

FIELDWORK HEALTH & SAFETY POLICY

Date	Purpose of Issue / Description of Change	Equality Impact Assessment Completed
4 th May 2015	Initial Issue	
27 th February 2020	Reviewed and approved by the Health, Safety and Emergency Management Task Group	14 th Oct 2019
30 th November 2023	Reviewed and approved by the Health, Safety and Emergency Management Committee	Reviewed 30 th November 2023

Policy Officer	Senior Responsible Officer	Approved By	Date
Head of Health & Safety	University Secretary	Health & Safety Committee	4 th May 2015

This Policy will be reviewed again in 2026

1. INTRODUCTION

Fieldwork, if not planned for and appropriately controlled, can be quite hazardous as work is undertaken away from the University's direct control, supervision and its immediate support in an emergency. However, just because there may be some risk does not mean activities should be avoided. Instead, measures need to be put in place to ensure risks and controls are considered during the planning stages so fieldwork can take place safely.

It should be remembered that most fieldwork is undertaken in relatively low risk environments or involves everyday activities such as visiting museums or publicly accessible locations like a beach or easy mountain path. Sometimes fieldwork will carry a greater level of potential risk and will require more thought and greater controls; for example, social research, cliff side flora collection, collecting snake venom, work in quarries or other harsh environments such as deserts.

2. POLICY STATEMENT AND SCOPE

It is the policy of Bangor University, so far as is reasonably practicable, but in accordance with the relevant statutory requirements and good practice, to ensure the health and safety of staff, students and visitors to the University.

Fieldwork is a valuable aspect of teaching and learning and is often an essential part of research. This Policy states the requirements placed on the University and its Colleges with regards to the management of fieldwork for teaching and research purposes and seeks to promote and support fieldwork activities to ensure they take place without unwarranted restrictions.

The Policy notes the general duties and responsibilities placed on Academic Supervisors, Fieldwork Leaders and Supervisors, staff, students and third-party fieldwork providers.

The Policy is supplemented by guidance documents that advise Colleges on what is required of them when arranging and managing fieldwork activities.

The Policy applies to:

- Colleges that arrange field activities and trips.
- Staff, students and volunteers participating in University fieldwork.

The Policy does not apply to:

- Work Placements at or away from the University.
- Attendance at conferences and meetings.
- Work using the facilities of other institutions.
- The overseas travel element of a fieldtrip (*addressed by the Overseas Travel Policy*).

NOTES: Fieldwork does not include work placements, the use of facilities within other institutions or business travel / attendance at meetings and conferences away from the University. Standard safety procedures should be adopted for these activities.

Overseas fieldwork has two distinct elements, namely the travel to the overseas destination and the actual work which will occur. This Policy and its associated procedures consider the 'fieldwork' element only; Colleges, staff and students are referred to the Overseas Travel Policy for information regarding overseas travel.

3. RELATED POLICIES AND LEGISLATION

The general duties outlined by the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act and the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations apply to all activities under the control or direction of the University including off-site activities such as fieldwork.

Procedures outlined in the supporting Fieldwork Management Procedures document detail the specific arrangements that Colleges should establish to control fieldwork risks; in accordance with legislative requirements, University expectations and the Universities Safety and Health Association (USHA) specific guidance on *Health and Safety in Fieldwork and Travel*.

The supporting Handbooks and template documents produced to assist Academic Supervisors, Fieldwork Leaders and Fieldwork Supervisors when planning fieldwork seek to reflect the principles of the USHA guidance and British Standard BS8848 (created for the provision of visits, fieldwork, expeditions, and adventurous activities, outside of the UK), whilst having due regard to the level of risk and the implementation of realistic controls.

4. DEFINITIONS / TERMINOLOGY

For the purpose of this Policy the following definition applies:

- Fieldwork: Work carried out by staff or students for the primary purpose of teaching and / or research at locations away from the University, where the University remains responsible for the safety and health of participating staff and / or students and others affected by their activities.

5. DUTIES OF THE UNIVERSITY

The University will:

- a. Establish, through this Policy and its associated documentation, a management system that seeks to promote fieldwork whilst suitably controlling risks to participants and others affected by the fieldwork.
- b. Provide adequate resources to support the implementation of this Policy.
- c. Delegate, in line with the University's health and safety management system, the duty to implement this Policy to Deans of College and applicable Academic Supervisors, Fieldwork Leaders and Fieldwork Supervisors.

6. COLLEGE RESPONSIBILITIES

Each College is responsible for implementing procedures to ensure fieldwork takes place without significant risk to participants. Each College will:

- a. Identify fieldwork activities and plan for these to ensure the necessary controls are put in place.
- b. Put in place an appropriate fieldwork approval mechanism, commensurate to the level of risk and taking into account other University policies and controls (e.g. Ethics, Overseas Travel Policy).
- c. Ensure staff and others planning and supervising fieldwork are suitably experienced and competent to do so.
- d. Risk Assess fieldwork activities and communicate the findings and controls required to participants and others as appropriate.

- e. Ensure other factors are considered and addressed as needed e.g. Regulatory Authority approvals, legislative requirements, adequate insurance, University Minibus Safety Policy.
- f. Seek to ensure that fieldwork is, where practicable, inclusive, taking into account the needs and capabilities of potential participants in line with the spirit of the Equalities Act, working with Students Services or Human Resources and other specialist advisers as appropriate.
- g. Ensure all equipment and materials to be used during fieldwork activities are suitable and safe, with records of equipment inspections, maintenance etc. kept as appropriate.
- h. Provide suitable personal protective equipment or stipulate that such should be worn, as appropriate to the fieldwork activity.
- i. Confirm third-party fieldwork providers are competent and will implement similar or greater controls as those stipulated by this Policy.
- j. Provide all fieldwork participants with suitable information, instruction and training to enable them to understand the nature of the risks involved and how these risks are controlled.
- k. Identify and inform participants of 'participant' borne costs and requirements.
- l. Establish, as appropriate to the level of risk, suitable emergency procedures.
- m. Ensure fieldwork accidents and incidents are investigated with action taken, including cascading findings within the College and / or institution as necessary.
- n. Regularly review arrangements for managing fieldwork and complying with this Policy.

Further information is provided in the Fieldwork Management Procedures document.

7. ACADEMIC SUPERVISORS, FIELDWORK LEADERS & FIELDWORK SUPERVISORS RESPONSIBILITIES

Academic Supervisors, Fieldwork Leaders and Fieldwork Supervisors have a duty to comply with this Policy and their College fieldwork management arrangements and systems to ensure risks are considered and suitably controlled.

Anyone who plans and supervises fieldwork should at all times seek to ensure the health, safety and well-being of the participants and others affected by the fieldwork activity. This includes ensuring, where appropriate, a suitable risk assessment is in place and this is maintained and communicated in a timely manner to all relevant persons.

It is imperative that Academic Supervisors, Fieldwork Leaders and Fieldwork Supervisors understand the limits of their own knowledge and experience, and seek the advice and / or assistance of others as necessary.

8. FIELDWORK PARTICIPANTS RESPONSIBILITIES

All staff, students and other fieldwork participants have a duty to follow any requirements established in the interests of health and safety including taking care of their own health and safety and that of any other person who could be affected by their actions. In addition, all fieldwork participants must:

- a. Attend relevant fieldwork training or briefings.
- b. Report concerns, including their ability to participate in the fieldwork to their Academic Supervisor, Fieldwork Leader / Fieldwork Supervisor or School / College H&S Coordinator.

- c. Follow all instruction, controls and procedures pertinent to the fieldwork being undertaken.
- d. Cooperate with those responsible for managing the fieldwork.
- e. Not interfere with or mis-use materials or equipment supplied in the interest of health and safety.
- f. Report any accidents and incidents associated with the fieldwork immediately as b) above.

9. EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Every effort must be made to support individuals so they are treated equally and to enable them to undertake their tasks in the same way as their peers.

However, in some rare instances, there may be a requirement to treat '*persons with a protected characteristic*' differently in order to safeguard their own health, safety and well-being. Any such consideration will be discussed with the individual and reasonable adjustments agreed.

10. MONITORING AND REVIEWING PROCEDURES

Health and Safety, Campus Services may undertake periodic audits or reviews to assess the effectiveness of and compliance with this Policy.

Colleges / Professional Services must periodically review their own procedures to ensure the requirements of this Policy are implemented, suitable and effective.

The Health, Safety and Emergency Management Committee will review this Policy in accordance with the agreed Review Schedule, with any significant changes considered by the University Executive.

End.