

# Working off-site and fieldwork health and safety guidance



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## Quick reference to the guidance

Does your travel or off-site work fit into one of the following categories? (Choose the most relevant).

- Attending a course
- Delivering teaching
- Hosted visit at another University (UK or overseas)
- Meeting or conference off-site
- Low-risk secondment

- Work in a geographically isolated location as a group or individual, including,
  - Few other people nearby
  - Limited phone signal
  - Limited access to emergency services

- Work in a hazardous location such as,
  - Physical hazards
  - Hazardous substances
  - Psychological hazards
  - A location where the FCDO has issued a warning

- Carrying out hazardous activities including,
  - Equipment
  - Machinery
  - Substances
  - Psychological
  - Risk of violence or aggression
  - Working with animals

- Working in a physically isolated location such as,
  - Working with limited supervision
  - Visiting an individual in their home

- A student placement which is part of their course.
- Exclusions
- ILO industrial placements
- Centre for study abroad.

These activities are usually low risk and the following actions should be taken.

Generally, these activities will be higher risk and the following actions should be taken.

Student placements do not come within the scope of this guidance. View the [student placements health and safety guidance](#).

Does this work involve overseas travel?

Go to the [Global Travel SharePoint site](#)

Yes

No

- Determine the precautions required.
- Follow general safety information.
- If necessary, complete a risk assessment for the activity and get approval locally.

## Introduction

This document provides guidance to keep staff and participants safe when working off-site or on fieldwork. Schools and Services can use it to show they are following good practice to manage off-site work.

The guidance covers low and high-risk activities, the use of third-party providers, and emergency response planning.

Off-site work will often be referred to in this guidance as fieldwork, full definitions are contained within Appendix 1.

## Roles and responsibilities

### Head of school or service

The Head of School/Service is responsible for ensuring that:

- adequate safety management arrangements are in place within their area of control, this includes off-site activities ensuring that due regard has been paid to health and safety considerations.
- any appointed course leader is competent to run any fieldwork course and that there is clarity of roles and responsibilities.
- a risk assessment of the off-site work has been undertaken where appropriate and that a safe system of work has been established for all participants. Frequently, the Head will delegate this duty to the member of staff organising or leading the off-site work, but with the Head retaining accountability for the activity.
- any accidents that occur are reported, investigated and, if necessary, that statutory notifications are made.

### Fieldwork leader or supervisor

The fieldwork leader is responsible for ensuring that:

- all safety precautions are observed for the duration of the work. This duty may be passed to other responsible persons but the overall duty to ensure the safety of the work remains with the fieldwork leader.
- the level of supervision is adequate for any given situation, and to make necessary adjustments to itineraries in the interests of safety, including (where necessary), cessation of an activity. The fieldwork leader must be explicitly empowered to implement emergency or contingency plans if necessary.
- there is a competent person to lead each sub-group where groups are subdivided during the fieldwork. Explicit responsibility is delegated to the leader of each sub-group to know the total number and identities of the participants they are responsible for supervising.
- all instructions issued to participants are comprehensible and appropriate, that control measures identified in risk assessments are implemented in practice and for ensuring that dynamic risk assessments are carried out if necessary.

### Independent fieldworkers

Independent fieldworkers undertaking solo travel or self-managed field work have a responsibility to take reasonable care in their activities.

In practice, they will assume many of the duties of the fieldwork leader and therefore some of

their responsibilities, which should be agreed in advance with their supervisor.

## Participants

It is the responsibility of participants/members of a fieldwork team to:

- acknowledge their own responsibilities for the health and safety of themselves and others. The authority and responsibilities of the fieldwork leader, or any other designated supervisor must be clearly defined and understood by all members of the party.
- make sure that they understand and observe any instruction given to them by a supervisor and to bring any questions or problems, particularly those of understanding, to the attention of their supervisor.
- seek medical advice as directed or when necessary.
- advise the supervisor of personal circumstances (such as disability or ill health) or restrictions that might affect their ability to participate or put them at increased risk of harm.
- report any accident or dangerous occurrence as soon as possible.

## Authorisation Processes and Planning

Schools and Services should have a management system in place that includes, as appropriate, approval protocols that meet their needs for off-site work, without creating unnecessary bureaucracy.

Some high hazard activities are governed by specific statutory regulations that must be met to control the risks. International legislation may vary from UK requirements so it's important to ensure the activity is managed in line with the statutory requirements of the host country. The University has dedicated approval systems to ensure specialist activities are appropriately managed and staff are competent to undertake them.

Examples of work that may require additional measures are,

- Drone Operations: [Drone Operations | Safety and Health Services | University of Bristol](#)
- Diving at Work: [HSE - Diving: How we work](#)
- Underground Working (including caving, mines, and quarries)
- Climbing, Tree work and working at height [Work at height - HSE](#)

If you are going to undertake these activities, please [email Safety and Health Services](#) for more information.

It is University practice that visits to countries or regions where the Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO) advises against travel on their travel advice web site should be avoided wherever possible.

Heads of School/Service are responsible for ensuring that there is a procedure in place to ensure, where necessary, that a suitable and sufficient risk assessment is carried out for off-site activities and that approval has been given. If necessary, any requests for travel which present unusual or high residual risks should be referred to the Dean or Divisional Head who will review the travel plan.

The purpose of the off-site work, together with a summary of its associated activities and

expected outcomes, should be clearly established at the planning stage. The effort and detail required in planning fieldwork should be commensurate with the risks identified. The following should be identified at the planning stage:

- The proposed fieldwork team and as many of the participants and stakeholders as possible at an early stage of planning.
- Potential participants including young (under the age of 18) or vulnerable participants.
- All permissions required in advance.
- Any relevant legislation in the country where the fieldwork is taking place.
- All known third party providers and their proposed role. If responsibility for supervision of any aspect of the fieldwork will be passed entirely to a third party, then a formal written agreement should be made.

For supervised fieldwork, a preparatory visit should be made where reasonably practicable to the field site and an evaluation made of local facilities and services regarding the needs of known or likely participants.

## Low risk off-site working procedure

Examples of low-risk off-site working include:

- routine travel such as attending business meetings and conferences within the UK.
- regular teaching slots in easily accessible environments.
- hosted visits to Universities overseas.

Each School/Service should develop a procedure to manage the health and safety risks of their low-risk off-site activities. In some cases, this might be as simple as taking a register of attendance.

More detailed arrangements may include:

- recording start and return dates for off-site working and, if possible, ensuring that travel itineraries are provided by participants for overseas visits.
- recording details of how participants may be contacted whilst they are away, this may include accommodation details and in-country contacts when overseas and mobile phone details.
- ensuring that accommodation is booked via a reputable external event organiser, such as a conference host, or through the University approved agent, details are available via [Procurement](#). Consideration should be given to the location of the accommodation and safe travel to the event.
- informing participants of the need for insurance cover. Find details of [University travel insurance](#).

Details of these arrangements need to be communicated to staff via the Local Rules document.

Supervised day courses in the UK or some research projects can be considered low risk, but further controls may be required than the simple recording of participants details.

## Risk assessment for off-site working

Activities requiring detailed written assessments include supervised off-site courses,

research projects overseas and any travel planned for teaching or recruitment in destinations showing instability.

Each School/Service should outline when they expect a written risk assessment. The risk assessment helps to determine what measures need to be taken to comply with relevant statutory provisions. An example form is shown in Appendix 2.

It may be possible for one risk assessment to be prepared which covers several trips to the same destination; this should be frequently reviewed prior to departure to ensure any changes to the risk status of the destination are considered. The level of detail of the risk assessment needs to be proportionate to the risk.

The risk assessment needs to be completed by the person responsible for the work or the fieldwork leader. There may be some areas of the assessment for which specialist knowledge or advice is required.

For the risk assessment to be 'suitable and sufficient', the written assessment should clearly identify what further action needs to be taken before the activity proceeds, how the actions will be taken and by whom, and it should detail the timescale for outstanding actions to be completed.

## Five steps to risk assessment

The following outlines the five steps to complete an off-site work risk assessment:

### Step 1 - Identify the hazards to which the participants may be exposed

Consider hazards associated with the following:

- travelling to the destination.
- Psychological hazards.
- Link to [DREI guidance](#).
- travelling around in the vicinity of the off-site or fieldwork location.
- the specific activity undertaken (specific threats of violence arising from the nature of the fieldwork, for example, some aspects of social research on contentious topics or with volatile individuals) should also be captured, and controls detailed in the risk assessment process.
- threats to personal security, such as from:
  - terrorism
  - crime
  - aggression from members of the public
- equipment:
  - manual handling
  - defects
  - failures
- unsafe accommodation:
  - fire
  - carbon monoxide poisoning
  - electrical safety
  - water purity
- significant natural hazards, such as earthquakes
- extremes of weather:
  - hypothermia
  - sunstroke

- dehydration
- frost bite
- flooding
- location:
  - altitude
  - sea or water course
  - landslide
  - rough terrain
  - work in trenches
  - avalanche
- contact with hazardous flora or fauna
- ill health:
  - prevalence of disease
  - altitude sickness
  - food borne illness
  - distance from medical facilities
  - health surveillance requirements
- inadequate or lack of competent supervision
- lone working
- lack of fitness or competence of participants
- inherently dangerous activities:
  - climbing
  - diving
  - caving
  - working alongside railways and major roads
  - working from boats
- inability to communicate or summon assistance
- poor or inappropriate participant behaviour
- failure to develop suitable contingency plans

## Step 2 - Identify all persons who may be at risk

Ensure that the risk assessment includes risks posed both to those participating in the off-site work, and to other persons who may be affected, e.g., members of the public. Consideration must be given to an individual's ability to carry out fieldwork safely.

Some individuals may be at greater risk than others, for example:

- those with certain disabilities.
- vulnerable adults.
- those who are new to a role.

Extra consideration must be given to students who may generally lack experience in the work they are doing. For supervised fieldwork ensure participants are advised on the assessed level of fitness required and seek confirmation of compliance in writing as appropriate.

If students under the age of 18 are included on the course, then it is likely to be classed as a 'regulated activity' under the terms of Independent Safeguarding Authority (ISA) guidelines and staff/volunteers will need to be registered with the ISA. Further details on this are contained in the [University Safeguarding Policy](#).

Useful guidance can be found in the [COMET fieldwork guidelines](#).



### Step 3 - Assess whether current controls are adequate

If current controls are considered inadequate, consider what additional/alternative control measure(s) can be put in place. It may be necessary to prohibit certain tasks or activities if the risks cannot be adequately controlled.

Examples of control measures could include:

- the provision of suitable training of participants
- recognised level of competency of fieldwork leaders
- effective communication strategies
- emergency and contingency plans in place and communicated to all participants
- an effective means of summoning help in an emergency
- information available on local health care facilities
- first aid equipment and personnel availability
- use of competent third-party service providers
- nominated home contact and local contact availability
- Adequate emergency funds being available, etc.

It is likely that an element of dynamic risk assessment will be required to respond to changes in circumstances or new risks. However, dynamic risk assessments are not a substitute for adequate emergency and contingency planning.

If new categories of risk are identified and these need to be assessed dynamically, there should be a procedure in place that, if necessary, they are referred via the approval process before the activity proceeds.

### Step 4 - Record the findings

Record your risk assessment findings for any significant risks. Where necessary, contingency plans should be built into risk assessment documentation before fieldwork begins and should relate directly to the threat analysis/risks identified.

Share significant findings of risk assessments with fieldwork participants and ensure that they are understood and accepted. Consent is then on an informed basis and expectations of participants will be realistic.

For supervised fieldwork, it is good practice to engage participants in the process of risk assessment as this can be a useful learning tool. Participants should also be encouraged to review risks whilst in the field and suggest safety management strategies.

### Step 5 - Monitor and review the risk assessment

The risk assessment (and contingency plan, where appropriate) should be reviewed and revised as necessary throughout working off-site to ensure that it is always up to date and relevant to changing circumstances.

Introduce measures to ensure consistency in risk assessment standards are applied across the Faculty/School/Service. The content of completed risk assessments should be reviewed to allow consistency to be monitored and to check adherence to University policy and guidance.

Clear and timely management arrangements should also be in place to facilitate the implementation of suitable controls. Participant advice is best placed within a participant

information pack (see Appendix 5) which is easy to read and understand, such as:

- how to mitigate against sunstroke
- dehydration
- insect bites

## Emergency response planning

The level and depth of emergency planning required will relate directly to the level of risk associated with the work off-site. The emergency plan should be in place before the work begins. The emergency plan should, where relevant, covering:

- methods for contacting next of kin
- available support
- medical emergencies and repatriation
- financial plan for emergencies
- missing persons procedure
- civil unrest and natural disasters
- media management plan.

Dealing with a medical emergency is a possibility which should be considered for all off-site work. Factors to consider affecting control measures include the:

- duration of the work
- remoteness of the destination
- fitness of participants
- access to hospital facilities
- standards of health care available in the country

## Exchange of information and communication

The provision and exchange of clear information is critical for work off-site both in the UK and overseas. It is good practice to arrange at least one face to face meeting for all residential courses before departure and this should be considered for all fieldwork.

Appendix 5 outlines the function of the meetings and what information should be provided in participant information packs.

## Competence

Fieldwork leaders, independent fieldworkers and participants working off-site must be competent to plan and undertake fieldwork safely. Competence in this context is defined as being an appropriate combination of knowledge, experience, and qualifications, but also importantly being able to acknowledge one's own limitations.

Regulated activities may require compulsory professional qualifications and competence criteria which are required by the relevant regulatory authority. Examples of these activities include diving at work and drone activities.

Undertake an assessment of the competence of fieldwork leaders and independent fieldworkers to ensure training is commensurate with the level of risk. All gaps should be addressed to enable the visit to be authorised.

Safety and Health Services created [guidance on undertaking risk assessments](#).

## Supervision

Many factors need to be considered when assessing the level of supervision required for any work off-site.

The factors that must be considered include the:

- nature of the off-site work
- environmental conditions in which the fieldwork takes place
- experience of the leader and supervisors
- experience of the group
- needs of individuals, including consideration of those who may have specific support requirements due to a disability or those who are under 18 years old
- external requirements such as those that may be outlined by National Governing Bodies

## Fully supervised student courses

Consideration should be given to staff/student ratios, which may vary according to the activities being carried out and the nature of the site being visited.

Each group should have an experienced staff member as leader, supported by other experienced staff where possible or by other suitable appointed supervisors, such as postdoctoral researchers or postdoctoral students of suitable experience and maturity).

Maximum and minimum party sizes should be set bearing in mind:

- the environment
- the activity to be undertaken
- the logistics of foreseeable emergencies

Each supervised course should endeavour to have at least one male and one female staff member. If this is impractical, then suitable post graduate students may be used to ensure that both genders are represented.

If it proves impossible to provide mixed gender staffing, then this fact should be clearly communicated to course participants in the course information pack.

## Field expeditions

The leader of such trips must be adequately trained in appropriate skills required for the expedition, which may include survival, communication, and navigational techniques.

The leader should be aware of local hazards and conditions and be familiar with precautions to be taken where the terrain is particularly hazardous, such as:

- glaciers
- rock faces
- where there may be a presence of:
  - dangerous animals
  - diseases
  - substances

An adequate number of experienced and trained members of staff should accompany the trip, so that suitable deputising arrangements can be made in case of incapacity, or if the party will be split up into smaller groups.

## Lone working

Post-graduate or final-year undergraduate students undertaking project work is an example of work which may involve lone working. This type of work will be in-directly supervised.

The student should be actively involved in the risk assessment process which will lead to a communication plan and emergency procedure. In all cases formulate clear guidelines on the scope of activities which may be undertaken alone, supervisory arrangements, such as:

- checking-in
- emergency plans in case the lone worker fails to check in
- the training and experience required on the part of the participant

Checks on lone workers should be on a regular and planned basis. The frequency should be dependent on the nature of the activities and the perceived risk.

## Personal time and downtime

Personal time can be defined as time when programmed fieldwork activities are not taking place, but fieldworkers remain under the general jurisdiction of the University. It is unlikely that fieldworkers will be directly supervised during these periods.

Common examples of personal time activities include:

- sightseeing
- social activities
- outings

Downtime can be defined as a period of time, occurring before, after or within the overall duration of the fieldwork but outside the jurisdiction of the University.

Arrangements for down time and personal time within work off-site must be effectively communicated to all participants prior to the start of the work. Ideally, this should be discussed during pre-departure meetings and outlined in participant information packs (see Appendix 5).

## Health and medical issues

A risk assessment of the health hazards associated with work off-site should be undertaken. These hazards may include, for example:

- the prevalence of certain diseases and parasites
- the possibility of exposure to hazardous substances including:
  - chemicals
  - radioactive substances.

The assessment should outline any minimum capabilities expected of participants, such as:

- physical fitness
- any immunisations or prophylactic medication needed
- health surveillance requirements

A health assessment can be undertaken at participant level. This assessment would include the effect of fieldwork on health, for example any pre-existing medical conditions that may be exacerbated by participating in the work. It should include verification that specified minimum capabilities are met.

Any request for information from a participant must comply with the Equality Act 2010.

An example health declaration is contained in Appendix 3 which should be amended to fit the requirements of specific off-site work. Any questions asked should not be of a general nature but specific to the work to be carried out.

Students may have already disclosed their disability to the University. In these cases, the individual will have a Learning Support Plan in place that would have been developed by Disability Services, this plan will set out necessary adjustments including support during fieldwork if appropriate (for example, the provision of a postgraduate support worker). Contact details are available on the [Disability Services website](#).

Steps should be taken to ensure that any fieldwork is accessible for disabled participants. Where this is not possible, suitable alternatives should be considered where practicable to do so such as a change in location or, for students, alternative means of assessment.

The Occupational Health Service does not provide immunisations for any form of work or course related travel.

[Read the list of Bristol Travel Vaccine Clinics](#) that can offer advice and immunisations on an appointment basis. Any vaccines required for work related travel can be reimbursed via expenses from your School or Service.

## First aid

The risk assessment should outline the requirement for trained first aiders. It is recommended that for supervised fieldwork, at least one staff member should hold an Approved First Aider Certificate.

Ideally, a second First Aider should be in the group to give secondary cover. It may be also appropriate, for a specialist qualification to be obtained, such as a Mountain First Aid Certificate.

## Accident and incident reporting

It is important that all accidents, illnesses, or dangerous occurrences are reported as soon as possible, either by telephone or email.

The fieldwork leader is responsible for ensuring that the University accident and incident reporting procedure is followed.

Please read the guidance before you go (as it may not be available off-site) for contact details and ensure that this is followed up with an incident report using the [online reporting system](#) as soon as you can and as soon as it is accessible to you (University network, VPN or staff desktop).

A procedure regarding action to be taken in the event of a death of a member of staff or student is outlined in the [Incident and Crisis Management Framework](#).

## Insurance

The University provides competitively priced travel insurance for employees travelling abroad

on University business and for students on field trips and on electives etc. Appendix 4 outlines what an insurance policy should cover. See the [summary cover and policy wording](#) page.

## Third party providers

One of the more challenging aspects of organising work off-site is the vetting of third-party providers, particularly if they are overseas. Typical third-party providers include:

- specialist outdoor activity leaders
- drilling contractors
- dive services
- field study centres
- in-country guides
- suppliers of specialist equipment or laboratory facilities

Host or partner organisations should also be treated as third party providers. Using a third-party provider does not absolve the University of its obligations under the Health and Safety at Work *etc.* Act 1974.

All third-party providers used or sourced should undergo suitable risk related checks on their suitability. The level of due diligence required will depend upon the individual circumstances of the work and the provider itself.

It is particularly important to check out competence in relation to specialist providers such as diving instructors.

If companies or individuals are used regularly, it is useful to keep a note of positive and negative experiences to inform future planning on courses. Public liability insurances should be checked as a standard requirement.

The roles and responsibilities of the third-party provider should be agreed in writing including the details of any special arrangements, actions to be taken or provisions to be made.

## Accommodation

Ideally, all accommodation should be booked with the University contracted travel agents who are able to guarantee that safety standards in the establishment have been vetted. [Booking is available through Clarity.](#)

If this is not possible, the fieldwork leader or participant should assess the safety of the accommodation as far as possible. The overall aim is to reduce intrinsic risks associated with the accommodation to a level acceptable to the School/Service and to the work team.

It is not unknown for accommodation to contain deficiencies such as:

- inadequacies in fire escape routes including blocked fire exits
- ineffective alarm systems
- inadequate compartmentation of the building
- unsuitable, or poorly installed or maintained gas appliances such as water heaters that release flue gasses (containing carbon monoxide) into the accommodation
- unsafe electrical installations or equipment

Gaining assurance as to the standard of accommodation to be used for an overseas field trip is complicated by differing national standards and the ability to check it.

Accommodation that is advertised by ABTA members is subject to an ABTA code of practice that includes verification that it meets certain standards relating to safety.

In some cases, no accommodation will be available through the above channels and therefore the fieldwork leader or participant should seek assurance from the accommodation provider prior to booking that it complies with relevant legislation relating to fire precautions and safety.

Assurance can also be sought on arrival with checks on safety including:

- fire safety
- personal security
- general safety of the structure and facilities, such as:
  - pool
  - lifts
  - balconies
  - electrical safety
- the accessibility of the accommodation for any disabled participants
- the environment surrounding the accommodation.

As a minimum, familiarisation with accommodation emergency escape routes and arrangements should take place. The fieldwork leader should be empowered to change any accommodation booking. This will be based on an informed decision if, upon arrival, the accommodation does not meet what they feel to be basic health and safety requirements.

If the accommodation is used for example on an annual basis, then the fieldwork leader should make a record of any problems noted to assist in determining its future suitability.

## Transport

The types of transport used for fieldwork will vary from public transport to third party providers and the possibility of participants using their own vehicles.

For UK based work, all transport should be booked with the University appointed agents where possible. Details are contained on the [Procurement website](#).

Where driving is involved, the University's [Driving policy](#) outlines responsibilities including requirements to ensure that individuals hold the appropriate licence, are insured and are medically fit to drive.

Fieldwork leaders will need to make sure as far as possible that transport arrangements overseas are suitable and fit for purpose. Consideration should be given to the safety record of providers when selecting the mode of transport for the course, such as ferries and airlines in developing countries.

Although national standards may differ, it is expected that fieldwork leaders source forms of transport which give appropriate standards of safety, so far as is possible. An example of this would be ensuring seat belts are fitted on hired vehicles, even in cases where there is no in-country legal requirement.



## Monitoring and review

A risk related review of off-site work should be undertaken. It is recommended that fieldwork leaders/supervisors hold a post-fieldwork debrief meeting for supervised courses, or other formal review, to capture any recommendations for improvement.

Considerations that would indicate a need for a formal review would include, among other things:

- significant accidents or near-misses
- occasions where dynamic risk assessments were needed
- there was a significant change to plans or itineraries
- where unexpected training was needed during the fieldwork
- potential shortcomings in planning, processes, and procedures
- management of the fieldwork

Any detail of incidents or issues that the fieldwork leader or supervisor considers would be helpful to be shared centrally throughout the University should be discussed with the Safety and Health Services.

## Appendix 1: Definitions

For the purposes of this policy the following definitions apply:

**Off-site work (Fieldwork)** – Any work carried out by staff or students for the purposes of teaching, research or other activities while representing the institution off-site.

This definition will therefore include activities as diverse as attendance at conferences and recruitment fairs, or undertaking social science interviews, as well as activities more traditionally associated with the term “fieldwork” such as survey/collection work carried out by geologists or biologists.

**Fieldwork leader** - The person with delegated operational responsibility for all aspects of the fieldwork. This term may be applied to a variety of types of fieldwork such as taught courses, research, and collaborative expeditions.

**Fieldwork team** - Two or more individuals who are conducting fieldwork to a common purpose. A fieldwork team may or may not have a designated fieldwork leader present during the work.

**Participant** - An individual who is undertaking fieldwork as part of a supervised group.

**Independent Fieldworker** - An individual who is undertaking fieldwork on their own without direct supervision.

**Supervised Fieldwork** - Supervised fieldwork is mainly under direct supervision such as taught undergraduate or post-graduate courses. However, there may be instances where fieldworkers are under periods of indirect supervision.

**Home contact** - The person in the institution – usually in the School/Department who is involved in, (or has knowledge of) organising the fieldwork – nominated and contactable in an emergency, and for general support (ideally linked into Institutional arrangements). The level of knowledge and involvement will be dependent on the level of risk of the fieldwork.

The person or organisation who acts in support of the fieldwork in the location of the work.



**Residual risk** - The level of assessed risk remaining after reasonably practicable controls have been implemented, taking account of the level of impact of the hazard or threat, the likelihood of its realisation and the robustness of control measures.

**Dynamic risk assessment** - The continuous assessment of risk in unforeseen and/or changing circumstances possibly requiring the implementation of new control measures.

**Emergency plan** – Plans which are required to respond to an emergency, these usually will involve immediate action and will be made to provide a suitable response to a natural disaster or to a medical or security emergency.

**Contingency plan** - An alternative plan to be put into operation if needed; the ‘plan B’ –that is required to ensure that the fieldwork can continue safely in foreseeable circumstances, whether emergency plans are invoked.

## Appendix 2: Example risk assessment form



### Section 1: Course details

<b>Programme of Study</b>	
<b>Off-site work/ course name</b>	
<b>Location</b>	
<b>Date(s) of Course/off-site work</b>	
<b>Is this a supervised course?</b>	Yes / No
<b>Brief description of off-site work activity and purpose</b>	

### Section 2: Organiser details

<b>Fieldwork leader</b>	
<b>Competence of fieldwork leader</b>	

- Qualifications - Experience	
<b>Other leaders and their responsibilities</b>	
<b>School (home) contact</b>	
<b>In country contact</b>	
<b>Nature of visit</b> - Size of group, - Lone working - Number of staff - Undergraduates - Postgraduates	

Section 3: Participant details

Name	Address	Mobile Number

Section 4: Risk assessment

Hazard	Control measures (such as training, supervision, protective equipment)
<b>Nature of the site:</b> laboratory, remote site, office, etc	
<b>Individual participants:</b> lack of training or experience, supervision requirements, medical conditions, lone working, fitness requirements	
<b>Physical:</b> extreme weather, mountains and cliffs, quarries, marshes, and quicksand; fresh or seawater	
<b>Biological:</b> poisonous plants, infectious diseases, animals, soil or water micro-organisms, insects	

<b>Chemical:</b> pesticides, dusts, contaminated soils, chemicals brought into site	
<b>Man-made hazards:</b> electrical equipment, insecure buildings, slurry pits, power, and pipelines	
<b>Security:</b> terrorism, crime, or aggression from members of the public	
<b>Emergency arrangements:</b> first-aid, distance from medical facilities, accident reporting, communication plan	
<b>Health issues:</b> prevalence of disease, disabilities, health conditions requirement for immunisations and health surveillance	
<b>Travel and transport:</b> licensed drivers, travel to and from the fieldwork, during activities, transport of equipment and dangerous goods, etc	
<b>Accommodation:</b> type and location of accommodation	
<b>Catering:</b> risk of food borne diseases, allergies	
<b>Equipment:</b> Manual handling risks, operation of machinery, tools, use of specialist equipment, etc	
<b>Other:</b> inherently dangerous activities climbing, diving, caving	
<b>Residual risks</b>	



Section 5: Additional information

<b>Pre-course meeting(s)</b>	
<b>Participant training</b>	
<b>Foreign &amp; Commonwealth Office advice</b>	
<b>Permission to work on site</b>	
<b>Insurance</b>	

Section 6: Signatures

	<b>Name</b>	<b>Signature</b>	<b>Date</b>
<b>Assessment carried out by</b>			
<b>Fieldwork leader/supervisor/manager</b>			
<b>Supervisor/line manager/head of school/service</b>			

## Appendix 3: Off-site work health declaration

**CONFIDENTIAL**



### Fieldwork disability and health declaration

The University of Bristol Faculty/School of (.....) has a duty of care towards staff and students whilst carrying out work activities off-site. In the interests of your health and safety and other participants on the fieldwork you are asked to complete a health declaration form. The questionnaire asks participants to disclose specified medical conditions and to provide information on any disability/health condition that may require support during fieldwork.

You must read all associated risk assessments and safety documentation so that you fully understand the risks associated with the activities you will be undertaking before completing this declaration.

This information will be shared with the Fieldwork Leader. Whilst disclosure of any disability or medical condition is not compulsory, you are strongly recommended to disclose any disability or health condition that could impact on your ability to participate in the fieldwork or that may need specific treatment if you become ill. This information will not be disclosed to anyone else on the course without your permission unless an emergency makes it necessary to do so.

Following the fieldwork, the form will be destroyed.

If you have any queries, please contact (.....).

Guidance is available from [Disability Services](#).

**CONFIDENTIAL****Example fieldwork disability  
and health declaration form**

The information provided will be treated as confidential and seen only by the fieldwork leader.

**Section 1: Personal details**

Title (Mr/Ms/Mrs/Miss, etc)	
Family name	
Given name(s)	
Contact address	
Postcode	
Home telephone number	
Mobile number	
E-mail address	
Date of birth	
Gender	
General Practitioner (Name/address and telephone number)	

**Section 2: Course details**

Programme of study	
Fieldwork course name	

## Section 3: Disability

<b>Do you have a disability?</b>		<b>Yes / No / Prefer not to say</b> If 'yes' please state the nature of your disability
a)	Autistic Spectrum Disorder / Asperger Syndrome	
b)	Deaf / hearing impairment	
c)	Blind / partially sighted	
d)	Learning difficulty	
e)	Mental health difficulty	
f)	Multiple disabilities	
g)	Dyspraxia	
h)	Unseen disability: Such as diabetes, epilepsy	
i)	Wheelchair user / mobility difficulty	
j)	Other disability	

## Section 4: Your functional capabilities

<b>Do any of the following present you with difficulty?</b>		<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>
a	Mobility: Such as ability with walking, running, using stairs		
b	Agility: Such as bending, reaching up, kneeling down, maintaining balance		
d	Physical exertion: Such as lifting, carrying, running		
e	Communication: Such as speech, hearing		
f	Vision: Such as visual impairment, colour blindness, tunnel vision		
If you answer yes, please give further details if necessary:			

## Section 5: Your health

Please answer all the following questions. If you answer yes, please give further details, continuing on a separate piece of paper if necessary.



<b>1. Do you have or ever been affected by any of the following?</b>		<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>
a	Chronic skin conditions: Such as eczema, psoriasis		
b	Neurological disorder: Such as epilepsy, fits or blackouts, multiple sclerosis		
c	Allergies: Such as allergies to latex, medicines, foods, animals, food		
d	Endocrine disease: Such as diabetes		
e	Respiratory disease: Such as asthma		
f	Sudden loss of consciousness: Such as a fit or seizure		
Please give further details if necessary			
<b>2. Are you currently taking any regular medication or receiving any treatment?</b>		<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>
If yes, give details			

### Section 5: Declaration

I declare that the answers to the above questions are true and complete to the best of my knowledge and belief.

**Signed:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

### **For University Fieldwork Leader Use Only**

Comments and actions:

Signed:

Date:

## Appendix 4: Insurance guidance

All staff and students going abroad on University business should have travel insurance. Typically the policy may include:

- emergency medical or dental expenses
- 24-hour emergency helpline
- search and rescue costs/repatriation
- cancellation/curtailment
- personal liability/personal accident
- loss or damage to equipment/personal effects
- kidnap and ransom

See the [University's travel insurance](#) for more information.

It is the responsibility of the Fieldwork leader or independent fieldworker to:

- Liaise with the University of Bristol Insurance Officer to ensure that appropriate insurance cover is in place.
- To have a mechanism to ensure that all participants have adequate travel insurance in place for the duration of the fieldwork. If they fail to provide the necessary information to the School, they should be asked to withdraw. If possible, for supervised fieldwork arrange suitable institutional travel insurance with a single insurer for all participants on the same fieldwork. It is better to have a single contact for emergency aid rather than 40 separate numbers.
- When participants are providing their own cover, they should be advised to check the wording, and particularly the exclusions, to ensure that it meets their requirements. The Fieldwork leader should maintain an immediately accessible log of individual arrangements, including policy numbers and emergency help-line numbers.
- Install a process for making all participants aware of relevant policy exclusions. Communicate the basis of cover and policy conditions to all participants.
- Check that specific fieldwork risks are adequately covered. E.g., Hazardous activities, protracted fieldwork, dangerous countries, pre-existing medical conditions. Activities should be curtailed, or cover extended as appropriate.
- Travel policies may not provide Kidnap and Ransom insurance for higher risk destinations. Check the wording carefully and consider purchase of additional cover, the University Insurance Officer will be able to help as necessary.
- Ensure that equipment is covered whilst being taken off-site. Check policy limits/excesses/conditions and arrange additional insurance if necessary.
- When driving a vehicle for fieldwork, check that fieldworkers have suitable insurance in place to cover local legal requirements, there are various considerations depending upon who owns the vehicles and the Country being visited including:
  - When using private vehicles for UK fieldwork - Check personal insurance cover

has been extended to include business use

- If hiring a vehicle overseas – Check the level of insurance offered as in some countries comprehensive cover is not standard, or they may have low limits of indemnity or have significant excesses. Build this into the risk assessment. Consider purchasing damage waiver cover from the hirer.

## Appendix 5: Pre-departure meetings and participant information packs

### Pre-departure meetings

This meeting(s) should be used to carry out the following functions:

- Introduce those with specific roles and responsibilities.
- Explain any inherent residual risks associated with the trip which have not been managed out.
- To advise participants on the assessed level of fitness required and seek confirmation in writing as appropriate.
- Act as a deadline for completion of any requested health declarations (Appendix 4) or updated personal details forms.
- Allow expectations of participants, differences in standards of accommodation, eating arrangements, sleeping arrangements, cultural differences, and behavioural and security requirements to be re-enforced.
- Confirmation of travel arrangements.
- Give timely information on vaccination requirements.
- Provide detailed participant information packs with kit lists and general advice for the course, this may include identification of hazardous specimens and general food safety advice for the country visited.
- Ensure it is clear that the course is an educational visit/work rather than a holiday. If participants are planning to extend their stay, there should be a very clear distinction between the time the course/work finishes and independent travel begins. A mixture of the two should not be permitted. Definitions of 'Down time' and 'Personal time' and an outline of how personal time will be arranged.
- Explain the circumstances in which a participant may be asked to leave the fieldwork course, and return home at their own cost, and the likely consequences of disciplinary action.

### Participant information pack

For supervised courses a participant information pack should be produced. This will contain all the information the participant needs to know about the course in a user-friendly format. The health and safety elements mentioned below are just one element of the information likely to be included with this pack. Off-site work can be intense and demanding, key to minimising these negative effects is effective briefing of the participants with suitable information.

Participants need to be able to mentally prepare themselves, so they are not surprised about the environment in which they find themselves once on the course or during the fieldwork.

Issues covered in the information pack should include the following (non-exhaustive) list:

- Price or costs involved
- Participant Code of Conduct
- Leadership team composition and competency
- Travel plans, timings, and duration
- Emergency contact information and emergency evacuation procedure
- Insurance provision
- Working protocol
- Project risk assessment
- Kit lists, including medical and vaccination
- Distance to medical facilities (in time)
- Special (what is special referring to?) requirements, including competence requirements of participants
- Resume of culture including any security issues and host country legislation which they may fall foul of
- Skills required for particular activities, including fitness requirements
- Draft or final itinerary
- Arrangements for personal time and down time
- Accommodation and catering information
- Awareness of environmental conditions e.g., security, diseases, hot weather, dehydration, insects, and advice on dealing with these.
- Clear information on any element of the trip which presents a high level of residual risk and what the implications of this might be.
- Things they might not expect, not having home comforts, sharing, lack of privacy, what to do if they experience problems.