

Toolik Survey 2025

Post-docs, graduate students and
undergraduates

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ARC LTER



Climate survey - postdocs and students

- 99 total
 - 9 postdocs (P)
 - 66 graduate students (G)
 - 24 undergraduates (U)
- 30+ different projects
- Length of stay spanned 2 to 100 days

Postdoc and student survey

● Postdoc and student survey

○ 23 postdocs and students

■ 1 postdoc

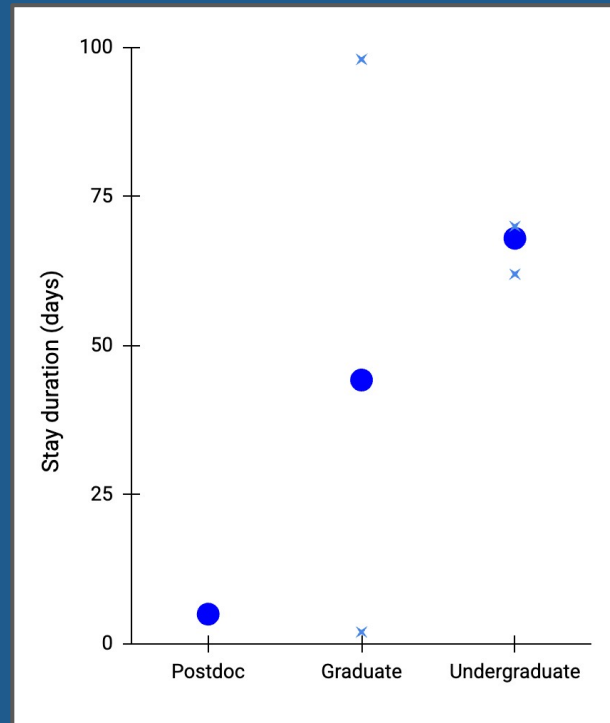
● 11% response rate

■ 18 graduate students

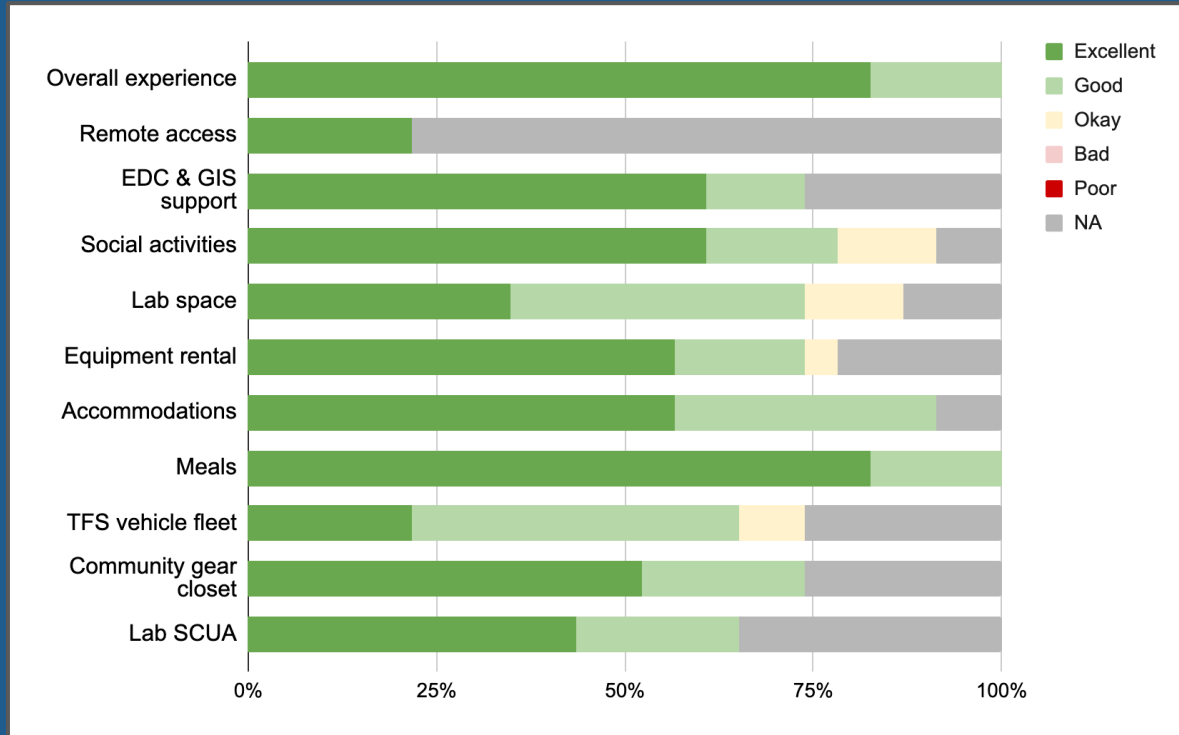
● 27% response rate

■ 4 undergraduates

● 17% response rate



How would you rate your experience?



- Overall “excellent” and “good” experience across the board
- Standouts:
 - Undergrads had an 100% “excellent” experience with Meals and Community gear closet.

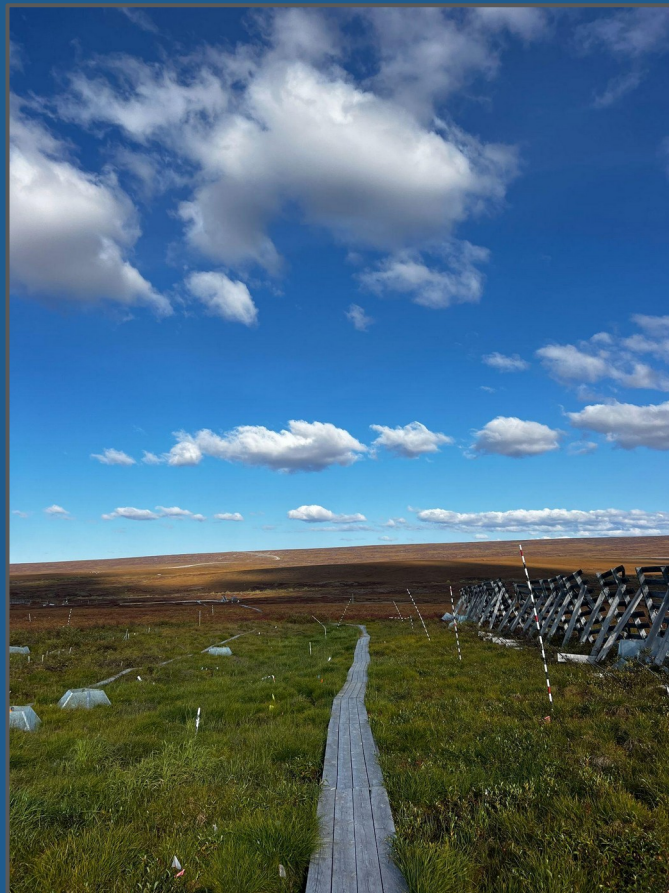
Remote access (High NA)

How was your experience?

- G: We had great support with remote access which consisted of collecting drone data for our project! No complaints here.

Would you use Toolik's remote access in 2026?

- Yes - 2 G
- No - 1 P, 1 G
- Maybe - 5 G, 1 U



Overall experience (summary)



Photo by: Rachel Badzioch

Postdoc

- Wish they had brought slip on shoes for buildings.

Graduate

- TFS was amazing - especially the food! They wish the wifi had better reach, and it was easier to plug in socially especially for short term stays.

Undergraduate

- TFS was amazing pt 2! They wish undergraduates had more clear guidance primarily when it came to their projects and expectations. They suggested formalizing a way for undergrads to plug into different research projects while at TFS. They also mentioned the driving age restriction not being ideal.

Overall experience

- P: I wasn't prepared to not be able to wear my shoes into the buildings. I would have brought different slip on shoes had I known that.
- G: It went well, I found people to be with after a while and I had a good experience. Less good experiences were not due to toolik but matters of my home institution.
- G: My experience was great! There is very little I would change. One thing that could be improved is Wi-Fi access. Connection was good in the lab area and dining hall, but could be improved in the community center and the living areas.
- G: Toolik is the best!!
- G: Great! the station went above and beyond my expectations.
- G: It went well, it is a bit challenging to get up to speed (on research as well as on the social dynamics) when not staying for the whole summer. Overall it was great though and can't think of any particular improvements.
- G: My experience went extremely smoothly. Food was good, accommodations were great. I honestly can't think of any major improvements, especially not specific to graduate students.
- G: It was a great experience!
- U: I think there could be more clear guidance for undergraduates, a lot of the time I felt like I didn't know what I was supposed to be doing but I felt weird asking because it felt like I should know what I was supposed to be doing. I talked to other undergraduates who felt similarly as well.
- U: My experience at Toolik as an undergrad was amazing. I felt welcome in the community, well-supported by staff, and was able to learn and grow as a scientist. Everything exceeded my expectations! My only thought is that it may be valuable for undergrads to have more structured ways to sign up to join other projects in the field to gain more experience -- not a fully thought-out idea, but could maybe be helpful.
- U: The driving age restriction was not ideal/

Social activities (summary)

Overall: Trivia! Trivia! Trivia! Thank you Jason & Aquatics for organizing this every year.

Graduate

- They really loved the bonfire & thanked staff for making that happen! They also enjoyed the carnival and sauna.
- They suggested coordinating hiking trips for short term visitors, having a storytelling night around the bonfire, and incorporating simpler events like a board game night.

Undergraduate

- They really enjoyed the golf tournament, carnival, game & movie nights, and rocket launch!



Social activities

- G: Thank you to the TFS staff for the bonfire!
- G: More Toolik trivia! I was sad to miss both times :(
- G: They were good but I suggest having more simpler events like board games or hikes together which are not specifically for a friend group
- G: I participated in most of the social activities that occurred while I was there. They were fun and well-organized. My only suggestion is to do the weekend bonfire more often, it only happened a couple of times throughout the whole summer.
- G: NA, winter visitor
- G: I don't know if it would just cause more problems, but I think that especially for people that haven't been to Toolik/aren't staying for long it can be hard to find hiking groups. Maybe a sign up board or something?
- G: Sauna was amazing!
- G: They were great. Trivia was outstanding. Soccer was fun. Bonfires were good.
- The social activities were so fun and a great way to decompress during the field season. I admittedly only went to one social function hosted by the station during my time, which was the carnival. I really enjoyed the effort put into the carnival celebration and games each lab came up with - would love to see this continue. I would also encourage more bonfires and do storytelling nights where folks share memorable stories from their fieldwork experiences or any fun stories they have.
- G: I really enjoyed all the social activities
- G: They were great, keep it up
- U: Very good and fun, more trivia!
- U: All social activities were so much fun, and it was super cool to see everyone's creativity come out for events like the 4th of July carnival and golf course. Trivia, bonfires, the rocket launch, movie and game nights -- all helped create a sense of community and helped me bond with both other undergrads and everyone at Toolik.
- U: I had a lot of fun at the social activities

Lab space

Summary

- Overall it was great!
- Wishes they had more office space but understand that it's constrained by project size.
- No shoes in labs should be a blanket rule.
- Confusion over which supplies belonged to which lab.

- P: yes
- G: 5 "Lab space was suitable/ superb"
- G: Yes, that was great! Maybe not entirely feasible, but I would have appreciated more office space/space for quiet work, but that is more constrained by my project's allocated lab space than anything.
- G: Yes. My only suggestion is enforcing no shoes indoors in all lab spaces as the labs that didn't require this would get quite dirty.
- G: Yes the lab space was suitable. Sometimes it is difficult to know whose supplies are whose, and also given the warning from advisor that if things are in glass cabinets or left out on the counters they will likely be used by others. Don't know if this is normal, but seemed odd.
- U: The lab space met all needs; no improvement suggestions
- U: The lab space worked just fine, it was quite small but we didn't really do much lab work anyway.

Any problems while at TFS?

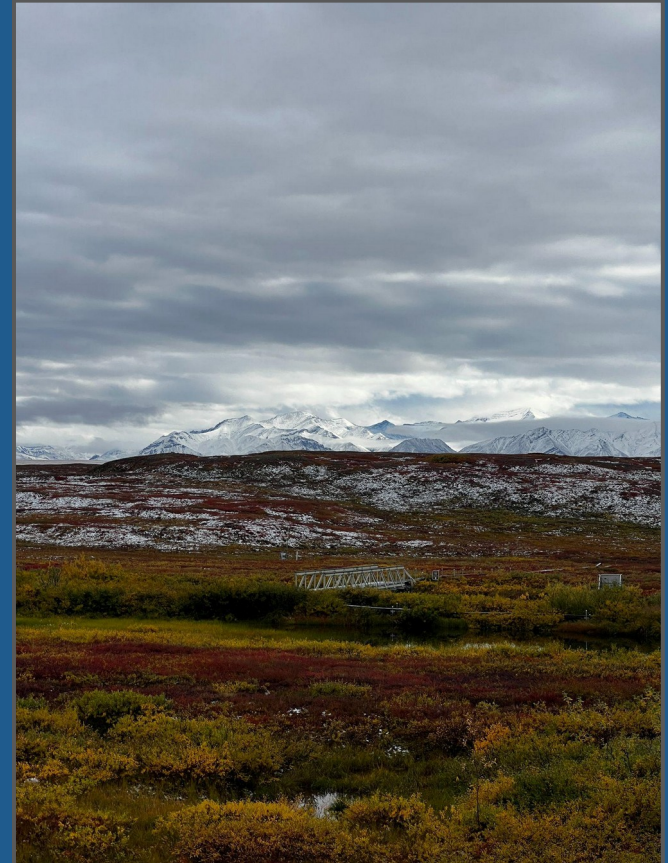
Summary

- Mostly “nope!”
- Wished that they had done the vehicle training.
- One of the trucks didn't seem to be working & they wish they had known before loading gear.
- Wished they could spend more time eating the delicious meals.
- A request for TFS to please control the weather!
- Not being able to drive the TFS trucks & needing to coordinate rides.

- P: no
- G: 6 “No’s”
- G: No, only that I wish I had done the vehicle training before.
- G: No. Though there was one time when a Toolik vehicle had several warning lights and didn't seem to be working properly. I switched vehicles before I went on to the Dalton and left some important equipment in the first vehicle. An error of my own, but could have been avoided if I had known before loading it that there was an error.
- G: None (other than wanting to stay in the dining area far longer than anyone should enjoying the delicious food)
- G: No, other than weather. If TFS could control weather for better fieldwork conditions, that would be optimal!
- U: The only barrier we faced was not being able to drive the Toolik trucks freely to our sites; however, we were always able to find rides with others and only had to alter plans a few times -- this was just a small barrier.

Any additional resources?

- P: More working boot dryers
- G: 3 “No’s”
- G: More electric recharger for batteries (car battery)
- G: Two things: small garden tools (like a hori hori knife) for collecting soil samples would have been a lifesaver, and portable batteries for charging tablets or phones while in the field would have come in clutch.
- U: All needs were met -- no additional suggestions



Were you satisfied with like at the field station? Is there anything that could be better?

Summary

- Mostly "It was great/ amazing!"
- Wished there were more lights when it was dark out.
- Wished there were lighter meals.
- Wished there were more laundry allowances.
- Suggested signs in weatherports to remind people to be quiet at night.
- Wished people were less passive aggressive.

- G: 4 "Yes! It was great."
- G: I was satisfied in camp, I only missed having a light or two more when it was dark during the later hours. But that can be changed by bringing a good headlamp as well
- G: Meals were absolutely delicious, but could be very heavy/fatty with lots of fried foods. There were always plenty of options with the salad bar and leftover fridge, but I think most people would appreciate lighter meals in general, especially for lunch.
- G: Everything was great! I do wish we had more laundry allowances, but I understand the current setup is for the best.
- G: My only real issue was people being noisy at night - maybe it would be helpful to have signs in the weatherports reminding people not to slam their doors/talk on the phone etc. after quiet hours
- G: The food is amazing!
- U: I wish people were less passive aggressive, just tell me what I should be doing instead of getting mad at me for not doing something right.
- U: I was beyond satisfied and very happy with life in camp!

Did you use a TFS vehicle? Any issues?

Summary

- Mostly “No issues!”
- 25 year age limit was restrictive.
- They were old, finicky, but mechanically sound.
- Easy to check out & easy to fuel.
- Felt professionally and socially limited by the age limit, but they said they always found a way around it.

- P: yes and no
- G: The 25-year age limit was incredibly challenging to work around.
- G: I did not drive any vehicles, but was driven in them a few times for recreation. No issues.
- G: No
- G: No, but I would like to next season!
- G: Yes, we used a truck daily. No issues - it was old and was finicky about starting, but overall mechanically sound, easy to check out, easy to fuel, etc
- G: Yes, no issues!
- U: Again, sometimes we had to rearrange plans to get rides in Toolik vehicles to our sites/for Sunday activities since we could not drive the Toolik vehicles ourselves; however, we always found a way, and I wouldn't say it was a significant challenge.

Did you feel the TFS code of conduct training was useful? Any changes?

Summary

- Mostly “Super helpful!”
- Suggested adding emphasis on general considerations when living in camp (quiet at night, no reusing plates, keep bathrooms clean, etc).
- Also mentioned how helpful the Toolik prep sessions were.

- P: Yes and no
- G: 4 “Yes. No changes.”
- G: The training was sufficient and good
- G: It was useful, and I thought it was very comprehensive. The only minor change I would recommend is a greater emphasis on general considerations when living in a camp with other people (no loud talking in living area at night, no reusing plates in the dining hall, keeping bathrooms clean, etc.)
- G: Absolutely it is helpful.
- G: Yes, I thought it was very well done and I appreciated it.
- G: It was useful and always a good reminder. No changes.
- U: Yes, the code of conduct training was useful, as were other Toolik prep sessions.

Thoughts on EDC and GIS

Amazing!

Superb!

Summary

- Mostly “They’re incredible!”
- GIS was incredibly helpful and responsive re: drone flights.
- EDC was super helpful with equipment rental.
- Thank you to the EDC for driving them.
- “We wouldn't have achieved the successes we had during our field surveys if it was not for [GIS+EDC's] support.”

- G: The EDC and GIS are both incredible. Thank you for all that you do for the station!
- G: Yes, everyone was very helpful (and probably more organized that I was!).
- G: Good
- G: We had Drone flights over our study sites. This went smoothly on site and in-post (we have the data now). The GIS staff was very attentive and responsive to our needs. We checked out a few instruments from EDC and GIS, which worked well.
- G: We used a gps unit which was very helpful and got great support from the GIS folks, who were also very helpful as we planned our sampling with mapping our sites.
- G: Yes, they were excellent. The crew has continued to respond to emails and help out with questions long after data collection.
- G: Yes. Both EDC and GIS are the best! Super grateful for everyone and how supportive they have been to our team and needs - we wouldn't have achieved the successes we had during our field surveys if it was not for their support.
- G: We borrowed a GPS. The experience was fine
- G: Perfect
- G: Yes, and everyone at the EDC was super helpful!
- U: The EDC occasionally helped us drive places, which was very helpful. The EDC also helped put away OTCs after we left the 16 station, which was also very helpful for our team.

Common use science equipment

Summary

- Research would not have been possible without the centrifuge, scales, drying ovens, walk-in fridges, -80 freezer, microscope, and greenseeker.

- P: we did not use any of the equipment because we brought everything we needed.
- G: My research wouldn't have been possible without the centrifuge and scales.
- Green seeker was good
- G: I used drying ovens and the walk-in fridges. They worked perfectly well
- G: No, we brought our own camera equipment up for our projects
- G: Yes - I used the -80 C freezer quite frequently. It was kinda scary because it would beep a lot if kept open for more than a few seconds. But that was more of a user error. The freezer kept our samples in great shape!
- G: I used a microscope and a couple of other small things that I'm now forgetting! But it was all very helpful
- U: We checked out some microscopes and a GreenSeeker; they were helpful, suited our needs, and were easy to check out



Did you travel to and from Toolik using Toolik provided transportation?

Summary

- Mostly "It was great!"
- They loved learning about the Dalton & landscape.
- The driver did a great job on a really rough road.

- P: yes, I had a great time in the shuttle
- G: To toolik in project truck, returned via toolik transportation and had no issues.
- G: Yes, great experience with no issues, and I loved learning about the Dalton and surrounding landscapes during the drive.
- G: Yes, it was good, no issues
- G: Yes, I thought the drivers did a wonderful job given the difficult road conditions. There was a washout on the road that delayed arrival by a couple days but nothing that could be done about that.
- G: Yes. Very pleasant experience and Kevin was the best.
- G: Yes, I took the northbound truck from Fairbanks. The experience was fine as usual
- G: No issues at all
- G: Yes, it was a good experience
- G: Great, no issues for me.
- U: Great!
- U: Yes -- easy and no issues!



What was your experience with COVID while at TFS? Did TFS do an adequate job?



Rachel de Sobrino flying a kite.

- G: Yes, I only recall one person getting COVID and they were properly quarantined
- G: Very adequate job
- G: COVID restrictions were completely lifted. Toolik made the proper decision doing this.
- G: yes, no issues
- G: I honestly did not feel like COVID was much of a worry during my time at camp.
- G: Post-covid now, so no real notes there
- G: Yes
- G: Didn't really affect me
- U: The one COVID case that occurred this summer was handled adequately.

TFS Staff Shout Out pt. 1/2

- G: Thank you to Scott and Lalo for everything you do!
- G: I would love to shout out Sara, Randy, and Rachel! All of them were instrumental in getting me key data!
- G: GIS, all the EDC, the guys in the garage. The kitchen staff. All were great
- G: Amanda Young was commendably responsive and considerate when we had any EDC needs or general issues with instruments and facilities. I also loved the willow ID walk!
- G: Great kitchen staff and food this winter!
- G: Amanda obviously!! Lindsay and Chad were very helpful as well. Scott and Lalo did a great job as always, and all of the sEDC are fantastic.
- G: Thank you to the drivers, I know it was pretty tough road conditions at the time. Amanda was amazing in helping me get connected and set up with my project. Also, thank you to Sarah for showing me the herbarium. And of course the kitchen staff!!!
- G: Rachel and Randy of GIS have been outstanding resources for GIS related things, so responsive and thoughtful. Lindsey and Chad are so kind and I felt like they always went out of their way to be helpful.

TFS Staff Shout Out pt. 2/2

- G: There are so many! A lot of our success this past summer is thanks to the Battelle team on-site/helicopter coordinator (Bodie), who provided such amazing support to our team and made sure operations went smoothly. Extremely grateful to the pilots Al and Nate too from Alpine Air. The EDC team (Amanda, Mayra, and Sara) are great and friendly and made us feel welcome. The GIS team (Rachel, Randy, Adam, and Jorge) are always there for us, and they continue to be so supportive of our work. The chefs - Don, Tyler, and Rachel (hope am remembering their names correctly) were just such a joy to be around and provided us with the best food. Grateful for Chad, Kevin, and Lalo, who were also outstanding. Last but not least Stevie - who always provided the best advice on logistics and was so prompt with everything we needed. Genuinely, everyone we had an opportunity to work with is so supportive, dedicated, and passionate about their work that it was inspiring to be around. I am sure I am missing a couple more folks too.
- G: Lindsey Clark is so very kind and always helpful, says hello every time we get back to station after a long field day
- G: Amanda Young! Absolute legend. Lindsey and Chad are also the best. And the entire kitchen staff are wonderful. Everyone is amazing, so much love for TFS staff
- G: Amanda for being super helpful. with common-use equipment
- U: Jessie, Sara, Amanda, Lindsey, Abby, Rachel -- all were amazingly helpful and supportive!!

Questions? Comments? Concerns? Ideas?

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