

Health and Safety in Fieldwork (off campus)			
Policy✓	Code of Practice...	Guidance...	Procedure...
Organisation-wide✓		Local...	
Approved by the University Health & Safety Committee			
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The purpose of presenting this document to the University Health & Safety Committee			
Standard 3-year review ✓	Changes in practice and/or legislation		New policy document...

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1. Scope and Exemptions

- 1.1 The following document sets the management arrangements for fieldwork, which shall be defined as:

Any work and/or study carried out by staff or students for the purposes of teaching, learning and research or other activities while representing the Institution off site.

- 1.2 This policy applies to all overseas activities carried out by staff and students, supervised off-site trips within the UK and fieldwork, whether overseas or within the UK.
- 1.3 For research conducted outside the United Kingdom, Section 9 outlines the University requirements for research ethics and governance requirements. This excludes overseas students or overseas staff engaged in Brunel-accredited courses in institutions abroad.
- 1.4 It is a requirement that such staff and students are to ensure that they are familiar with this policy's requirements with regards Health, Insurance and Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) advice prior to travel.
- 1.5 In advance of all overseas travel contact Diversity Travel directly for all your work-related travel through the [Diversity portal](#). Or visit [their website](#) for more information.
- 1.6 All activities off campus carried out by staff and/or students require a risk assessment.
- 1.7 Where there is any doubt as to policy applicability, advice should be sought in the first instance from the Health, Safety & environment Team @ healthandsafety@brunel.ac.uk.

2 Responsibilities

2.1 Executive Team Members (Deans, Directors, COO or equivalent)

Executive Team Members are responsible for ensuring a safe healthy working environment within their area of responsibility, which covers activities on and off campus, and as such they shall ensure that:

- 2.1.2 An adequate assessment of the risks involved in fieldwork has been made and that a safe system of work is in operation regarding the travel, location and the work, where applicable;
- 2.1.3 Suitable organisational arrangements have been established and both the conduct, role and accountability of all concerned is clearly understood;
- 2.1.4 A suitable hierarchical approval process is developed and communicated within their area of responsibility that places in the main the Head of Department and/or equivalent Director as the primary approver; and
- 2.1.5 Individual members of staff and leaders of groups who are involved in the fieldwork have ensured that approval for the fieldwork has been received from the Head of Department and /or equivalent Director and those they are authorised, competent and, where necessary, qualified to undertake the fieldwork.

2.2 Fieldwork Leader

The Fieldwork Leader is responsible for the overall supervision of the fieldwork and must ensure that; as well as all appropriate permissions are granted:

- 2.1.1 A suitable and sufficient risk assessment is in place and that the safety controls/measures are appropriate and have been communicated to members of the leadership team and participants and understood by all;
- 2.1.2 A level of supervision and control of the fieldwork for any given situation is maintained and any necessary adjustments to itineraries in the interest of safety including cessation of an activity and /or fieldwork are made; where applicable;
- 2.1.3 All instructions issued to participants are comprehensible and appropriate, that control measures identified in risk assessments are implemented; and
- 2.1.4 Any accidents, incidents, or work-related illnesses during the fieldwork are reported as soon as possible using the appropriate forms.

2.3 Independent fieldworkers

- 2.3.1 Independent fieldworkers undertaking solo travel or self managed fieldwork 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 the Head of Department, or equivalent and/or their line manager.
- 2.3.2 No undergraduate can be an independent Fieldworker; permission must be sought by their supervisor.

2.4 Participants /members of a fieldwork team (including student projects)

- 2.4.1 It is the responsibility of participants/members of a fieldwork team to understand, heed and observe any instructions given to them by a supervisor and to bring any questions or problems, particularly those of understanding, to the attention of their supervisor.
- 2.4.2 Participants must acknowledge their own responsibilities for the health and safety of both themselves and others. The authority and responsibilities of the fieldwork leader, or any other designated supervisor in relation to safety, must be clearly defined and understood by all members of the party.

3 Feasibility

The purpose of the fieldwork, together with a summary of its associated activities and expected outcomes must be established at the outset. This is the feasibility study and will assist in forming a view as to whether approval can be granted considering the risks, finances, ethical considerations; if applicable. Appendix 2 outlines the Fieldwork Leader flowchart and items for consideration in the feasibility study.

3.1 Threat and Weather Analysis

A Threat Analysis shall form part of the feasibility study to assess the security and political threat levels, significant natural (including weather) hazards, and health risks that the fieldwork may present.

Advice on the Threat Analysis shall be sought initially from the FCO @ <http://www.fco.gov.uk/en/> , and where the FCO advises against travel to specified areas or stipulates special security measures, travel shall not be permitted to those areas without specific written approval from the University following discussion with the appropriate Dean of College or equivalent.

In terms of weather warnings within the UK and outside, the advice from the MET Office shall be sought and where the MET Office advises against travel to specified areas or stipulates additional measures, travel shall not be permitted to those areas without specific written approval from the University following discussion with the appropriate Dean of College or equivalent.

3.2 Approval

- 3.1.1 Once the feasibility study has been completed the Head of Department, or equivalent may authorise the commencement of the fieldwork. Approval by Head of Department, or equivalent, is required for all supervised off-site trips, research projects overseas and any travel planned for teaching, research or recruitment in destinations showing instability.

4. Risk Assessment

- 4.1 All fieldwork is unique and there will be variables that need to be considered for each instance of the fieldwork. Therefore, the nature and complexity of the risk assessment will vary with the type of activity intended and should be commensurate with the actual risk that the identified hazards pose in the circumstances. A checklist of generic hazards is contained in Appendix 3, which should be amended and added to considering the assessor's own knowledge and experience.

4.2 Supervision

- 4.2.1 The fieldwork leader must assess the risks arising from the fieldwork activity to determine the type and level of supervision required to secure the health and safety of participants. Identify any lone working during risk assessment and specifically include lone working arrangements in relevant plans at all stages.
- 4.2.2 Any fieldwork which involves participants who are under the age of 18 or classified as vulnerable adults must comply with the requirements of the [Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006](#).
- 4.2.3 It is important to consider the gender mix in supervision and accommodation and, the arrangements for supervising personal and down time during fieldwork and how the arrangements are to be communicated to participants. Personal time can be defined as time when programmed fieldwork activities are not taking place, but fieldworkers remain under the general jurisdiction of the institution.

4.3 Third Party Providers

- 4.3.1 The fieldwork leader or independent fieldwork leader must take steps to evaluate the competence of third party providers to satisfy them that safeguards are in place whilst they are reliant on that provider. The activity provider shall carry out a full risk assessment of the proposed activity, including travel, transport and accommodation, prior to selection of any activity leader or participant.

5. Insurance

- 5.1.1 The fieldwork leader shall ensure that all fieldworkers are adequately covered for the fieldwork and that the risk assessment and emergency plans reflect the Insurers' capabilities overseas. Fieldworkers must ensure that they comply with the transport and driving policies and ensure that adequate insurance cover which meets local legal requirements is provided for the type of transport used.

6. Health and Medical

- 6.1 The fieldwork leader must consider the immunisation requirements for overseas travel and maintenance of the health of participants. A range of sources are available via the NHS to check vaccinations requirements such as:

[NHS Travel vaccination advice](#) or

<http://www.fitfortravel.nhs.uk/destinations.aspx> .

- 6.2 Participants should be asked to declare whether they knowingly suffer from any disability or any medical condition (e.g. asthma or lung disease, diabetes, epilepsy, heart disease, mental health conditions, vertigo, or the taking of certain drugs) that could compromise their health and safety, or that of others.
- 6.3 Every effort should be made to enable those with specified medical conditions or disabilities to participate fully in fieldwork, but it may sometimes be necessary, after discussion with the University Occupational Health Service and other relevant parties, to make exclusions.

7 Monitoring and Review

- 7.1.1 A fully effective system for safely managing fieldwork requires regular review of procedures, so that lessons can be learned from experience and working practices improved. The fieldwork leader where appropriate, is required to hold a post-fieldwork debrief meeting, or other formal review, to capture any recommendations for improvement.

8 Research conducted outside the United Kingdom – research ethics and governance requirements

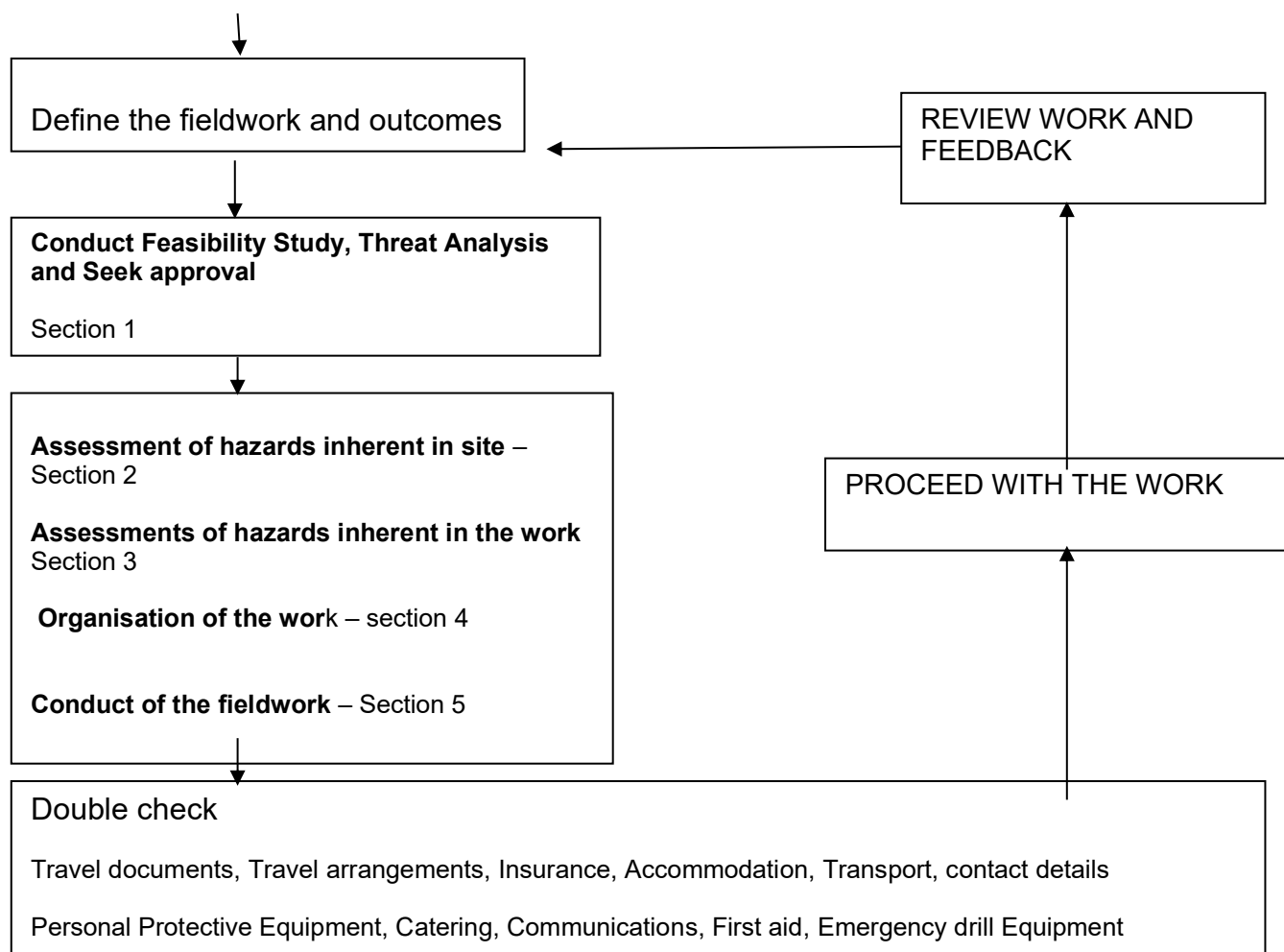
- 8.1 Brunel University London policy and procedures require that there be strict adherence to legal regulations governing the conduct of research, together with adherence to good research practice (this to include proper and appropriate conduct of research, together with professional integrity and honesty).

- 8.2 All off-site research undertaken outside the United Kingdom must comply with the regulatory requirements of the country in which it takes place and must include a thorough risk assessment and liaison with the University Insurance Officer to ensure that appropriate insurance is in place.
- 8.3 Research undertaken under the auspices of the University should meet, as a minimum, the ethics standard required within the University, regardless of its place of conduct.
- 8.4 Thus, where data are collected outside the UK, the research will normally be expected to have received ethics approval from a properly constituted and independent ethics committee in the country concerned, where such a committee exists to review the type of research being proposed, before final approval can be provided by the University.
- 8.5 It is the responsibility of the researcher to:
- check the requirements for the conduct of the proposed research, and for ethics review in the country concerned (including the seeking of advice from the proper authorities of the country in question);
 - Where relevant, to make the appropriate visa applications and to provide evidence of ethics approval having been sought and given. The University does not sanction research where the appropriate visa applications have not been obtained. It also expects the University Research Ethics Committee (or relevant College Research Ethics Committee) to be provided with evidence of research ethics approval having been sought and given. If there is lack of clarity about the relevant legal and regulatory requirements, then further advice must be sought from the Secretary to Council and University Secretary.
 - the University Research Ethics Committee will also consider whether the advice of the University Health and Safety Committee should be sought

9 Getting Your Fieldwork Approved

- 9.1 The following Flowchart is an aid to planning rather than a means to planning. Due to the diversity of fieldwork, the hazards and risks will show great variation and it is for those leading, or otherwise responsible for the fieldwork, to make appropriate plans and risk assessments.
- 9.2 The sections can never be fully comprehensive but provide a basic flow to take the fieldwork leader (or delegated individual by the fieldwork leader) through the planning stages, while subsequent examples provide a direction to more specific items of the work which are outlined in Appendix 1
- 9.3 The Fieldwork leader shall use this flow chart, along with the more specific items in Appendix 1 to complete the Fieldwork Risk Assessment and send this to their Head of Department and/or equivalent for the Fieldwork to be approved
- 9.4 The Head of Department or equivalent, shall either approve or decline the Fieldwork on the basis of the Risk Assessment and where declined provide appropriate feedback.

START



Appendix 1 Fieldwork Hazard Checklist

The following sections are not all inclusive and have been designed to identify the significant hazards in fieldwork. Use the checklist as a guide when completing the risk assessment for fieldwork. Some aspects of the checklist will not be applicable to all types of fieldwork; in this case enter N/A in the control column on the risk assessment pro-forma.

Hazards sections	Examples of items to be covered	Check
1 Feasibility	Any security, political, natural hazards and health risks presented by the fieldwork	
Access	Travel arrangements, permission to work on site, provision for disabled, and availability of assistance, accommodation and fitness. Insurance	
Fitness	Pre-expedition training.	
Training	Navigation, first aid, languages, interpersonal skills, health and hygiene and specific skills e.g. driving, use of ropes and chain saws	

Health	Health questionnaire, medical/dental check up, vaccinations and first aid kits.	
Staffing	Staff to student ratios, deputising arrangements and competence of all leaders	
2. Inherent to Site		
Physical	Extreme weather, mountains and cliff Feasibility Study, glaciers, crevasses, caves, mines and quarries. Forests freshwater, sea and seashore. Roadside	
Biological	Venomous, lively or aggressive animals, plants and pathogens	
Chemical	Agrochemical and pesticides, dusts and chemicals on site. (COSHH)	
Man made	Machinery and vehicles. Power lines and pipelines, electrical equipment	
Environmental	Pollution and waste minimisation. Disturb the Eco system	
3. Inherent to Work		
Training	Navigation e.g. maps and compass, first aid. Specialist training e.g. chainsaw, diving, using machinery/vehicles, boating, machinery.	
Chemical	COSHH assessments for the work on site	
Biological	COSHH assessments for the work on site. Animals, plants, Fungi , Moulds etc.	
Personal safety	Risk of attack, routine communication and communication in an emergency	
4. Organisation of the Fieldwork		
Pre-planning	Travel documents, medical problems noted, appropriate authorities informed (police mountain rescue, coast guard), next of kin	
Catering	Provision of food, hygiene, portable water, food preparation and fuel for cooking.	
Group members	Leader (experience, qualification), chain of command, staff student ratios, accommodation, responsibilities for aspects of work and intra group relationships.	
Individual	Lone working avoided? Adequate clothing, PPE and individual trained and fit.	
Equipment	Fit for purpose used properly, well maintained.	
5 Conduct of the Fieldwork		
Local conditions	Weather forecast, local knowledge/rules, farming practices, itinerary and return times, and appropriate permission sought.	

Transport	Appropriately licensed and insured driver (s), correctly maintained, correctly loaded, seat belts, fuel and maps and navigational aids.	
The group	Present and correct (roll calls), correctly equipped, group size and supervision and survival aids.	
Working practices	Lone working avoided if possible, communications systems, safe working systems, permit to work (confined spaces etc) workers trained and fit.	
Emergencies	Communication, protection of remaining party, evacuation, chain of command	

For risk assessment proformas please visit the Health, Safety and Environment Team Website: [Risk Assessment \(brunel.ac.uk\)](https://www.brunel.ac.uk/risk-assessment)

For further advice please contact the health, Safety and Environment Team @ healthandsafety@brunel.ac.uk

