive or an endorsement of any establishment.

Planning Your Visit - GCR

- Facilities
It is critical that you communicate your facilities needs to us at least 6 months in advance.
While it may be possible to make arrangements on shorter notice, scheduling conflicts are more likely and we may not be able to meet the needs of your workshop. Additional information can be found in the [GCR Laboratory Work Policy](#).
 - **General** - The GCR is open Monday - Friday from 8:00 AM to 5:00 PM local time. The GCR is closed on [TAMU University Holidays](#).
 - **Parking on Campus**
There are only four visitor parking spaces at the GCR. Please limit the number of vehicles you drive to campus when possible. For example, if all participants will fit in three vehicles then do not drive four vehicles.

If all four visitor parking spaces are occupied when you arrive, please let the front desk know and they will issue you a parking permit. You will need to know the license plate number of the vehicle to get a parking permit. You WILL get a ticket if you do not park in a visitor space or register your vehicle with the front desk. The GCR will not pay parking tickets.
 - **Conference Rooms** - When scheduling your event with the GCR, please communicate which conference rooms you would like to reserve. The conference rooms are:
 - C126: The largest conference room in the building, can accommodate up to 30 people comfortably. The room has two overhead projectors that can display from the computer in the room or using an HDMI cable from a laptop. This room is also wired with cameras and microphones for virtual meetings (e.g., Zoom). Power plugs available at most seats.

- A105: The second largest conference room in the building, can accommodate about 15 people around a central table, and approximately 10 additional people in chairs without table access. The room has one overhead projector that can display from the computer in the room or using an HDMI cable from a laptop. The room is wired with cameras and microphones for virtual meetings (e.g., Zoom). Power plugs available at most seats.
 - C140: A small conference room with seating for about 8-10 people. The room has a wall mounted TV. The room is wired with cameras and microphones for virtual meetings (e.g., Zoom). Power plugs available at most seats.
 - IT Infrastructure
 - Wifi: Wireless internet access is available throughout the facility via TAMU Visitor Wifi and eduroam.
 - Printers: Visitors will not be able to connect to the printer network. Please print documents ahead of time or let us know about anticipated printing needs during your event. A printer is connected to the instrument host computers in the B140 laboratory.
 - Laboratories
Diagrams of laboratories and instrument lists can be found at <https://gcr.tamu.edu/>.

- Agenda & Participants List

It is critical that you share your detailed agenda regarding laboratory and instrumentation needs, as well as your instructor/participant list with us at least 1 month in advance.

The GCR will need a detailed agenda of your plans for the laboratories and instruments so that our technical and curation staff can properly plan and assist you during your event.

The agenda should include details of dates/times for each part of your workshop, as well as which location in the facility each part will take place (which lab, which conference room, etc.).

An example agenda outline is available [here](#). Further details should be provided for any time in the GCR laboratories.

Some instrumentation at the GCR is controlled and requires identity compliance checks of participants. The GCR will need you to provide a list of all instructor/participant names (as on government IDs), along with institutions/organizations, country of citizenship, email addresses, and dietary requirements (see [Meals](#)). A template for this participant list is provided [here](#).

- Meals/Snacks

It is critical that you begin coordinating lunch catering needs with us at least 6 months in advance.

- Lunch: The GCR is located on west campus at Texas A&M University, and there are extremely limited options for food. Depending on the time of year, there may even be no options within walking distance. We *strongly recommend* you cater lunch for participants. We can provide suggestions for catering based on past experience, as well as GCR support for ordering/receiving/set-up/clean-up of lunch during the event. You will need to pay all catering invoices/bills directly to the caterer. Please coordinate well in advance with the GCR for this support. You will need to add two (2) people to your meal counts for the GCR staff that will be supporting your catering. Furthermore, if you are planning to run a workshop that will put time pressure on other GCR staff (Analytical Services & Curation staff) such that they would not be able to have a normal lunch break (~12:00-13:00; at least one hour), you will need to include GCR staff in your catering.

While we strongly recommend you work with us for your catering needs, if you would rather make all arrangements and handle everything yourself please be aware that you will be responsible for: determining caterers, all communication with caterers (arrangements, payment, etc.), receiving food from caterers, providing plates/cups/utensils/napkins, setting up the food, serving food, taking care of any serving needs (tongs, spatulas, etc.), providing cleaning supplies, and cleaning the entire food service area. Failure to do so will impact your ability to use the facilities in the future.

- Snacks/Coffee Breaks: As mentioned for meals, there are very few options near the GCR for food, including snacks and drinks during breaks. Keurig machines are available in the two largest conference rooms (C126 and A105). However, you will need to provide coffee/tea pods, sugar, milk/cream, and coffee stirrers. Approximately 25 ceramic mugs are available to be used in the main conference room (C126). If you will have more participants, you may want to supplement with disposable cups. In C126 there is a small refrigerator available for soft drinks or anything else you would like to keep cold. Plan to purchase and bring any snacks you will want during your workshop. College Station has multiple grocery stores (HEB, Kroger), Target, Walmart, and wholesale stores (Sam's Club, Costco).
- Group Dinners: Many groups like to have a 'celebratory' dinner near the end of their event. Not all restaurants in Bryan/College Station are prepared to accommodate this on short notice. Contact your restaurant of choice well in advance.

- Instruments/Software

It is critical that you communicate your laboratory and instrumentation needs to us at least 6 months in advance.

Rates for instrumentation and software can be found [here](#). Current links below to instrument procedures and manuals may reflect the *JOIDES Resolution* environment and are in the process of being modified to reflect the GCR shore-based laboratories. If needed, GCR staff can help you develop an instrument plan that best fits the needs of your workshop.

- Whole-round core measurements
 - [Natural Gamma Radiation Logger \(NGRL\)](#)
 - [Thermal Conductivity](#)
 - [Whole-Round Multisensor Core Logger \(WRMSL\)](#)
 - [X-ray Linescan Imager \(XSCAN\)](#)
- Split-section and discrete core measurements
 - [Core Splitting](#)
 - [GEODESC \(descriptive data capture\)](#)
 - [Handheld XRF Analyzer](#)
 - Hyperspectral Logger (HYPERSCAN)
 - [Moisture and Density \(MAD\)](#)
 - Paleomagnetic discrete measurements ([JR-6A](#) and [Kappabridge](#))
 - [P-wave velocity bayonet and gantry \(PWB/PWC\)](#)
 - [Section Half Imaging Logger \(SHIL\)](#)
 - [Section Half Multisensor Logger \(SHMSL\)](#)
 - [Shear strength, automated vane shear \(AVS\), Torvane, and Pocket Penetrometer](#)
 - [Superconducting Rock Magnetometer \(SRM\)](#)
 - [Thermal Conductivity](#)
 - [X-Ray Fluorescence \(XRF\) Core Scanners \(2x\)](#)
 - [X-ray Linescan Imager \(XSCAN\)](#)
- Microscope Laboratory
 - [Microscopes \(upright, stereo, epifluor\)](#)
 - PICAT thin section viewer
 - Scanning Electron Microscope (SEM)
 - [SEM-Energy Dispersive Spectrometry \(SEM-EDS\)](#)
- Geochemistry Laboratory
 - [Carbon Hydrogen Nitrogen Sulfur \(CHNS\) Elemental Analyzer](#)
 - [Coulometer \(carbonate carbon\)](#)
 - [Gas Chromatographs](#)
 - [Inductively Coupled Plasma-Optical Emission Spectroscopy \(ICP-OES\)](#)
 - [Ion Chromatograph \(IC\)](#)

- [Source Rock Analyzer \(SRA\)](#)
 - [X-Ray Diffractometer \(powder\)](#)
 - [UV-VIS Spectrophotometer](#)
- Sample Preparation & Rock Cutting Laboratories
 - Drill press
 - Freeze dryers
 - Freezer
 - Miller mill
 - Parallel saws
 - Shatter box
 - Single-blade saws
 - X-press
- Training
 - Introduction to Safety Training

All visitors working in the laboratories must take the online “Introduction to Safety Training” course and be given a Work Area Specific Training by the staff hosting their visit. If they will be working with chemicals (i.e. working in the geochemistry lab), liquid nitrogen or radiation producing devices (RPD), then additional training is required. The GCR will reach out to you and your participants with further information on the process for completing this training.
 - General Building & Lab Safety

Approximately 5 minutes should be allotted at the beginning of your agenda for our staff to address general building safety. A tour of the facility on the first day of the workshop should be included in your agenda. During this tour, GCR staff will cover basic laboratory safety and GCR-specific information.
- Supplies

It is critical that you communicate your supplies needs to us at least 2 months in advance.

The GCR can provide some supplies, and in some cases these are considered included for certain instrument use. Fill out the [supply checklist](#) form and submit this to the GCR.

- Preliminary Section & Sample Lists

It is critical that you provide your list to us at least 1 month in advance.

A list of the sections you plan to measure on track instruments or discrete samples for other instruments must be provided at least one month in advance. This is absolutely critical to allow the GCR adequate time to investigate if the sections are present in the repository and to determine the condition of the material (e.g. - moldy; unsuitable for some track measurements). Failure to send this list adequately in advance may result in unpleasant surprises during your visit.

Please use this [template for track measurements](#), and this [template for discrete samples](#). Send your list to Laurel Childress (childress@tamu.edu).

- Sample, Data, and Research Request Manager (SDRM)

It is critical that you submit your Sample and Data Request to us at least 1 week in advance.

To formally request sections for track instruments measurements or discrete samples for other instruments, you need to submit a SDRM Request at <https://web.iodp.tamu.edu/SDRM/#/>.

While this may seem similar to the section above, '[Preliminary Section & Sample Lists](#)', this is the formalized submission of sections and samples that will be reviewed by the GCR Curator.

This request should include a complete list of the sections/samples you are requesting, as well as any instrumentation (track or discrete instruments). The user guide is available within the SDRM system, and at this [link](#).

With this request, include Laurel Childress (childress@tamu.edu) as a "Collaborator" - this will ensure your request is visible to the GCR workshop coordinator.

- Data Transport

Data from GCR instruments is not stored in the LIMS database. You will need to bring a jump/external hard drive to make a copy of your data. The size of drive you will need will depend on which instruments you use. Once you have determined which instruments you will use and the number of sections/samples, the GCR can provide further guidance on an estimate of file size.

- What to Bring
 - Long pants: these are required in the laboratories
 - Closed-toe shoes: these are required in the laboratories
 - Light jacket: conference rooms at the GCR are often quite cold
 - Jump drives/external hard drive
 - Personal computer/laptop (as needed)
 - Other teaching materials (as needed)

- Photo/Media and Image Release

A photo/media and image release will be circulated at the start of each workshop. Participants/instructors can indicate if they do/do not give permission for the use of their personal image.

- Texas A&M University Policies

It is the responsibility of workshop organizers to make all participants aware in advance that by taking part in workshops at the GCR they are committing to the following policies. Violation of any of these policies could result in exclusion from the GCR and further action, depending on the severity of the violation.

 - Smoking and Tobacco Use

Texas A&M University prohibits [smoking and use of all forms of tobacco](#) on University Property. This includes all forms of smoking and tobacco products including but not limited to cigarettes, chewing tobacco, and electronic cigarettes (vapes).
 - Alcoholic Beverages

Possession or consumption of alcoholic beverages on property under the control of the university is [not permitted](#) except in special use buildings and facilities as designated by the president, approved by the chancellor, and subsequently reported to The Texas A&M University System Board of Regents on an annual basis.
 - Conduct

Texas A&M University is committed to providing safe and non-discriminatory learning, living, and work environments for all members of the University community. The University provides equal opportunity to all employees, students, applicants for employment or admission, and the public regardless of race, color, sex to include pregnancy and related conditions, religion, national origin, age, disability, genetic information, veteran status, sexual orientation, or gender identity. Further details and reporting information is available at: [Notice of Non-Discrimination](#)