

This document supports the University's Fieldwork Health & Safety Policy and provides guidance on the procedures Colleges should establish so fieldwork is suitably planned for and undertaken safely. In addition, a number of supplementary Handbooks are available to provide practical advice on what Academic Supervisors, Fieldwork Leaders and Fieldwork Supervisors should consider when planning and carrying out fieldwork.

## 1. DEFINITIONS

The following definitions may apply to off-site activities:

	Description	Comment / Duties
GENERAL DAY TRIP & VISITS	Trip (group and alone) away from the University to undertake an activity that poses a risk that is generally no greater than everyday life	Trip involves everyday risks e.g. aquarium / museum visit, trip to an easily accessible beach
TAUGHT FIELDWORK	Fieldwork / study away from the University that includes a taught element and involves a level of risk greater than that generally encountered in everyday life and where University staff will attend to support students (e.g. student group(s) taking plant samples on a mountainside)	Heightened or greater risk activities not usually undertaken in everyday life and where those with little or limited experience may be put at risk
RESEARCH FIELDWORK	Traditional field research away from the University, which is generally unsupervised, not part of a taught module and which could involve unusual / higher risk activities	Usually unsupervised and / or high risk / unusual activities, e.g. taking snake venom, assessing quarry-face flora, social interviews
ACADEMIC SUPERVISORS (AS)	Responsible for ensuring all fieldwork they direct complies with the requirements of the Fieldwork Policy. The AS is defined as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The module organiser for group taught fieldwork</li> <li>The Project Supervisor for undergraduate, MSc and MRes students</li> <li>The main AS for PhD students</li> <li>The Principal Investigator for all research associated fieldwork</li> </ul>	Academic Supervisors will provide authorisation on a case-by-case basis after assessment of all fieldwork elements e.g. location, activity, participant competence  The Dean of College, normally through the Head of School, is responsible for ensuring Academic Supervisors are competent to direct fieldwork
FIELDWORK LEADERS (FL)	A competent FL is essential for all group taught fieldwork. The FL is responsible for implementing the controls identified in the Risk Assessment and for maintaining the health and safety of participants. The FL is also responsible for the supervision of all participants taking part in the fieldwork. FLs are expected to take charge in an emergency and decide to abort or change the fieldwork as required	Academic Supervisors must be confident that Fieldwork Leaders are competent through knowledge, experience and formal training as required

	<p>FLs may often be involved in planning and risk assessing fieldwork but the responsibility for ensuring compliance with the Fieldwork Policy remains with the AS</p> <p>Where groups of people are involved in research fieldwork the appointment of a competent FL should be considered</p>	
FIELDWORK SUPERVISORS (FS)	FS are often required for group taught fieldwork where the main group is split into sub-groups. FS must be competent to supervise these sub-groups under the direction and with the support of the Fieldwork Leader	Academic Supervisors are responsible for ensuring Fieldwork Supervisors are competent and receive the necessary training
FIELD WORKER	Fieldworkers includes those under supervision and those working independently of direct supervision on a field activity	Academic Supervisors must be confident any person working independently has the skills and experience to carry out the fieldwork activity at the location visited, including responding to any emergencies that could arise

## 2. COMPETENCE OF ACADEMIC SUPERVISORS, FIELDWORK LEADERS & SUPERVISORS

Academic Supervisors, Fieldwork Leaders and Fieldwork Supervisors must understand the limits of their own knowledge and experience and seek the advice or assistance of others as necessary.

In order to protect the health and safety of fieldworkers Colleges / Schools may need to arrange additional training and/or information for Academic Supervisors, Fieldwork Leaders and Fieldwork Supervisors. In all cases this should be commensurate to the level of risk and could in some instances include formal qualifications such as Mountain Leader Training.

Training could also take the form of accompanying an experienced member of staff on a fieldtrip so they can lead in the future. Similarly, a new or relatively inexperienced researcher visiting an unknown area may benefit from a formal briefing by a more experienced person on the fieldwork's safety considerations.

Colleges are also advised to include any additional training needs during annual Performance Development Reviews to ensure Academic Supervisors, Fieldwork Leaders and Fieldwork Supervisors skills remain pertinent.

Records of any training should, as with any work-related training be kept by the College.

## 3. AUTHORISATION

Colleges must develop a clear, written, fieldwork approval process. Arrangements should ensure:

- i. All fieldwork is supported as appropriate by suitable and sufficient Risk Assessments.
- ii. Any person involved in the approval process understands and accepts their role, including the duty to prohibit unsafe fieldwork and the powers of their approval authority.
- iii. Appropriate advice is sought from within the institution as required.

- iv. Compliance with the specific requirements of the University's Ethics and Overseas Travel Policies and other legislative requirements relevant to the fieldwork.
- v. Approval can be withdrawn if risks escalate and become unmanageable.

Fieldwork Type	Authorisation	Risk Assessment <sup>1</sup>
GENERAL DAY TRIP & VISITS  TAUGHT FIELDWORK	It is envisaged the majority of such fieldwork will have overarching authorisation from the Dean of College, normally through the Head of School	Day Trips: Review and customise template Risk Assessments  Taught Fieldwork: Customise template Risk Assessments as appropriate, otherwise carry out a specific assessment  Risk Assessments should be reviewed regularly with amended documents communicated to relevant persons
RESEARCH FIELDWORK	It is envisaged the Dean of College will delegate duties to Academic Supervisors. Academic Supervisors will provide authorisation on a case-by-case basis after assessment of all fieldwork elements eg location, research activity, emergency aid, competence of participant(s)	A specific Risk Assessment must be provided to support the fieldwork request
OVERSEAS FIELDWORK	As above plus the requirements of the Overseas Travel Policy must be adhered to	As above plus the requirements of the Overseas Travel Policy must be adhered to

#### 4. SUPERVISION

It should be remembered that students are adults and in the majority of cases will be carrying out activities that pose no more risk than those associated with everyday life. As such, it is envisaged that for the majority of fieldwork supervision ratios will be dictated by academic needs to ensure learning and teaching outcomes are met. In some cases ratios may need to increase if specific health and safety risks are identified which cannot be suitably controlled by the number of supervisors already appointed to fulfill academic needs.

Participants should be informed of periods when supervision will not be provided e.g. 'free time' with details of any controls or restrictions made clear.

Where fieldwork is undertaken independently, Colleges must ensure regular contact is made with fieldworkers to confirm arrangements and controls are suitable and being employed.

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<sup>1</sup> See relevant Handbook

## **5. TRAINING AND INFORMATION - FIELDWORKERS**

Colleges must ensure fieldworkers receive appropriate training, information and instruction to undertake fieldwork safely including for example how to take samples and use field equipment correctly. Identifying what needs to be provided 'pre-trip' and what needs to be given once 'on site' is crucial to ensure proper arrangements can be made. Records should be held of any briefing or training given.

## **6. ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS**

Colleges must ensure that all fieldwork complies with University and College Ethical Policies and approval arrangements.

## **7. OTHER CONSIDERATIONS**

Colleges must make sure other relevant requirements are identified and complied with. These may include access restrictions on land managed by public bodies, permits needed to collect samples and permissions from the Relevant Authority if the species or area being studied is protected.

When working overseas knowledge of local legislation and an understanding of local customs and practices is essential. If planning to undertake work in countries that are subject to political sanctions or boycotts contact should be made with the Head of Governance Services in the first instance. In some cases travel and work in Sanctioned countries may require University Ethics approval.

## **8. COSTS**

Colleges should ensure fieldwork health and safety costs are included in any estimate or grant application e.g. safety equipment, training, clothing. In addition and wherever possible Colleges should identify and inform students at the beginning of each academic year of any foreseeable student borne costs.

## **9. CODE OF CONDUCT**

Colleges may establish a Code of Conduct detailing the general behavioural standards expected of participants including the disciplinary action that will be taken if the rules are breached.

Participants should then be informed of additional, specific fieldwork requirements on a case-by-case basis. For example, specific dress code if visiting a culturally sensitive area.

## **10. INCLUSIVITY & HEALTH AND WELL-BEING (incl. protected characteristics)**

It is important that every reasonable effort is made to ensure taught fieldwork is inclusive for all participants both physically and mentally. Participants should be informed at the earliest opportunity about the nature of the fieldwork, including the location, mode of transport, activity & physical demands and arrangements, and students should be encouraged to speak to their Fieldwork Leader, in confidence, if they have concerns about their ability to fully participate. This so reasonable adjustments can be made where possible to support the individual needs in a timely manner, whilst ensuring learning outcomes are achieved.

Dependent on the nature of the fieldwork Colleges may need to develop a system whereby potential fieldworkers complete and sign a Fieldwork Participant Form (examples available on the Health and Safety Website). The information should be checked prior to fieldwork to capture individual needs.

Student Services can also provide specific advice to Colleges on student health matters. Health and Safety, Campus Services can advise for staff.

**NOTE:** It must be made clear when and with whom the information on Participant Forms will be shared. All information must be stored in accordance with the University's Data Protection Policy.

## **11. MENTAL HEALTH**

Being away from familiar surroundings could increase stress factors impacting on mental health. Mental health issues may manifest themselves during fieldwork because of the changing social and physical environment, which may be exacerbated by new experiences or exposures that are difficult to process. As part of fieldwork planning, participants should be encouraged to raise any concerns they have, in confidence so appropriate support and / or adjustments can be made, whilst achieving the learning outcomes of the fieldwork. This includes directing the participant to other University resources for support and guidance e.g Student Services.

## **12. CHILDREN (under 18) / VULNERABLE PERSON**

Colleges must implement the University's relevant child and vulnerable person protection procedures. Further advice can be sought from Governance Services.

## **13. THIRD PARTY PROVIDERS**

Colleges must establish systems to ensure a risk-based assessment of the competency of third party providers is undertaken. If the third party is to provide a service which involves a heightened or greater risk not usually encountered in everyday life, for example outward bound activities, Colleges should undertake a more detailed assessment of the suitability and competency of the third party. This would include a review of their Public Liability Insurance, checking of past Enforcement actions, accreditation to relevant Governing Bodies and the specific management arrangements for their service, including Risk Assessments.

Responsibilities regarding supervision during the activity and the provision of specialist equipment, training etc should also be confirmed pre-trip, with arrangements confirmed in writing.

## **14. ACCOMMODATION**

Colleges should ensure suitable checks are undertaken of any fieldwork accommodation and is inclusive for all fieldwork participants. However, as it is accepted costs may dictate the standard of accommodation, a practical approach should be taken with similar checks carried out as if making a 'personal' booking. Checks could include booking through an established provider, ensuring the accommodation is in a safe location and near to the fieldwork site with suitable facilities for all participants.

On arrival, a general check of standards e.g. fire arrangements, cleanliness should be undertaken with alternative accommodation sought immediately if it is felt the accommodation poses a risk.

**NOTE:** The use of private accommodation providers such as Airbnb is discouraged and approval of any such provider is required from Finance Office prior to purchase.

## **15. CATERING**

If catering is to be arranged it should be through a suitable provider (e.g. Food Hygiene Rating) with consideration given to special dietary needs, information on which should be sought prior to the trip commencing.

## **16. ROAD TRAVEL**

Each College must undertake road travel in accordance with the University's Driver and Vehicle Policy, the Minibus Safety Policy and specific Finance Office insurance requirements.

It is suggested public transport or licensed / approved providers such as a coach company, especially for group travel, are used and inclusive for all participants.

Colleges should be particularly mindful of challenges when driving unfamiliar vehicles, driving in unknown terrain and where driving conditions and practices are extremely different, for example driving overseas. In such cases specific consideration must be given to driver and vehicle risks as part of the fieldwork Risk Assessment, with, as an alternative, a vehicle and driver hired from a suitable organisation recommended. The Local Tourist Board or the host organisation should be able to advise on suitable providers if planning to drive overseas.

## **17. OVERSEAS TRAVEL**

All overseas travel must be undertaken in accordance with the University's Overseas Travel Policy which includes an on-line system, supported by a Risk Assessment process to ensure appropriate University Insurance is in place. In addition, Finance Policies and Procedures must also be adhered to when booking University related overseas travel. See 7. above regarding Sanctions.

## **18. RISK ASSESSMENT**

Colleges must make sure those leading Taught Fieldwork have a suitable and sufficient Risk Assessment (includes customising template Risk Assessments) for their activities and participants with relevant information passed to participants and other interested parties in a timely manner. Participants should be encouraged to be involved in this process to develop fieldwork management skills and to ensure arrangements are suitable for all.

For Research Fieldwork, Colleges must make sure staff or students undertaking such activities submit a Risk Assessment to their Academic Supervisor for approval before activities commence.

It is essential that Risk Assessments are reviewed regularly, e.g. pre-fieldwork to confirm details remain pertinent. Details should be kept of revisions i.e. date and version number to keep a track of updates with any updated documents communicated as needed.

Systems should also be established to capture salient information centrally so valuable knowledge and experience is not lost if an Academic Supervisor, Fieldwork Leader or Fieldwork Supervisor leaves the University.

## **19. INSURANCE**

Colleges should ensure relevant persons are aware that if the fieldwork involves an unusual or high-risk activity or an individual has specific, ongoing medical needs they should seek the advice of the University Insurance Officer to confirm appropriate insurance is in place. If travelling overseas on University related business the University's on-line Travel Cover / Insurance Form must be completed prior to travel.

**NOTE:** Fieldworkers should be reminded they will need to arrange 'personal insurance cover' for any activities they wish to carry out during fieldwork 'free time'.

## **20. EMERGENCY PROCEDURES**

Colleges must make sure suitable emergency procedures are in place for fieldwork activities and participant needs. This includes identifying first aid provision, how the alarm will be raised, emergency contacts (local, University based, out of hours) etc.

For group trips a Trip Registration Form (Participant Register) should be completed with a copy taken on the trip, and if possible a copy held locally with the College or University Security.

**NOTE:** All incidents must be reported on the Accident and Incident Form in accordance with the College and University reporting procedures.

## **21. AFTER CARE SUPPORT FOLLOWING AN INCIDENT**

If an incident were to occur, the University will provide appropriate support and resources to affected individuals. Generally students are supported by their School and Student Services and staff by their School / Service and Human Resources. In addition, an incident investigation will be undertaken, appropriate to the nature of the incident, to identify lessons learned and areas of improvement for future fieldwork and emergency response.

## **22. REVIEW / MONITORING**

Colleges should develop a Student Feedback mechanism to assess if fieldwork is meeting student needs and to identify any concerns.

Fieldwork related accidents; incidents and near misses should also be investigated in accordance with University policies and procedures, with any recommendations / actions or lessons to be learned recorded and tracked to completion.

Colleges should also periodically review fieldwork and associated Risk Assessments and Student Feedback with comments and suggestions coordinated in order to direct any changes in College policy. As part of this process it is important relevant information is forwarded to Health and Safety so lessons learned can be shared across the University, with changes made to central University policies and procedures if required.

In addition, Health and Safety will carry out general and periodic audits to ensure compliance against the Fieldwork Health & Safety Policy and legislation in general.