University of Reading

Safety Code of Practice 32

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FIELDWORK SAFETY

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1 SUMMARY

This Safety Code of Practice sets out procedures for organising and managing fieldwork. NOTE: This Code EXCLUDES the overseas travel aspects of such work – guidance on overseas travel is given in Safety Code of Practice 38, which must be read in conjunction with this Code

2 SCOPE/APPLICATION

This Safety Code of Practice provides guidance for Heads of Schools, academic supervisors, fieldwork leaders and managers who are responsible for the health and safety of staff, students and other participants in fieldwork. Fieldwork must be properly managed so that the University can demonstrate that it has done all that is reasonably practicable to minimise risks to health and safety; and to reduce the likelihood and ameliorate the consequences of any reasonably foreseeable accident during fieldwork.

The definition of fieldwork is:

Any work carried out by staff or students of the University for the purposes of teaching, research, or study that involves either practical work, or organised group activity, off campus, in the UK or overseas.

Hence it encompasses practical data collection activities undertaken by individuals and groups, as well as organised study tours/visits by staff/student groups.

This Code covers:

- All staff
- All postgraduate and research students

All undergraduate students who participate in fieldwork trips organised by their School, as part of their course of study. Fieldwork includes, for example:

- Practical work e.g., geological or biological survey/collection work, archaeological digs
- Organised visits for groups of students e.g., to farms, geological/geographical features, museums, industrial plants, construction sites
- Social science/psychology visits and interviews with members of the public in their homes or elsewhere
- Filming or other similar activities in public places
- Individuals or groups undertaking hazardous activities e.g., mountain exploration, caving, work in a remote area

Most fieldwork will involve a degree of detailed planning and team management.

Even in work environments under the control of 3rd parties, the University retains responsibility for the safety of its staff and/or students and others exposed to their activities.

Where students/staff are working away from the University as a recognised part of their course, e.g., at another academic institution, in a commercial organisation, or as a participant in a Knowledge Transfer Partnership or Study Abroad scheme, there may be an overlap between fieldwork and placements.

This Code does not cover leisure activities undertaken by RSU-affiliated student sports and social clubs. However, the best practice principles of organisation, risk assessment, planning, communications, emergency procedures etc will be relevant to many of these activities.

Where core actions have been identified, those units/persons within the University with responsibility for their implementation – have been identified by colour-coding as follows:

Yellow	**University level – i.e., University Executive Board (UEB), Health & Safety Services, Insurance Office, other strategic managers, and central policy departments.**
Green	**Fieldwork management – Heads of Schools and Departments; School Health and Safety Coordinators, Research Supervisors.**
Blue	**Fieldwork implementation – Fieldwork supervisors and participants.**

3 RESPONSIBILITIES

UEB will determine the level of risk associated with fieldwork that is acceptable to the University**.**

- In cases of doubt, proposals for fieldwork assessed as high risk should be referred to a member of UEB e.g., Pro-Vice-Chancellor, Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Vice-Chancellor.
- **Any fieldwork that will involve travel to a country that is subject to a GOV.UK (Foreign and Commonwealth Development Office (FCDO) travel advisory notice (i.e., essential travel only, or advise against all travel) MUST be approved by:**

  1. **the Vice-Chancellor for travel to a country where the FCDO advises against all travel.** In the absence of the Vice-Chancellor, the Deputy Vice-Chancellor, followed by a Pro-Vice Chancellor can give approval.
  2. The Head of School/Function, or Pro-Vice-Chancellor in the case of the Vice-Chancellor's Office, for travel to a country or area of a country where the UK Government advises 'essential travel' only.

  In both cases the request for approval must be supported by a risk assessment and business case that sets out the benefits to the University that justifies the risks involved and explains how the risks will be mitigated.
- The Insurance Office is responsible for putting in place appropriate insurance policies to cover fieldwork in the UK and overseas and provision of advice and guidance specific to travel to sanctioned and high-risk countries. See the Sanctioned Territories Referral Questionnaire on the Business Travel web pages.

Heads of School/Function are responsible for the safety of fieldwork undertaken by staff/students within their School/Function. They must ensure that**:**

- Fieldwork Leaders, and individual fieldworkers who plan their own fieldwork, are authorised and competent, and are capable of leading, possibly in adverse or emergency conditions
- There is clarity of roles and responsibilities.
- Fieldwork is subject to suitable and sufficient risk assessment and is approved by them – see section 4.
- The degree of planning and organisation required is consistent with the degree of risk, so that risks are reduced to as low a level as reasonably practicable.

- Safe systems of work are in place for potentially hazardous work.
- **Any field work that is 'high risk' does not proceed without their personal approval/authorisation or that of a higher authority on every occasion – see section 4.**
- The consequences of failure by participants to comply with the instructions of Fieldwork Leaders are clearly defined within School policies and procedures and that this is made known to participants.

Heads of School/Function may need to take account of fieldwork costs, and specifically health and safety costs (training, equipment etc.) when preparing School budgets, and endorsing grant applications.

Fieldwork Leaders

(and individual fieldworkers) are responsible for the detailed assessment, planning, supervision of participants, and on-site management of fieldwork.

Supervision - Fieldwork Leaders

Fieldwork Leaders have the task of overall supervision. They must:

Plan and research all aspects of the fieldwork, including risk assessment.

Ensure there is a clear command structure in place. If command changes to others for specific activities e.g. a boat skipper or external expert. then the party must be kept fully informed. In such cases the overall duty to ensure the safety of the fieldwork remains with the fieldwork leader.

Check that the fieldwork is within scope of the University insurance policies (see Section 7).

Ensure that all participants are given clear and detailed information about the planned fieldwork (activities, expertise of leaders, potential safety issues, itineraries, and any pre-requisites for travel (e.g., level of fitness or training), on essential safety precautions and codes of conduct, and where necessary provide written briefing material and instructions.

Where appropriate e.g., with groups of students, obtain written agreement from participants that they understand and will comply with all safety procedures, codes of conduct etc. [NB this may be covered by generic School procedures].

Ensure that all safety precautions are observed and take action when individuals do not comply.

Ensure that they have access to essential emergency information, for example emergency contact information for the fieldwork participants.

Ensure that details of the fieldwork, including names of participants and contact information, are readily available within the University, in particular within the Department/School, for reference in an emergency (see Section 5).

Ensure an adequate number of trained and competent supervisors and allocate specific supervisory duties (including details of any emergency plans).

Allocate a competent supervisor to each sub-group where groups are subdivided during the fieldwork, with explicit responsibility for each supervisor to know the total number, identities, and skill level (where appropriate) of the participants in the sub-group and any relevant individual vulnerabilities or health risks.

Stop the activity (which may include leaving a location) if they judge that the situation is unsafe.

Where appropriate, keep adequate records of critical decisions, events etc. in a fieldwork log, that can be referred to in an emergency, and later during the debrief.

After the event, review how things went, seek feedback from participants and feed lessons learnt back into the risk assessment process.

Report any incidents as soon as it is practicable to do so via the University Incident Reporting System and immediately to the Head of School (or agreed senior person) in the case of a serious incident.

3.1 Participants

All participants

(staff, students, and any guests e.g., from another institution) must comply with the safety precautions and instructions put in place by the Fieldwork Leader, and with the general good practice guidance given in this Safety Code. This may include:

- Providing essential personal and contact information e.g., mobile phone number, emergency contact details.
- Complying with any medical or health requirements e.g., vaccinations.
- Keeping in contact with the University to confirm that they are safe and well.
- Complying with Codes of Conduct.
- Bringing any problems to the attention of the Fieldwork Leader or their academic supervisor.

4 REQUIREMENTS

4.1.1 Initial Assessment and Approval

- The School/Function must have arrangements in place to make an initial assessment of fieldwork risks, before detailed planning is undertaken.
- The Head of School/Function has the authority to withdraw approval if the situation changes between the time of initial approval and departure.
- The consequences of failing to complete the fieldwork due to circumstances beyond the control of the University e.g., natural disaster, political instability, outbreak of disease, are assessed before the study programme is approved, so that if more reliable/safer alternatives are available, these are selected in preference.

- All fieldwork must be assessed for foreseeable hazards and risks. **This should include personal health, safety & security, and natural hazards, as well as work-related risks.**
- Measures should then be taken at the detailed planning stage to eliminate or minimise the risks to an acceptable level.
- If circumstances change, and the risk level increases, the Fieldwork Leader must inform the Head of School/Function so that a revised assessment of risk and benefit can be made.

The purpose of the fieldwork, together with a summary of expected outcomes, must be clearly established early in the assessment and planning stage. This will enable the School/ Department and the University to decide if the expected outcomes are "worth the risk."

Routine and low risk fieldwork needs only limited planning, relying on generic risk assessments and School procedures. However, variables such as location and participants may need to be considered separately. Where the fieldwork is a new activity e.g., this is the first visit to an unknown location or a new activity, the risk level may increase.

Where the fieldwork is to take place in remote, hostile or unstable environments, or the work itself poses a significant risk, the planning should be more detailed, commensurate with the risks.

Fieldworkers may feel compelled to undertake research in unsafe conditions if they believe their research/degree award will be jeopardised if they fail to complete the fieldwork. This should be considered at the planning stage; if there is an opportunity to modify the research or study programme to work in a safer environment, this should be pursued.

4.1.2 Risk profiling tool

For consistency and to ensure that decisions are taken at an appropriate level of management, the following **risk profiling** should be used by Fieldwork Leaders **to make an initial assessment of risk.** This must be followed up with either a generic or specific risk assessment so that controls can put in place to reduce the risk level, where practicable.

Table 1 Risk profiling tool – [See Safety Code of Practice 38 for assessment of overseas travel risks]

Category	Low	Medium	High
Planning and supervision	• School/Function has a robust risk assessment and approval system, commensurate with the level of risk • There is previous trouble-free experience of similar activities • Fieldwork Leaders are trained and assessed as competent • Participants are mature, responsible, and healthy • Codes of Conduct are in place, communicated to individuals, and followed	• Fieldwork leaders are trained, but there is no system for assessing their competency • Staff/students are inexperienced or known to be immature • Standards for conduct have been set and communicated but they are not followed (including failure to apply sanctions where participants break the rules) • Participant has known health problems (e.g., heart, respiratory, diabetes etc.), or mobility limitations, or who require regular	• Fieldwork supervisors are not trained • Adequate emergency arrangements are not in place • There is no Code of Conduct, it is inadequate, or it is not likely to be followed • Individuals may be vulnerable e.g., due to appearance, cultural differences, race, gender etc. • Participant has known significant health problems or disabilities and cannot be given adequate support

Category	Low	Medium	High
		prescribed medication. They can be provided with adequate support, or reasonable adjustments can be made	• Females in later stages of pregnancy (24 weeks onwards)
Activity	• Attendance at a conference, seminar or exhibition in a controlled environment • A visit to an academic or business institute with no practical work hazards • Practical work in the UK, where there are no hazards that have the potential to cause permanent injury or fatalities • Activities are covered by university insurance • University procedures for driving are followed	• Hazards have the potential to cause significant harm • Untried 3rd party providers used for some of the fieldwork activities • Additional insurance is required and will be obtained	• There are unusual or elevated risks (activities, location) which could be life-threatening if not well managed • Activities where specific licences, qualifications or skills are essential for safety e.g., sub aqua diving, flying aircraft, using small boats/ inflatables/RIBs, high altitude or winter mountaineering, rope access • 3rd party providers being used/relied upon for hazardous activities without reassurance of their competence (e.g., driving in countries with low road safety standards) • Adequate insurance is not in place

4.1.3 Approval of fieldwork

The following authorisation levels should be applied within Schools/Functions. These are linked to the initial risk assessment and risk profiling tool in Table 1. See also Appendix 1 Approval of Fieldwork flowchart.

Table 2 Approval levels

	Low	Medium	High
Level of approval and risk assessment required	• Generic assessment • Initial approval by **Head of Department or School Director Safety Director, in accordance with local procedures** • Subsequent trips - review the risk assessment to check nothing has altered the risk rating • Re-approval not required unless there has been a significant change that increases the risk rating.	• Specific detailed risk assessment • **Initial approval by Head of School/senior Function management** • **Approval of detailed plans by Head of Department** • Subsequent trips - review the risk assessment to check nothing has altered • Re-approval required if there have been significant changes	• Specific detailed risk assessment on every occasion • Thorough review by **Head of School/Function and written approval required** • Approval must be obtained for each subsequent repeat visit • Where risks are likely to change in the period between approval and departure, the approval must be linked to a review of the risk assessment. Approval may be withdrawn if the risk status changes.

The following restrictions apply:

i. Undergraduates must not normally undertake fieldwork that is classed as high risk – means must be found to reduce the risk.

ii. In the case of postgraduate students, especially in the earth and biological sciences, careful consideration must be given to high risk work and to try to reduce the classification by applying stricter controls and/or modifying the work patterns whenever practicable.

4.1.4 Dynamic risk assessments

Dynamic risk assessments (i.e. ongoing situation awareness and assessment) may be required during some field work to allow flexibility. However this should not replace adequate contingency planning, and it should not introduce completely new activities which have not been given prior approval without consultation with the person who gave the original approval.

4.1.5 Planning and preparation

- Each field trip School/Function must have system for reviewing fieldwork proposals and obtaining approval at an appropriate level – see section 3. Where risks are classed as medium or high risk the Head of Department/School should be involved with the subsequent detailed planning.

- Each field trip is unique with its own set of objectives and risks. A field trip may require:
  - a written plan, that can be given to participants, and which sets out details of the work, travel, and communications (routine and emergency situations).
  - a contingency plan – this is an alternative plan that need to be activated by the Fieldwork Leader to ensure that the fieldwork is able to continue in foreseeable circumstances e.g. adverse weather.
  - an emergency plan - immediate actions that may be required to respond to a serious situation.
- Plans must be revised as appropriate throughout the fieldwork to ensure that they are always up to date and relevant to changing circumstances. Participants must be kept informed about changes to the plan if it affects them.

For Emergency planning and contingency planning see section 5 below.

4.1.6 Operational planning

Operational planning should include consideration of:

- the participants, including students, staff and supervision
- identification of young persons and vulnerable adults
- personal safety
- acceptable and unacceptable conduct
- travel
- accommodation
- first aid
- health and food
- insurance
- communications
- legal requirements/permits/permissions etc

(See Appendix 2 – Outline Planning Checklist & Appendix 3 - Operational Checklist)

4.1.7 Supervision and management structure

- Levels of supervision must be agreed as part of the planning and approval process.

- There must be a clear command structure within a fieldwork group. There must be adequate deputising arrangements to maintain effective levels of supervision if, for example, the party splits into smaller groups, or the Fieldwork Leader is not available. When command passes from the Fieldwork Leader to others, for example a local guide, all members of the party must be kept fully informed.

- The Fieldwork Leader should ensure that the level of supervision is adequate for any given situation or group and make adjustments to itineraries in the interests of safety, including – where necessary – stopping or cancelling an activity. The Leader and supervisors must be explicitly empowered to do so.
- Any lone working must be identified during risk assessment and lone working arrangements must be specifically included in relevant plans at all stages.

In all cases, the Fieldwork Leader must be an employee of the University. Experienced postgraduates can be included as assistant supervisors. The use of family or friends as part of the leadership team should be avoided.

The level of supervision should be adequate for any given situation. Supervision requirements will vary depending on:

- Nature of the fieldwork (e.g., practical hands-on, or site visit)
- Location, environment, and conditions in which the fieldwork takes place
- Experience of the members of staff in supervisory roles
- Experience of the group
- Whether or not the group will split into sub-groups during the fieldwork
- Needs of individuals in the group, considering their age, level of maturity, experience, and any individual special needs
- External requirements such as those that may be outlined by National Governing Bodies.

An **indicative** supervision ratio for low-risk work is given in Table 3. The range of types of work likely to be undertaken as medium risk make it impractical to provide guidance on supervisory ratios – each situation must be assessed on its merits.

*Note – where a large group splits, each subgroup must have an experienced and mature supervisor.

The student profile (age, experience, medical / disability needs etc.) and the fieldwork environment may determine higher staff to student ratios are required and should be determined by, and recorded in, the fieldwork risk assessment.

Table 3 Supervisory ratios guidance

NUMBER OF STUDENT PARTICIPANTS	LOW RISK
1 – 14 (Undergraduate)	1 member of staff
1-20 (Post-Graduate)	1 member of staff
15-28 (UG) 20- 40 (PG)	1 member of staff + 1 additional member of staff or mature postgraduate or 3rd party e.g., member of staff from a 'host' site

Supervision can be direct (i.e., the supervisor is always present and in charge), or indirect (i.e., a member of staff manages the fieldwork but would be unable to intervene in person immediately.) Direct supervision is appropriate for medium and high-risk activities or for less experienced participants. Indirect supervision may include individual research placements, lone working, or postgraduate research project fieldwork. In these circumstances the fieldworker(s) must have previously demonstrated their competence in all procedures to be used. A safe system of work must be in place, including means of maintaining contact, emergency procedures, contingency plans in case of failure to make contact on a pre-agreed and routine basis etc.

4.1.8 Briefing participants

Staff and students undertaking fieldwork must be briefed on the general plan, significant risks, communications, and emergency procedures. Students must be given written information about the arrangements.

4.1.9 Personal identification

- Schools/Functions must have a system for knowing the identities and contact information for fieldwork participants. In some case, especially where a trip is outside normal working hours and/or overseas, this may also need to include information about emergency contact information (e.g. Next of Kin, partner etc).
- All fieldworkers should have a form of personal identification, in case of accident or emergency. This applies to fieldwork in the UK and overseas.

In the UK, a driving licence or university staff/student card may be sufficient as a form of personal identification. Overseas, there may be legal requirements to be complied with e.g., carrying a passport may be mandatory.

Depending on the nature of the work, organisers should consider if there is a need for bespoke university identity cards, or a summary document carried by all participants describing the activity, with names of participants, contact telephone number for the supervisor or university etc.

4.2 Lone working

- Schools/Departments should formulate clear written guidelines on what types of work are and are not permitted to be conducted alone.
- Fieldwork Leaders must put in place effective procedures for lone working including direct / indirect supervision and monitoring as appropriate to the individual and type of fieldwork.

Lone field working by staff and students should be avoided whenever reasonably practicable. However, it is recognised that lone working is unavoidable in some situations and is therefore permitted where the risks are low and the person involved:

- has received appropriate information, and instruction and training if necessary
- is competent and experienced in any work tasks involved and follows an agreed safe system of work
- is adequately equipped
- is adequately supervised (albeit from a distance)
- is not conducting high risk activities
- has access to an effective means of normal and emergency communications (e.g., mobile phone, satellite phone, two-way radio, etc) and maintains communication as agreed

- has informed their supervisor or another responsible person (a "buddy") of their departure and thereafter safe return
- there is a contingency plan if the lone worker fails to return or make contact at agreed times.

It should also be noted that:

- working alone is illegal in certain specified situations (e.g., work in confined spaces, fumigation, diving operations, etc); and
- working in pairs sometimes imparts a false sense of security and the persons may take unnecessary risks - such attitudes and actions should be discouraged as part of the basic training.

4.2.1 Reconnaissance visits

Pre-trip site reconnaissance visits are advisable for both safety and academic reasons. Ideally one member of the field party should have firsthand knowledge of the area. If this is not available, seek advice from a person who is familiar with the area.

4.2.2 Mixed groups and young people

For residential programmes, it is recommended that both male and female members of staff are included on the supervisory team. If this proves impractical it must be explained clearly to participants in writing.

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. Further information is available from the Disclosure and Barring Service at https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/disclosure-and-barring-service. See section 4.4 below re: University Safeguarding.

4.3 Health and disability aspects

Where fieldwork involves overseas travel, see Safety Code of Practice 38 for information about health assessment and screening for international travel.

- The University is committed to providing equality of opportunity to all its staff and students, regardless of disability. This includes opportunities in attending fieldwork, research and travel in general. However in exceptional circumstances, information about needs and capabilities may need to be shared with e.g. Fieldwork Leaders and deputies, so that they can take account of this in planning fieldwork. In extreme circumstances participants' activities may be modified or limited in the interest of their own and/or public health and safety.

- Schools/Functions should ensure that health and fitness is considered as part of the approval process for fieldwork (seek specialist medical, legal or health and safety advice if required).

- Fieldwork Supervisors must consider the health and medical aspects of fieldwork in the planning phase, in order to reduce to a minimum the possibility of a medical emergency during the fieldwork. This should cover the degree of physical and mental health required, illness, accidents, and hazards associated with the fieldwork or location itself e.g. diseases, parasites, venomous animals.

- Participants with disabilities or health issues, who may require adjustment or support whilst on fieldwork, should be positively encouraged to disclose these confidentially to the Fieldwork Leader in good time. Any information considered to be medical in confidence will only be disclosed on receipt of the participant's signed consent.
- On disclosure of a disability or medical condition, the Fieldwork Leader should liaise with the participant as soon as possible to understand how the disability / medical condition is already managed and any support, contingency arrangements (e.g. replacing lost medication / equipment, accessing medical assistance etc.) or additional adjustments required.
- Reasonable adjustments must be made, provided that health and safety standards will not be compromised by making the adjustments, if these participants might otherwise be disadvantaged.

If necessary, medical advice should be sought from the University Occupational Health Service for staff; the University Medical Practice (for students); or the participant's GP. All field class leaders can access a disability report for each module and are required to look over these and take on board the contents.

Participants should be advised to take any necessary medication with them.

The availability of medical assistance in the fieldwork location, and the procedures for medical repatriation, must be considered. Further information on the latter is available from the Insurance Office.

Participants should be informed well in advance about likely health hazards and preventative measures e.g. food and drink safety, hygiene, environmental or climatic illnesses such as dehydration, mountain sickness, and endemic disease.

Written consent must be obtained from parents or guardians for administering medication or first aid to young persons (under 18) and vulnerable adults.

For extended fieldwork in extreme/remote areas where access to dental care may be difficult or where there is a high prevalence of blood borne virus including HIV infection, participants should be advised to have a dental check-up prior to travelling.

Where pre-travel health requirements are not complied with e.g. vaccinations, anti-malaria's, and the consequences could be serious i.e. high risk of contracting a potentially fatal disease, consideration should be given to refusing participation. Medical advice should be obtained in case there are valid reasons for not taking medication, and to consider the potential risk to the individual.

4.3.1 Mental Health Issues

Under the stress of travel or extended periods away from home, pre-existing mental disorders can be exacerbated. Furthermore, for those people with a predisposition towards mental disorder, such a disorder may emerge for the first time during travel. (WHO 2015)

This increase of stress factors may also lead to the surfacing of more complex mental health issues such as depression, self-harm, and suicidal thoughts. The presentation and subsequent management of these may be significantly influenced by the available standard of healthcare, together with cultural and language related constraints. As a result, the incidence of evacuation and repatriation for mental health issues is much higher when compared with other medical conditions. Evacuations

can be complex and expensive to co-ordinate. Standards of healthcare vary considerably around the world and should be reflected in the risk assessment as should identification and declaration of pre-existing medical/health conditions. Discussions with fieldworkers who have disclosed a mental health condition should take place where appropriate so all relevant stakeholders are aware of the risks involved and the support needed to control and mitigate those risks. See section 4.3 above for how to access medical advice where this is required.

- The University has arrangements in place to manage all medical emergencies for overseas travel (See CoP38 and the University Business Travel Pages for more info). In the UK, emergency / local NHS services should be accessed as appropriate.

- Ensure pre-travel health questionnaires include questions regarding mental health and reassure participants regarding declaration.
- Trip leaders should obtain consent from participant to share details with relevant supervisors where appropriate and ensure that adequate control measures are in place.
- Ensure participants with mental health issues are aware of how to access support if required (especially overseas if away from usual support mechanisms) and regularly check-in with them to monitor any signs of changes / deterioration in behaviours.

See section 9 for further sources of information

4.4 Safeguarding

The University makes a positive contribution to a strong and safe community and recognises the right of every individual to stay safe. It is committed to safeguarding children and adults at risk in so far as they are engaged in University-related activities and services. Fieldtrip and research leaders, should ensure they are aware of the University's Safeguarding Children and Adults at risk policy and the process around raising concerns. See also Guidance note on preventing harm in research and innovation activities.

Please also be aware of the UoRLearn online training "**Preventing Harm (Safeguarding) in Research and Innovation Activities**". The session only takes one hour and it is **strongly recommended** that all staff and students actively involved in research involving participants complete it. This should be considered in addition to any Disclosure and Barring (DBS) checks that may be required in relation to work with children or vulnerable adults.

4.5 Insurance

- The University requires that adequate and appropriate insurance is in place for all participants in fieldwork and to cover University-owned equipment.

- It is important to liaise with the Insurance Office well in advance of the field trip to ensure that the level of cover is adequate for School activities.

If dangerous or excluded activities are to be undertaken:

- The Insurance Office MUST be notified to confirm that cover is in place or that specific terms/conditions apply.
- Members of fieldwork groups should be informed of their insurance cover through the University, including any exclusions, and should be advised to take out additional personal insurance if necessary.

- Fieldwork Leaders and any other persons/services who may have a role in management of an emergency should ensure that they have up-to-date details for access to the travel insurance services if working overseas e.g. policy number, emergency contact details.

Even if the fieldwork takes place at a recognised field centre, the **organiser must clarify the insurance liabilities** and it may be expedient to arrange adequate cover through the University.

If participants are likely to undertake hazardous activities during personal down time, or make their own travel arrangements e.g. by extending a fieldwork overseas to take a holiday, this may not be covered by the University travel insurance, and participants may need to take out their own personal travel/accident insurance. This should be checked with the Insurance Office well in advance prior to travel.

Guidance:

The Insurance Office publishes details of the University Business Travel Insurance policy and supporting emergency assistance provider on the Insurance web site.

4.5.1 Disclaimers and indemnities

Field site owners and occupiers may request that disclaimers are signed by a representative of the University or that some form of other indemnity is provided (not to be confused with formally accepting the local site safety rules). All such disclaimers and indemnities must be referred to the University Insurance Officer and not signed by School/Function staff.

4.5.2 Overseas travel insurance

See Safety Code of Practice 38 for information on travel insurance.

The advice of the University Insurance Office should be sought prior to arranging overseas fieldwork so that appropriate arrangements can be made for vehicular use, equipment, bail-bonds, etc.

4.5.3 Use of vehicles

Private vehicles

If a student or member of staff wishes to use their own vehicle whilst carrying out fieldwork, they must check that their own vehicle insurance cover is adequate. **Specific cover for business use of vehicles is required for staff and may be required for students.**

Minibuses

Specific conditions relate to minibuses - further details are available from the University Insurance Officer or see the University policy 'Driving for Work Purposes'.

4.6 Essential information and communications

- The Head of School/Function should ensure that there is a system for holding all final plans for fieldwork in a secure, but readily accessible place in the School/Department (if the risk assessment provides further information, this should be lodged as well).
- There must be a system by which a responsible person in the School/Department is aware of the planned fieldwork, departure and return times, and is in a position to make further

enquiries or raise the alarm if the fieldworker(s) fails to make agreed contact, or fails to return at the planned time.

- The School/Department must ensure that a responsible person is nominated for fieldworkers to contact in the event of a problem or emergency. This contact may need to be available 24 hours a day i.e. a departmental office number that is only manned during Monday-Friday office hours may not be sufficient. If this is not practicable, a reporting-in system may be required. The frequency will depend on the level of risk.

- The Fieldwork Leader must ensure that:
  - ❖ details of the fieldwork are lodged with the School/Department
  - ❖ summary details are sent to University Security (the School, name of Group Leader, telephone contact details, location, accommodation details, dates of departure and return, and number of participants on the trip).
  - ❖ they, and a deputy if appointed, have a means of communication, in routine and emergency situations, with:
    - o all participants in a fieldwork group
    - o the University Security Control (Tel +44 118 378 6300)
    - o a nominated responsible person in their School/Department
    - o if overseas, the University's travel insurers and emergency assistance providers
  - ❖ members of the fieldwork group know who to contact in the School/Department in the event of a problem or emergency, and how to contact Security Control
  - ❖ the nominated responsible person in the School/Department knows what action to take if anything untoward happens, including a breakdown in communications.

All those involved in fieldwork should be informed about who will take charge in an emergency, back-up arrangements e.g. insurance details, and contact details.

The fieldwork leader should have access to emergency contact information for all participants. Emergency contact information will only be used in an emergency, and only with the prior consent of the fieldwork participant. This can be obtained by the member of staff or student completing emergency contact information on Trent (for staff) or RISIS (for students, this is collected at enrolment). As this information can go out-of-date, it is good practice to remind all participants to check that their information is up-to-date prior to travel. Student information may then be downloaded from RISIS in advance of the trip. Any personal data must be held securely but be accessible to fieldwork staff. If held electronically, the data should be encrypted in accordance with University policies – see www.reading.ac/encryption-policy.

It cannot be guaranteed that the emergency services, either in the UK or overseas will contact relatives/partners/next of kin, even in a life-threatening emergency. It may fall to the University to do so, and in some circumstances, this may be the fieldwork leader/staff member. The fieldwork leader/staff member should try to consult University management first (Human Resources for incidents involving staff; Student Services for students, or a member of the Major Incident Team). However this may not be practicable and may introduce unnecessary delay. If it is essential that emergency contacts are informed as soon as practicable, the fieldwork leader is authorised to do so. They must then inform the University.

4.6.1 Communications

Communication systems are a key feature in safe fieldwork. This is particularly so in postgraduate research and on expeditions, where workers may be working individually or in small groups. The poorer the communications, the more competent and experienced the team needs to be. The

communications infrastructure in the emergency plan should aim to incorporate as many options as possible.

It is also important to remember that the emergency may be at home in the UK, for example serious illness of a family member, which might require the University to assist with contacting the fieldworker.

For day-to-day group activities in-country, a 'base' should be aware of the location of fieldworkers and the activities they are undertaking. This may mean leaving written details of the activity/plan/route and communication methods with a nominee at base. There must be an agreed means of communication between the fieldworker and the base and a plan of action if the fieldworker(s) fails to report at the agreed time.

In general, mobile phones may be used for communications, but should be supplemented with back-up alternative methods of seeking assistance in an emergency e.g. land line phones; satellite phones; two way radios; satellite distress beacon; telex/fax/email.

4.7 Accommodation

1. Where accommodation is to be used regularly on a repeat basis, or for long duration stays, by organised fieldwork groups, the School/Function should implement a procedure to have the accommodation checked by a competent person. All members of staff in a supervisory role should be competent to carry out basic checks. The level of checking should be risk based and be dependent upon the type of accommodation. Checks should include:

- Fire and electrical safety
- Safety of gas appliances (annual Gas Safe checks in the UK)
- Personal security
- General safety of the structure and facilities – for example pool, lifts, balconies
- Environment surrounding the accommodation
- Existence of third party liability insurance
- Previous institutional experience and feedback

2. The Fieldworker Leader should be given delegated authority to find alternative accommodation in circumstances where no prior checks have been practicable, and the accommodation is found to present unacceptable risks (e.g. poor fire or electrical safety or hygiene).

3. Ensure that the accommodation meets the needs of all members of the group, paying particular attention to participants with disabilities, young persons (under 18) and vulnerable adults.

4. Provide training to participants on the safe use of any temporary accommodation such as tents.

5. Personal security and privacy should be considered when booking accommodation e.g. depending on location, female travellers may feel less secure in a ground floor room.

6. All fieldworkers should to make themselves familiar with the fire procedures in their accommodation (alarm signal, evacuation routes, extinguishers, assembly point).

4.7.1 Selection of accommodation

The type of accommodation that will be used will vary considerably. Choice will be influenced by the requirements of the fieldwork, the needs of all the participants and the availability of accommodation in the location. Details of the accommodation should be communicated (preferably in a face-to-face meeting with all participants) prior to the visit.

4.7.2 Camping

Whenever possible licensed camp sites with permanent facilities - rather than temporary sites - should be used. 'Wild' camping is not recommended for the untrained or inexperienced.

Consideration must be given to:

- Whether or not 'wild' camping is permitted by legislation or the landowner
- Fire safety (of tents and the surrounding environment)
- Facilities and fuel for cooking, including safe storage of food
- Sanitation and hygiene
- Flooding and flash floods
- Water purity and drinking water
- Safe disposal of waste
- Environmental impact (on land, water, wildlife, vegetation and plants)
- Risk from wild animals (and other animals e.g. large farm animals)
- Ability of the party to transport/carry all the equipment and supplies necessary for the duration of the stay, if camping in a remote area

Guidance:

Advice on sanitation is given in the Mountaineering Council of Scotland leaflet 'Where to "Go" in the Great Outdoors': http://www.mcofs.org.uk/assets/access/where-to-go-leaflet.asp.pdf

Information from the NHS on camping safety:
http://www.nhs.uk/Livewell/Healthyholidays/Pages/Campingsafety.aspx

RoSPA advice on camping safety;
http://www.rospa.com/leisuresafety/adviceandinformation/leisuresafety/camping-safety.aspx

Practical advice on all forms of camping is given at Camping Expert:
http://www.campingexpert.co.uk/

4.8 Transport

Providing safe transport for fieldwork can be a challenging aspect, particularly in developing countries. Travel requirements may include transport to and from accommodation within the UK and overseas, to and from airports, and between fieldwork locations – sometimes to remote areas. If the risk or complexity of the travel dictates, it may be necessary to actively manage transport arrangements to ensure that all fieldworkers arrive safely at a particular location. The provision of transport will also vary from public transport to third party providers and the possibility of fieldworkers using their own vehicles. All of these aspects should be managed.

See Safety Code of Practice (CoP) 38 for guidance relating to travel overseas.

1. Ensure that the fieldwork leader is competent to assess the safety of the transport and to make a decision about the safety of the transport arrangements, including travel to/from airports, transportation in-country, safety of hire vehicles, buses, and minibuses, and the emergency arrangements.

2. Ensure that all modes of transport are assessed for their suitability, including available public transport options.
3. Fieldwork leaders must ensure that they comply with legal requirements and the University's driving at work policy and procedures (CoP52 Driving for Work Purposes), including mini-bus driver training and licensing.
4. Where available, road vehicles must be fitted with seat belts, and seat belts must be worn.
5. Where other forms of transport are used and are under the control of university staff or students e.g. small boats, those in control must have appropriate qualifications and be assessed as competent.
6. Ensure that the mode of transport is suitable for the needs of all participants. Particular attention should be given to the needs of participants with disabilities.
7. Ensure that adequate insurance cover which meets local legal requirements is provided for the type of transport used.
8. Evaluate the competence of independently chartered third party transport providers to ensure that appropriate precautions and safeguards are in place. Considerations should include the safety record of the transport provider, particularly in developing countries, licensing and insurance. Keep records of any negative experiences with transport providers to inform future planning and risk assessment.
9. Where appropriate, brief transport providers on their duties and responsibilities.
10. Plan contingency arrangements in the event that the transport arrangements fail or are assessed as unsuitable.
11. Brief participants on any residual risk associated with transport safety or accessibility issues that may affect them.

It is useful to keep records of positive or negative experiences of a transport provider, which can inform future risk assessments and travel decisions.

Communicate the details of the travel arrangements (preferably at a face-to-face meeting) prior to the field trip. Additional guidance should be made available for any transport that is expected to be beyond the participants' experience, for example some forms of public transport overseas.

4.8.1 Driving

Note that the greatest risk of death during most fieldwork is from driving-related accidents.

4.8.2 Minibuses

A high level of competence is required to drive a minibus. Staff who drive minibuses for the university must have specific training. See University Code of Practice 52 Driving for Work Purposes .

Driving licence requirements for minibuses are complex – requirements and entitlement must be checked in advance. See CoP52 and the Gov.uk web site at: http://www.direct.gov.uk/en/Motoring/DriverLicensing/index.htm.

It may be easier to use staff-driven people carriers for small groups on fieldwork in the UK, replacing the traditional minibus. However the driver still requires driving safety awareness training and their driving licence must be checked.

Driving a University owned minibus in the European Union is complicated in terms of legal / permit requirements. Fieldwork leaders should consider hiring a minibus once at the destination.

4.8.3 Travel by car

See Safety Code of Practice 38 Overseas Travel for general requirements on use of road vehicles overseas.

If it is proposed to use or hire a suitable vehicle for the particular job e.g. a "4x4" for rough terrain, the insurance must be checked, including cover for any equipment carried, off road travel, theft, loss, damage, etc. If in doubt, contact the University Insurance Officer for advice.

Drivers of vehicles being driven off road must have specialist training – see the University 'Safe Driving for Work' policy and procedures document.

The use of private cars by individuals (staff or students) for fieldwork purposes is not recommended. If that option is selected, staff must have insurance for "business purposes". Students must be advised to check the terms of their insurance policy to make sure that the cover is adequate for themselves, any other passengers, and any equipment carried.

It is strongly recommended that university staff and students DO NOT hire motorbikes, All Terrain Vehicles (ATVs), quadbikes, etc) mopeds etc. If it is necessary to do so, protective headgear and clothing must be worn, and training in use must be provided.

4.8.4 Air travel

Fieldwork Leaders must have access to all necessary phone numbers, web addresses etc to be able to contact airlines in the event of problems.

It is good practice for to remind students of the airline safety regulations, luggage limits and general advice for airline travellers, to avoid problems at airline check-in or security.

4.8.5 Travel by small boat and "boat work"

Small boats include sailing vessels, motor cruisers, open boats, canoes and the like. These may be used, for example, to collect marine specimens, to take meteorological measurements at sea, or as the base for sub-aqua work.

If the boat is hired, checks must be made to ensure that it is in good condition and properly equipped (and licensed when required) before agreeing to the hire. Fieldwork Leaders should also consider whether they should hire a skipper/cox who is familiar with the local area and the type of boat involved.

Where there are nationally accepted competency standards for sailing/driving/operating a small boat (e.g. RYA qualifications for skippering sail and power boats, diver coxswain award for boat

handling in sub-aqua diving etc) participants must have the relevant competence and/or qualification.

The Fieldwork Leader must confirm who has ultimate responsibility for safety on board – generally this will be the boat skipper.

The Fieldwork Leader must ensure that all participants are fully briefed and comply with safety and emergency procedures.

4.9 Equipment and Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

All equipment necessary for the fieldwork should already have been identified and specified at the planning stage, including any equipment or clothing expected to be provided by fieldworkers. Equipment should be specified and selected carefully to ensure that it is suitable for the intended use and conditions, and any prior and ongoing requirements for testing, examination and inspection should be detailed– including any required competencies to inspect or use the equipment. Damaged equipment and equipment that has not been approved should not be used. Hired equipment should be similarly specified and any maintenance records verified. Where no such records exist it will be down to the judgement of the fieldwork leader and experienced team members, erring on the side of safety where there is any doubt.

1. Fieldwork Leaders should have an inventory of all equipment.
2. Where applicable, the equipment required for the fieldwork, and methods of ensuring that it is suitable and sufficient for the task and individual, and the environment in which it will be used must be detailed in the risk assessment.
3. Any legal conditions/licences, import/export declarations etc must be checked and complied with.
4. Ensure that all equipment users have been adequately informed, instructed and trained (including refresher training where appropriate) in the use of any equipment, the risks and control measures.
5. Check all hired equipment for suitability and condition at the point of hire.
6. Give details in writing of any equipment, clothing and PPE that participants will need during fieldwork. This must be given to them in good time prior to departure.
7. If appropriate, ensure that a manual handling risk assessment has been completed for the carrying of loads, including work equipment, luggage, etc to site and during the fieldwork.
8. PPE must always be regarded as a ‘last resort’ to supplement other protection and its suitability for the individual and task must always be checked prior to departure. Engineering controls and safe systems of work must always be adopted first.
9. Identify and follow requirements for thorough examination, maintenance and inspection of equipment.
10. Ensure that where equipment is being taken overseas, any import/export, carriage of goods and use/storage regulations are complied with.

Any equipment must be suitable for the intended use and conditions. Any prior and ongoing requirements for testing, examination and inspection should be detailed – including any required competencies to inspect or use the equipment.

Hired equipment should be similarly specified and any maintenance records verified. Where no such records exist it will be down to the judgement of the Fieldwork Leader and experienced team members, erring on the side of safety where there is any doubt.

Guidance:

Further information of the safe use of work equipment is given in Safety Code of Practice 46. Guidance on excavations is given in Safety Code of Practice 47. Transport of Radioactive Materials is covered in Safety Note 8.

4.10 Food safety and catering

The type of catering required for field trips can vary between self-catering when camping, to being fully catered for by a third party provider. It is common for fieldworkers to suffer from an upset stomach or diarrhoea because of something that they may have consumed. The risk of contracting something more serious such as cholera, typhoid and hepatitis A is greater in a developing country. In countries where sanitation is poor, basic precautionary guidelines should be followed, such as not drinking tap water unless it has been treated, avoiding foods such as washed salads and fruit, cooked cold meats, un-pasteurised milk and cheese and ice in drinks.

1. Ensure that the level of catering meets the needs of all members of the group, paying particular attention to participants who have special dietary needs, e.g. gluten free diets, diabetics, food allergies. Information should be sought from participants prior to the fieldwork commencing.
2. Where appropriate, or where catering is project-critical, a process must be in place to check the suitability of the catering. All members of staff in a supervisory role should be competent to do this. The level of checking should be risk based and be dependent upon the type and extent of the catering provided. It is not expected that checks would be made of an outlet that is visited once. However, where appropriate, hotel or hostel accommodation checks (see Section 4.2) should include basic food hygiene considerations.
3. Any self-catered trips should be managed by a competent person, who should check that control measures such as personal hygiene procedures and temperature control for high risk foods are effective. On long expeditions or ones involving substantial numbers of participants, whoever does the cooking should have a food hygiene qualification.
4. Whilst preparing food, it is extremely important that food handlers are not suffering from gastrointestinal illness or throat, nose or eye infections. Cuts must be covered with waterproof dressings.
5. The emergency arrangements must consider the possibility of an outbreak of food poisoning/food-borne infection, and plan for having effective arrangements in place.
6. Ensure that participants are able to wash their hands prior to eating or preparing food. Equipment such as antibacterial wipes may need to be provided.

Where the fieldwork is self-catering, particularly in a remote area or where levels of sanitation and hygiene are poor, food hygiene guidance for participants should be provided. Such guidance may include information on food temperature and storage, and food, drinks and water to avoid.

Participants should have a means of washing their hands prior to eating or preparing food. Antibacterial wipes may be provided as an alternative.

Where there are doubts about the quality of the water supply, steps should be taken to boil the water or use a chemical treatment, with or without additional filtration, prior to drinking or use for food preparation.

Guidance:

Food safety advice is given in Safety Code of Practice 29 and in the following publications:

A Guide on Safe Food for Travellers. World Health Organisation, available at: http://www.who.int/foodsafety/publications/consumer/en/travellers_en.pdf

Five Keys to Safer Food. World Health Organisation, available at: www.who.int/foodsafety/consumer/5keys/en

FCO overseas travel web site at http://www.fco.gov.uk/en/travel-and-living-abroad/staying-safe/eat-drink-safely

4.11 Conduct and disciplinary procedures

1.	Students of fieldwork are subject to the Regulations for Conduct of The University.
2.	Codes of Conduct issued for fieldwork have the force of Regulations for Conduct.
3.	Schools must set standards for Codes of Conduct, to be adopted by Fieldwork Leaders, appropriate to the type of fieldwork undertaken.
4.	Schools should ensure that Fieldwork Leaders are given sufficient authority to take action in the event of participants breaching the Code of Conduct.
5.	If not already covered by School procedures, Fieldwork Leaders should issue a Code of Conduct and any other necessary written instructions for all fieldwork undertaken by students.
6.	Fieldwork Leaders have authority to take disciplinary action against disruptive participants, and if necessary to exclude them from the fieldwork or to take any other appropriate action.

4.11.1 Codes of conduct

Students must be advised that:

- they must comply with the Code of Conduct/fieldwork rules
- in the case of breaches of discipline the Fieldwork Leader has the authority to take appropriate action, which may include
  - requiring a student to leave the fieldwork
  - imposing a fine not exceeding £100; and
  - reporting the student to the Director for Student Services for referral to the Vice-Chancellor or a Pro-Vice-Chancellor with a view to other or additional disciplinary action.

This can be covered in the School Student Handbook/Health and Safety Code, or in a Code of Conduct specific to the proposed fieldwork. It is strongly recommended that written agreement/

acceptance is obtained and that students are reminded of their obligations and the Code of Conduct immediately prior to the fieldwork.

Disciplinary action could be immediate, for example, sending the offending student home immediately, or be delayed until the return of the party to the University. Note that the option of sending the student home may itself pose risks, or cause disruption to the remainder of the programme, particularly if the fieldwork is overseas.

The risk assessment should consider the options available to the Fieldwork Leader if a participant breaches the Code of Conduct or is disruptive. If the risk of disruption is unacceptably high, consideration must be given to whether the trip should go ahead as planned, and/or with modification. Remedial action could include:

- excluding particular individuals from participation
- modifying the location of the fieldwork to reduce the accessibility of alcohol, etc.
- making it a requirement that all course work associated with the field work is completed, and that failure to do so will impact on a student's assessment/marks.

4.12 Alcohol and drugs

It is recommended that Codes of Conduct make explicit reference to excessive alcohol consumption and to illegal drugs. The former should be advised against, the latter should be reported to the University for consideration of disciplinary action and any other appropriate action such as informing the police, in accordance with the University Regulations for Conduct. **Fieldwork leaders should note that University insurance policy will not provide cover in the event of a claim if the person involved / injured is found to be under the influence of alcohol or drugs (not prescribed by a medical practitioner).**

4.13 Personal and down time

Personal time is defined as time when programmed fieldwork activities are not taking place, but **participants remain under the general jurisdiction of the University**. It is unlikely that participants will be directly supervised during these periods. Common examples of personal time activities include time to read over notes from the field, organised sightseeing, social activities and outings.

Supervisors remain responsible for e.g. supervising sightseeing or social activities which they organise for the group, including where they make use of 3rd party excursion companies, and for managing resulting incidents. Reiteration of expected behaviour during this time may be prudent. Please also note section 4.11.1 above re: codes of conduct and alcohol.

Down time is time occurring within the overall duration of the trip, but **outside management of the fieldwork and thus outside the jurisdiction of the University** e.g., a personal trip to visit relatives or a holiday extension stay in country. In the main, participants will legally be adults, and therefore responsible for their own actions If down time is permitted during the course of the fieldwork, consider any insurance implications, reputational risk, and supervisory resources available to manage the consequences of any serious incident or delay to the fieldwork programme e.g. if a student fails to report back at the agreed time. Down time should be minimised during undergraduate fieldwork.

1. Schools must define what are acceptable activities during personal or downtime, on fieldwork trips involving students.

2. The Fieldwork Leader must identify the extent of personal and down time within the proposed itinerary/fieldwork, and define what is and is not acceptable during these periods. This must be communicated far enough in advance to participants to enable them to plan.
3. A face-to-face briefing, supported by written information, is strongly advised and may include e.g. advice re: personal conduct, personal safety, the inherent hazards in local environment, alcohol / drug use and so on.

4.13.1 Student Conduct during personal / downtime

Fieldwork Leaders should, if necessary, intervene if they observe, or are made aware of, unacceptable behaviour or activities.

4.13.2 Transport use during personal time

Fieldwork Leaders must be aware of the possible implications of using University or hire transport for leisure / personal time activities - for example, using a minibus to take the field party to the local town for an evening out. To avoid this being construed as condoning any possible misbehaviour, which could compromise any subsequent disciplinary procedures, specific warnings regarding expected behaviour should be given. However, the benefits of providing transport, and thus ensuring that students are transported safely and return to base at a reasonable time, may outweigh the theoretical disadvantages.

Careful consideration should be given to participation in hazardous pursuits during fieldwork leisure time. If the activity is offered by a reputable provider, who is fully compliant with all UK or equivalent accreditation and safety requirements, and the activity is well managed and controlled, this may be acceptable. Where this high standard cannot be achieved, participation should be actively discouraged. Insurance implications MUST be checked before planning any such activities.

4.14 Third Party Providers

The University has obligations to ensure that any third-party provider has considered the health and safety implications of its activities and their potential impacts on the institution and its fieldworkers and has or controlled identified risks.

1. The competence of third party providers must be checked during procurement in order to ensure that the provider has considered the health and safety implications of its activities and has an appropriate safety management system.
2. Heads of School/Function must be satisfied that third party providers have effective safety management arrangements in place.
3. Specific precautions, safeguards and emergency arrangements must be checked. This is particularly important for fieldwork involving students, and for high-risk activities/destinations.
4. Public liability insurance should be a standard requirement on all contracts with third party providers. However, in some countries where it will not be possible for the third-party provider to secure public liability insurance, it should be checked with the Insurance Office that the travel insurance provision will cover the activity.

5. Check the individual competency of third-party instructors. e.g., diving instructors, climbers for canopy access, boat skippers and/or crew members for boats and survey vessels.
6. Agree the roles and responsibilities of third-party providers in advance and writing, including any contingency or emergency arrangements, action to be taken and /or provisions to be made.
7. Keep records of all pre-trip checks undertaken.

Examples of typical third-party providers are specialist outdoor activity leaders, safari companies, in-country guides, suppliers of specialist equipment and laboratory facilities.

Collaborating staff acting as supervisors from overseas institutions, and other host or partner organisations, should be treated as third party providers.

Formal vetting of contractors is now accepted practice in the UK. Ideally, third party providers should conform to *BS 8848: Specification for the provision of visits, fieldwork, expeditions, and adventurous activities outside the United Kingdom (BS 8848:2007+A1:2009)*. (BSI).

However, third party providers overseas may not be used to their safety arrangements being questioned. It is likely to be necessary to use a variety of techniques to establish confidence in a third-party provider. Wherever practicable, formal checks should be made, and records kept. A less formal alternative are recommendations from other colleagues or institutions. Such recommendations must be documented. Schools/departments should also keep monitoring records of positive or negative experience with third party providers, including their reliability, and sharing this at institutional level, if appropriate.

If responsibility for the safety and conduct of participants is to pass to a third-party provider, this should be agreed with the third party in writing. The extent to which formal contract arrangements are needed will vary depending upon the risk involved and the level of control expected of the third party. Some formal agreement will be needed particularly when responsibility passes to local transport providers and charters, including boat captains, diving supervisors and armed escorts.

Where reasonably practicable the Fieldwork Leader should undertake pre-visit checks on the third-party provider.

Where appropriate, emergency arrangements should be vetted to ensure that they are suitable.

For project-critical third-party providers, contingency plans should be made in case the provider proves unsuitable in practice.

5 EMERGENCY ARRANGEMENTS/EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

5.1 Medical emergencies and first aid

- The University Insurance Officer is responsible for putting in place appropriate medical support and repatriation arrangements for university staff and students who undertake fieldwork overseas.

- The School/Function must ensure that all staff involved with fieldwork are aware of the University's arrangements for medical and travel support overseas.
- The School/Function must ensure that fieldwork staff are trained in first aid, where appropriate.

- The Fieldwork Leader must know how to access local health care facilities/accident and emergency department Details of any additional emergency medical assistance, contact and implementation details, must be included in the emergency plan.
- The Fieldwork Leader must ensure adequate first aid cover is available, and that it is appropriate to the risks faced by fieldwork participants.

5.1.1 Medical emergencies

In the UK, fieldwork participants can generally rely on the emergency services and should contact them by phoning 999. Fieldwork Leaders should also identify where the nearest hospital Accident and Emergency Department is, in case they need to take a fieldwork participant there e.g., for a minor injury.

See Safety Code of Practice 38 for procedures for obtaining medical support overseas.

5.1.2 First aid

A group member should be trained in first aid at work (FAW) as a minimum, unless the risk assessment has determined there is no need for first aid e.g., low risk visit in the UK to a city centre with quick access to emergency facilities.

For medium or higher risk activities (or where there are participants with specific medical needs) there may be some instances where the FAW course will not be appropriate because it will not cover the range of medical emergencies identified in the risk assessment. This may be, for example, fieldwork in difficult environmental conditions (e.g., remote locations, heat, cold, high altitude etc.) or where serious illness or injury could occur and / or there may be a delay in accessing emergency care (e.g., altitude sickness, snakebite, anaphylaxis, heavy bleeding, broken bones etc.). In these circumstances a party member should attend a more specialised course such as “Fieldwork First Aid” (University provider - British Red Cross) or where appropriate “Expedition First Aid”, or “Wilderness Medical Training” – (see the Royal Geographical Society web site for more details). If fieldtrip leaders are unsure of the level or type of first aid training required, they should contact the School Health and Safety Coordinator for advice in the first instance.

Where appropriate, standard travel first aid equipment should be part of the fieldwork equipment. Additional items should be taken if indicated in the risk assessment e.g., survival blanket/group shelter.

If participants have particular health needs, information and specialist training on treatment/ response should be provided for Fieldwork Leaders and first aiders if this is reasonably practicable. All participants must receive clear documented information on the location and identity of first aid providers.

5.1.3 Emergency money/funds

In some cases, the Fieldwork Leader or individual fieldworkers may need access to emergency money. Where this is identified as a risk, and where practicable, a means of achieving this should be identified in advance.

Guidance:

Provision is made with the University insurer for emergency cash overseas. University Finance can also be contacted to arrange emergency transfers, or the Fieldwork Leader should apply (in advance) for a University Purchase Card.

5.1.4 Emergency actions

Depending on the nature of the incident/accident or emergency, the main factors for fieldwork leaders to consider include:

- establish the nature and extent of the emergency without delay
- ensure that all group members are safe and looked after at all times
- establish the names of any casualties and arrange immediate medical attention
- ensure that a leader/supervisor accompanies casualties to hospital
- notify the University travel insurer (if abroad)
- notify the police if necessary (and British Embassy/Consulate if abroad)
- inform the university departmental contact (who can contact other parties), or University Security (+44 118 378 6300) and if necessary instruct them to contact senior university management/activate the Major Incident Plan
- preserve any vital evidence, including taking photographs of the scene
- notify the University Insurance Office
- notify any 3rd party provider /tour operator

The University's International travel – Emergency Response Checklist is available for use by staff taking calls from fieldworkers in the event of emergency. It may also assist those who may need to notify the University of an evolving incident of the information they may ask for to add to emergency plans.

Depending on the nature of the emergency, it may be appropriate to compile an incident log including:

- nature, date and time, location of incident
- names of casualties and how injured
- names of others involved
- action taken and when taken
- further actions required

See also International Travel – Emergency Response Checklist which can be adapted for UK use.

5.1.5 External contact, media and press

Wherever possible contact with external third parties such as the press should be undertaken by someone trained in this role e.g. Major Incident Gold or Silver team leader, Communications Office spokesperson.

Contact from the fieldwork group with the press/media should be minimised:

- nobody in the party should speak to the press
- media enquiries should be referred to a designated media contact in Communications

- if group members phone their family to let them know that they are safe, they should not speculate or pass on inaccurate or incomplete information which could reach the press and cause unnecessary anxiety or be misinterpreted
- casualty names should not be released externally
- nobody should discuss legal liability with other parties
- personal photographs of accident sites should be discouraged

5.2 Accident, incident and near miss reporting

All incidents, accidents and near misses that occur during fieldwork must be reported to the Fieldwork Leader, School/Function Health & Safety Co-ordinator, and Health and Safety Services in accordance with normal university procedures – see Safety Code of Practice 9. This includes incidents that occur during leisure time.

- The Business Continuity Manager is responsible for the University's Major Incident Plan and Team, which could be called upon to manage a major incident involving a fieldwork group or participant.
- University Security is responsible for responding to telephone calls made to the Security emergency number (+44 (0)118 378 6300). Depending on circumstances, they will either: refer the caller to the University's travel emergency assistance provider for assistance overseas; alert the emergency assistance provider on behalf of the caller; refer to the appropriate Head of School/Function; or seek authority to invoke the Major Incident Plan.
- The Communications Office is responsible for taking the lead on communications with press/media.

- Schools/Functions must ensure that there are effective emergency arrangements in place for all fieldwork. For low risk work it may be sufficient to rely on University systems and support e.g. insurance. For higher risk fieldwork, additional measures may be required.
- All Fieldwork Leaders must be made aware of the University's procedures to be followed in the event of a death (regardless of cause) to a member of staff or a participant.
- In the event of possible media/press interest, the Communications Office must be contacted. School/ Function staff should not make any statements and must refer all enquiries to the Communications Office.

- **Fieldwork Leaders (or individual staff members working on their own) are empowered to stop an activity or leave a location if they deem it to be unsafe.** This decision can be made without reference to the University if circumstances dictate this - although where it is possible to share information and seek advice within the University, this should be done. The University will support the decision of the Fieldwork Leader of authorised fieldwork trips and will meet any additional expenditure incurred as a result.
- Fieldwork Leaders must have an emergency plan (see 5.3.1 below), appropriate to the circumstances likely to be encountered.

5.3 Contingency planning

Where appropriate, the contingency plan should include responses to:

- Travel and security issues – see Safety Code of Practice 38 International Travel
- Illness
- Domestic/personal emergency requiring immediate return of fieldwork participant
- Changes to leadership ratios
- Changes in activity
- Theft/loss of essential equipment
- Communications with the University
- Unacceptable conduct

5.3.1 Emergency planning

Where appropriate, the emergency plan should cover:

- Travel and security issues – see Safety Code of Practice 38
- Means of summoning help and assistance
- Missing persons procedure
- Evacuation procedures
- Availability of emergency medical support
- Liaison with police and emergency services
- Financial plan for emergencies
- Communications with the University

6 COMPETENCE

6.1 Training for Fieldwork Leaders and other fieldworkers

1. Fieldwork Leaders, supervisors, participants and others working off site need to be competent to manage, plan and undertake fieldwork safely. This may require leadership or specialist skills training.
2. The Head of School / Department should be satisfied that the fieldwork leader has the personal capability and competence to lead, especially under possible adverse conditions, and has sufficient awareness of their obligations to those under supervision. Training to BS 8848 standard should be offered to all staff involved in overseas and/or medium / high hazard fieldwork supervision.
3. If fieldwork is offered explicitly or implicitly as part of a course of study, the resources required to maintain staff competency should be included in the annual budget. Similarly, resources required to ensure and maintain competency of field researchers should be included in research bids.
4. Ensure that the leadership team receives, as a minimum, briefing or training in:
   risk assessment and planning
   University of Reading operating procedures
   implementing the incident and emergency plan
5. The Head of School or Department must identify the core competencies required and must not authorise the fieldwork until all gaps have been addressed. Undertake an assessment of

the competence of fieldwork leaders and team members (including any team members from outside the University) to determine any gaps in knowledge or skills for each trip.

6. For some activities, formal management/leadership/supervisory qualifications may be required.
7. Review training needs for fieldworkers regularly. This can be achieved as part of the staff development review process.
8. Fieldwork Leaders must identify what training may be required to ensure competency, and ensure this is provided before the fieldwork starts (unless the fieldwork itself includes a training element under appropriate instruction and supervision).
9. Put a robust system in place to assess and train participants before allowing any indirectly supervised fieldwork. Proper understanding and an ability to operate incident and emergency protocols should be in place.
10. Consider if outdoor fieldwork may cross the boundary with hazardous sports. If competency frameworks are already established – e.g. mountain leader training, sub aqua diving, caving - these should be followed. Where there is no governing body or appropriate certification, Schools must ensure that participants are assessed as competent by virtue of experience, knowledge and practical application.
11. Training needs that emerge whilst on the fieldtrip must be addressed insofar as is possible as they arise. Training given in the field must be logged, and should be considered at the subsequent formal review.

Competence in this context is defined as being not only the combination of knowledge, experience and qualifications, but also being able to acknowledge one's own limitations.

Competence is gained through ongoing staff development. The Head of School or Department must be satisfied that the Fieldwork Leader has the personal capability and competence to lead – especially under possible adverse conditions – and has sufficient awareness of the legal obligations to those under their supervision.

It is important to distinguish that a leader's and/or participant's competence in an academic subject or in research techniques is different to competence in management and leadership, and supervisory skills.

Specialist training may be required for some fieldwork supervisors and/or participants where the location or fieldwork activity is classed as high risk. Examples include survival training (e.g., for Arctic/Antarctic or jungle conditions), mountain leadership, wilderness medical training, navigation techniques, 4-wheel drive training, sub-aqua diving, rope access and abseiling, cultural awareness, security threat assessment etc.

7 MONITORING AND REVIEW

1. Health and Safety Services may audit fieldwork arrangements from time to time or following any major or serious incident, including procurement, insurance and fieldwork planning and management.
2. An appropriate level of monitoring of health and safety arrangements must be an ongoing process during fieldwork. Procedures must be adapted and documents, instructions etc. updated as necessary.

3. Hold a post-fieldwork debrief meeting, or other formal review, to capture any recommendations for improvement. Considerations that would indicate a need for a formal review would include inter alia:-

- A major incident or significant accidents or near-misses occurred
- Occasions where dynamic risk assessments were needed
- There was a significant change to plans or itineraries
- Where unexpected training was needed during the fieldwork
- Whilst actions following investigation during the fieldwork normally focus on immediate cause and effect and on continuity issues, reviews should focus on potential shortcomings in planning, processes and procedures, and in management of the fieldwork.
- Significant participant feedback indicating improvements are required

Inform the relevant University departments (Insurance Office, Health & Safety Services, Procurement, Academic and Student Services etc) where University procedures can be improved.

4. Address all accidents, incidents and any near misses in the formal review on return to the University. Whilst actions following investigation during the fieldwork normally focus on immediate cause and effect and on continuity issues, reviews should focus on potential shortcomings in planning, processes & procedures, and in management of the fieldwork.

5. Relevant risk assessments and fieldwork arrangements should be reviewed as soon as possible after return to the University.

Schools/Departments may choose to send a survey to all participants following fieldwork. The survey should have a health and safety content as well as academic or business considerations. The results of the survey should be made available to all involved in the planning, organisation and participation in the fieldwork. The survey should include retrospective incident reporting, and feedback on accommodation and other third-party providers.

8 RELEVANT LEGISLATION

8.1.1 Criminal Liability

For fieldwork in the UK, with regard to criminal liability under UK health and safety legislation:

- Primary responsibility for the management of health and safety for a member of staff and for any post doctorate researcher, postgraduate or undergraduate student while on fieldwork lies with the institution (under Section 2 (1) of the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974).
- The institution also has a duty in respect of students and non-employees (under Section 3 (1) of the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 and the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999)
- All employees have a responsibility to follow instructions and act sensibly to protect their own health and safety and that of others (as set out in Sections 7 and 8 of the Health and

Safety at Work etc. Act 1974). Those holding more senior positions have responsibilities under section 37.

- Under the Corporate Manslaughter and Corporate Homicide Act 2007 an organisation is guilty of the offence of corporate manslaughter (corporate homicide in Scotland) if the way in which its activities are managed or organised by its senior management causes a person's death, and amounts to a gross breach of a relevant duty of care owed by the organisation to the deceased.

Failure to comply with these requirements can have serious consequences for both institutions and individuals. Potential sanctions include fines and imprisonment, and any legal action can result in reputational damage. Individuals and institutions are also subject to the laws of the countries in which visits take place. Any criminal prosecution or civil action may also be brought in that jurisdiction either independently or as well as in the UK.

8.1.2 Civil Liabilities

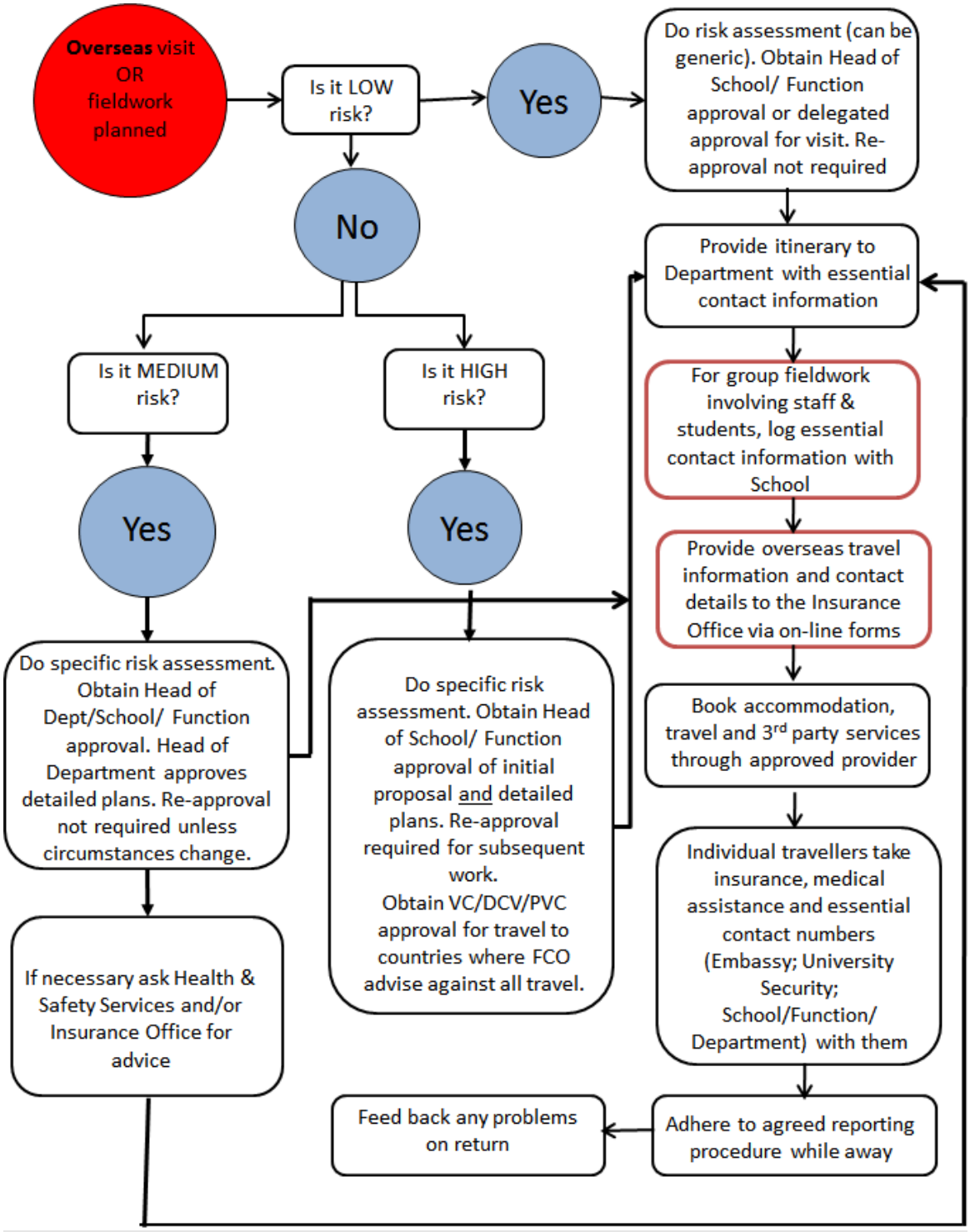
The nature and extent of civil liabilities between the institution and the fieldwork participant, and the nature and extent of their civil liabilities to others, are affected by many factors which can only be resolved in the courts and may depend upon which country's legal system is deemed to have jurisdiction. Civil liabilities are affected by the nature of any agreements between the parties, of any statements made by the parties in advance about what they offer, and by civil law relating to contracts and services. The aim of the guidance is not merely to protect the institution from any criminal or civil action but to provide an outline of management practices that will help to protect both staff, students and participants, and to ensure that their health, wellbeing and safety are sufficiently considered before, during and after fieldwork.

9 REFERENCES / FURTHER ADVICE & GUIDANCE

Safety Code of Practice 38 – International Travel	https://www.reading.ac.uk/health-safety-services/policies-and-procedures
UoR Project risk assessment form RA2 Overseas travel risk assessment – TRA1	https://www.reading.ac.uk/health-safety-services/risk-assessment
UoR Business Travel Pages (including Insurance)	https://www.reading.ac.uk/procurement/insurance/business-travel
Foreign and Commonwealth Development Office Travel advice	https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice
National Travel Health Network and Centre (NaTHNaC)	https://nathnac.net/
BS 8848:2014 (Royal Geographical Society Guidance – Managing the risks of adventure travel)	https://www.rgs.org/CMSPages/GetFile.aspx?nodeguid=18d11cd1-d7dc-4837-b688-b6feb9546f44&lang=en-GB
Mental Health	www.fitfortravel.nhs.uk/advice/general-travel-health-advice/mental-health-and-travel

	NaTHNaC - Travel and mental health (travelhealthpro.org.uk) Looking after your mental wellbeing - Student Minds
Guidance on Safety in Fieldwork in the UK and Overseas. Universities Safety and Health Association (USHA) June 2018	https://www.usha.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/MASTERUSHA_Safety-in-Fieldwork-Guide.pdf.
GOV.UK web site Passports, Travel and Living Abroad	https://www.gov.uk/browse/abroad
Expedition Handbook, Royal Geographical Society	http://www.rgs.org/OurWork/Publications/EAC+publications/Expedition+Handbook/Expedition+Handbook.htm
BS 8848: Specification for the provision of visits, fieldwork, expeditions, and adventurous activities outside the United Kingdom (BS 8848:2007+A1:2009). (BSI).	https://www.rgs.org/CMSPages/GetFile.aspx?nodeguid=18d11cd1-d7dc-4837-b688-b6feb9546f44&lang=en-GB

Appendix 1 - Fieldwork approval flowchart



Appendix 2 - Outline planning checklist

The following is a list of considerations that may be relevant to in the initial stages when planning various fieldwork, field trips and expeditions, ***as a precursor to more detailed planning and risk assessment****. It is not intended to be exhaustive.*

What does the fieldwork involve? Describe the purpose and scope, and any **risks inherent in the proposal**:

Why is this work necessary? Describe the benefits – both to participants and in terms of research value:

Who is involved?

1. Identify stakeholders – include young people and specific roles
2. Identify participants – including young and vulnerable, those with special needs, those with medical conditions or allergies
3. Third parties and other service provision (e.g. accommodation; guiding; language interpreters; medical assistance)
4. Staff, supervisors, leaders – existing competencies, gender mix, gaps and vacant roles, staff to student ratios
5. Other interested parties, e.g. government agencies

Are there any **Ethical** considerations?

If so, has approval been sought separately?

Flag Hazards (early identification for consideration in a more detailed risk assessment):

- Political instability (FCDO status)
- Lack of access to cash
- Maintenance/failure of equipment
- Health & medical risks and contingencies (including first aid)

• Travelling to site/in-country (including road safety, safe driving, flight safety) • Travel alteration/breakdown • Remote location • Loss of contact (2-way) • Local antagonism/cultural taboos • Supervision/lone working • Accommodation (including fire safety) • Local crime & harassment • Local communication/language • Food safety, hygiene & allergies • Environment/climate/weather/wildlife	• Fire safety • Hazardous substances (including work materials) • Hazardous activities (e.g. caving, climbing etc) • Industrial hazards (heavy equipment/plant; confined spaces; working at height; noise; excavations etc) • Participant behaviour (including drugs/alcohol consumption) • Environment (impact, pollution, waste)
Any other hazards	
How will any inherent risks identified above be controlled?	
Do the participants need any prior training or orientation training on arrival? e.g. • Arrival orientation • First aid • Navigation • Cultural awareness • Use of work equipment • Hygiene/health (inc. food & water safety • Defensive driving • Security awareness • Towing • 4 wheel drive/off road • Task related training e.g. surveying • Leadership (including mountain leadership/wilderness training) **Other**	
Joining instructions, including a statement about the risks inherent in the field trip and any expectations of qualifications or competencies:	

Appendix 3 - Operational checklist

This is defined as any work carried out by staff or students of the University for the purposes of teaching, research, or study that involves either practical work, or organised group activity, off campus, in the UK or overseas.

The checklist below covers H&S requirements. Other requirements specific to a particular trip may need to be added.

Risk profile the trip (Safety Code of Practice 32) (delete as appropriate)		Low/Medium/High
Plan and prepare for the trip: Generic risk assessment for all foreseeable risks (including travel, illness, injury etc as well as work-related risks). Specific risk assessment required for medium and high risk trips.		
All necessary approvals obtained		
Checklist for overseas travel if appropriate (see Safety Code of Practice 38)		
Has the supervisor(s) received suitable training?		
Supervisory ratio: 1 member of staff /1-20 participants achieved		
Male and female supervisors available (recommended for UG programmes)		
Emergency arrangements: Note * Check current details on University Insurance Office web site	First aid kit available	
	Trained first aider (see section 5.1.2 in CoP32 Fieldwork)	
	Location of nearest hospital	
	University Security emergency number (+44118378 6300)	
	Travel insurers claim number (O/S, 24 hour) *	
	Travel emergency assistance provider *	
	UoR business travel policy number *	
	UoR Insurance Office	+44(0)118 378 8309
	Group emergency numbers (at least two, to be issued to all participants and the School))	
	UoR School contact (day time and out of hours) name and telephone number/email	
Code of conduct issued and agreed with participants (if students)		
Any other essential information (e.g. allergies, medical conditions, disabilities, reasonable adjustments required) requested from participants and held by Group Leader		
Written instructions, including emergency arrangements and contact details, issued to all participants		

Itinerary (including timings, full addresses, contact details of host, address and contact details for the accommodation/hotel) issued to all participants	
Online travel insurance form completed by all participants (Safety Code of Practice 38 for overseas travel)	
List of participants available, held by the Field Trip Leader and the School/Department	
Details of emergency contacts available to Field Trip Leader, with written authorisation from students for them to be contacted in case of emergency	
Conduct and disciplinary procedure: code of conduct signed by participants (students only)	
Third party providers: University approved suppliers used	
Identify specific equipment	
Identify specific risks	

VERSION CONTROL LOG OF DOCUMENT CHANGES

Version	Changes	Author	Approved by	Approval date	Published date
1.0	Update to arrangements for approval of travel Changes to reflect revised policy on driving licence requirements for minibuses Addition of fieldwork approval flowchart Editorial changes of titles/Services/Functions etc.	Moira Simpson		Oct 2016	
2.0	Update document to new CoP format. Add clarity on University responsibilities for staff / students during personal / downtime. Reviewed against USHA guidance and generally updated following stakeholder feedback.	Wendy Manning	UHSWC	Oct 2023	20/10/23
3.0					
4.0					
4.1					