Fieldwork

COVID-19 Supplementary Guidance
Supplementary Guidance for Fieldwork Activities during COVID-19: updated 11 June 2020

This guidance is for the use of Staff and PGR students undertaking research related fieldwork activities only, it does not extend to teaching and taught student fieldwork.

While the University is working towards restarting its activities, it is essential that all staff and PGR students understand and comply with the University’s position to ensure staff and PGR students can work safely in line with government and University guidelines.

The main principles are as follows:
- That the activity can be carried out within 8 hours, including travel and reasonable rest periods
- There is no overnight stay (including camping)
- There are adequate hygiene facilities available
- Any samples collected can be stored and processed safely (e.g. not in a fridge containing food)
- No sample analysis / processing is carried out in a home setting
- Travel must not be via public transport
- Consideration should be given to lone working with suitable social distancing controls

Before carrying out fieldwork:
1. A full fieldwork risk assessment is carried out, taking into account the aspects listed within this guide.
2. The fieldwork risk assessment must be approved via your HSM, Head of School and Dean.
3. Only Staff and PGR students with approved fieldwork risk assessments will be permitted to carry out fieldwork.
4. Inform your line manager / academic supervisor of any personal circumstances (e.g. clinically vulnerable) that need to be considered before carrying out any fieldwork, these should also be considered within the fieldwork risk assessment.
5. If you have approval to carry out fieldwork then you will be required to limit the length of time you need to be away from home. Work that can be completed at home should be considered, with the exception of samples that need a laboratory setting to store/analyse them.
6. If you, or a member of your household displays any symptoms of COVID-19, you must follow existing government guidelines for self-isolating and immediately inform your line manager/academic supervisor. In these circumstances you must not complete any fieldwork.
7. If you need access to campus to collect field or to store samples on return, this must be identified in the fieldwork risk assessment. You will need additional permission to access campus, this will include instructions that you may need to follow as many areas are heavily restricted.
8. Use your own vehicle not public transport, this will require business insurance cover.
9. You will be expected to observe social distancing – maintaining 2 metres distance from others, this includes journeys to and from the site.

On Fieldwork
10. If you become unwell while in the field, inform your line manager/academic supervisor as soon as practicable and if you have coronavirus symptoms, you must return home, self-isolate and not continue the fieldwork.
11. You must follow any additional requirements that have been identified in the fieldwork risk assessment and notify your Health and Safety Team, if you are unable to follow any of the identified control measures. This includes any requirement to wear Personal Protective Equipment.
12. Any activities that require close contact will be risk assessed separately and should it be deemed that a necessary control is for any member of staff to wear a face mask, then these will be provided by the University.

13. Personal hygiene measures, appropriate to the location you are working in must be implemented. Where possible the use of welfare provision is preferable. However, it is recognised that in remote locations these may not be available. Hand sanitiser use will be a minimum expectation to be carried and used while undertaking any activity in the field.

14. Where working with others in the field, you must observe social distancing – maintain 2 metres distance from others, this includes journeys to and from the site.

15. You must take adequate provision of food, drinks etc and not rely on local amenities.

If you need to enter campus

Local details to support the below principles will be provided on approval of access.

16. You must observe the instructions provided at the time of approval, and any additional requirements that may be added locally as buildings/areas are gradually reopened.

17. The use of face coverings is not required when working inside University buildings. Their use in external spaces are also not required when ensuring you observe social distancing measures. The University is sympathetic to those people who choose to wear a personal face covering.

18. You must observe any one-way systems and signage throughout buildings (entrances/exits and along corridors and stairways) and anywhere else that such routes exist.

19. To prevent the spread of the virus it is essential to clean any work equipment.

20. Coughs and sneezes should be covered with a tissue and disposed of immediately (into your elbow if no tissue available) followed by the washing of hands.

21. Reduce travel and movement to a minimum, plan your route to the point of campus you need to access. Use technology where possible to reduce contact.

22. Observe the arrangements for toilets/wash/rest facilities, by following all local signage.

23. Please ensure that you know where the first aid box is as you may need to deal with minor injuries (e.g. one that may need a plaster) yourself. For emergencies that require a visit to hospital please dial 9-999 for an ambulance.

If you are concerned about your safety please contact your line manager, your HR contact or a member of the Health and Safety Team.