

Fieldwork Policy

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Fieldwork Policy

1. Introduction

- 1.1. Fieldwork may be regarded as any practical work carried out by staff or students of the University for the purpose of teaching and/or research that involves hazardous activities and/or hazardous locations not controlled by the University. The policy does not include student placement activities, which are covered by the Student Placement Policy and guided visits/tours/conferences which is covered by the risk assessment process.

2. Statement of Intent

- 2.1. Teesside University wishes to ensure that all members of staff and students taking part in fieldwork will be safe from danger and will return in a fit and healthy condition.
- 2.2. Teesside University will expect that all persons taking part in fieldwork, but more particularly the leaders, will be aware of and abide by the USHA and UCEA Guidance on Health and Safety in Fieldwork, including offsite visits and travel in the UK and overseas (copies of this booklet are available from the Health and Safety Centre).
- 2.3. The University's Health and Safety Centre will offer workshops on the Fieldwork guidance including the requirement of risk assessments for those staff leading fieldwork trips.

3. Mandatory Criteria

- 3.1. All drivers of minibuses must have attended a course of instruction in the use and legal requirements of such vehicles, this course is available from the Human Resources Learning and Development Section.
- 3.2. Any group which will be working in areas remote from habitation, either by distance or situation, should include a first aider who is qualified and has access to a first aid kit.
- 3.3. A written risk assessment must be prepared and submitted to the Dean of the School and to the Health and Safety Centre for scrutinisation and endorsement, at least four weeks prior to the activity, except in exceptional circumstances. Guidance on the content of the Risk Assessment can be found in Appendix 1.
- 3.4. When undertaking specialised activities with particular associated risks the leader must be qualified, or ensure the presence of a suitably qualified

person, to the standards expected by the recognised bodies for that activity, which is agreed by the University.

- 3.5. Full insurance cover for the activity and location of the fieldwork must be established with the Finance and Commercial Development Department.
- 3.6. A list of those attending the fieldwork, with contact telephone numbers and addresses of relatives, must be left with the Dean of School and the Health and Safety Centre, by the Fieldwork Leader.

Guidance on Fieldwork Risk Assessments

Once an outline plan has been given authorisation to proceed it will be necessary to produce an appropriate risk assessment. The risk assessment process should be closely integrated with the planning of the fieldwork and the documents produced should complement each other rather than duplicate information.

The fieldwork risk assessment should be undertaken by a competent individual, agreed by the University, usually the fieldwork leader. All aspects of the work should be considered on a thorough and systematic basis. The final risk assessment document should aim to identify and record foreseeable hazards and significant risks associated with the planned activities. It will also include details of the control measures which will be, or have been implemented to reduce these risks to an acceptable level. A hazard checklist to assist with this process is detailed below.

Fieldwork Hazard Checklist

- Travelling to the destination.
- Travelling around in the vicinity of fieldwork location.
- The specific activity undertaken.
- Threats to personal security from terrorism, crime, or aggression from members of the public.
- Equipment (manual handling, defects, failures).
- Unsafe accommodation (fire, carbon monoxide poisoning, electrical safety).
- Extremes of weather (hypothermia, sunstroke, dehydration, frost bite).
- Location (danger from sea or water course, landslide, rough terrain, work in trenches, avalanche etc).
- Contact with hazardous flora and fauna.
- A city environment.
- Locations with low infrastructure and support.
- Ill health (prevalence of disease, foodborne illness, distance from Medical Facilities).
- Inadequate or lack of competent supervision.
- Lone working.
- Fitness or competence of participants on supervised courses.
- Inherently dangerous activities (climbing, diving, caving).
- Inability to communicate or summon assistance.
- Poor or inappropriate behaviour.
- Failure to develop suitable contingency plans.

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

It is also likely that an element of dynamic risk assessment will be required to respond to changes in circumstances or new risks. However, dynamic risk assessment should not be a substitute for adequate emergency and contingency planning. The findings of dynamic risk assessments must also be communicated and understood throughout the fieldwork team.

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Health Declaration Questionnaire

The purpose of this questionnaire, which complies with the Equality Act 2010, is to assist Teesside University meet its statutory duty to ensure the safety of its students. The Fieldwork Leader needs to know of any health conditions or disabilities that may affect you, so they can discuss with you the support that you need to participate in the Fieldwork trip to ensure that you are not put at risk.

1. Do you need any special aids/adaptations to assist you, whether or not you have a disability? Yes/No
2. Do you have a medical condition or disability which may affect your ability to carry out activities on the fieldwork trip? Yes/No
3. Are you having or waiting for medical treatment of any kind at present? (includes medication) Yes/No
4. Do you need to take any medication? Yes/No
5. Do you have any back, neck or joint problems causing difficulty with standing, walking, bending, lifting or stair climbing? Yes/No

I confirm that the declaration provided above is correct to the best of my knowledge and understand that by making a false declaration I could put myself or others at risk.

Full Name:

Course:

Date of Birth:

Signed: Date:

Please return to Fieldwork Leader