



Risk Management of Fieldwork

Standard

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Introduction

Fieldwork is an essential part of University teaching and research, enabling and inspiring many staff and students' academic and personal development. People organising fieldwork need to use an effective fieldwork assessment process to minimise risk and ensure that as a University we fulfil our duty of care to protect staff, students and other affected people.

The key to managing fieldwork safely is firstly to carry out the Fieldwork Assessment and consider the potential risks before you go; secondly once you are undertaking the fieldwork activity, to carry out a dynamic assessment of risk as you go along to deal with the changing situations you find yourself in.

What do we mean by fieldwork?

Fieldwork is any activity carried out by staff and students for the purpose of their teaching or research as a member of the University of Leeds representing the institution off-site. Activities traditionally associated with the term fieldwork include archaeological digs, environmental and biological collection work / surveys, and social surveys and interviews. Fieldwork also includes short organised trips for taught students to public sites, for example, the British Library, York Minster, Malham Cove etc.

Fieldwork does not include Student Placements or Study Abroad (see relevant protocol).

For staff, fieldwork **does not** include business trips, meetings or conferences in the UK or abroad (which will be dealt with in a forthcoming protocol on travel off campus), **unless** they are in a location to which FCO recommends against travel. If you have any questions please discuss with your Health and Safety Manager.

For students, fieldwork **does** include meetings and conferences off campus in the UK and abroad.

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The University takes a risk-based approach to managing fieldwork and expects that:

- Fieldwork activities are identified and a system is in place to identify which staff/ students are on fieldwork, when and where.
- Fieldwork activity organisers and other key roles are identified and understood.
- For fieldwork overseas, Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) travel advice is checked and incorporated into the Fieldwork Assessment.
- Where FCO advice is *against* 'all but essential travel' or 'all travel' to the area, a Fieldwork Assessment (high risk) is carried out and approval obtained following the 'University travel against FCO advice procedure'.
- Whilst on fieldwork, if the FCO advice changes to advise against 'all but essential travel' or 'all travel to' the area, the 'University travel against FCO advice procedure' is implemented.
- People involved in fieldwork are briefed and given insurance policy details before the fieldwork activities begin.
- All control measures identified in the Fieldwork Assessment are put in place.
- All health and safety training needs specific to the fieldwork activity are identified in the Fieldwork Assessment, fulfilled and recorded.
- People involved in fieldwork are given training as identified in the training matrix, and this is recorded.
- A University-approved Fieldwork Assessment Form is completed.
- The periods of fieldwork activity, 'down time' and 'personal time' are clearly defined in the Fieldwork Assessment.
- The gender, experience, age, disability or medical conditions of all fieldwork participants is taken into consideration when planning any fieldwork activity and is included in the Fieldwork Assessment.
- Any requirement for health surveillance identified in the Fieldwork Assessment is referred to the Occupational Health Service (staff) or GP (student) and organised.
- All Fieldwork Assessments and associated documentation are shared with all those involved in the fieldwork.
- A copy of the Fieldwork Assessment and any associated documentation is taken into the field so that significant changes can be recorded.

- A copy of the Fieldwork Assessment and associated documentation is kept locally within the school / service and retained for the duration of the activity.
- If an incident (accident or near miss to people or property) occurs, records are kept for a minimum of 3 years - or if the participant involved is under 18, then until they reach 21.
- Any accidents, incidents, cases of ill health or near misses are reported to the School / Service so that they can be recorded on the University online accident reporting system.
- If fatalities, hospitalisation or serious injuries occur (e.g. broken bones) they are reported immediately.
- Where third party organisations are used, an assessment of the suitability of the organisation is carried out before they are used, which takes into consideration their:
 - Knowledge, health and safety experience, and competency
 - Any insurance or health and safety documentation in line with the host country's requirements.

Relevant Legislation

- Health and Safety at Work etc. Act (HSWA) 1974.
- Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 as amended. (MHSWR).
- Others where relevant e.g. COSHH, GM or radiation.