

## University Policy and Model Code of Practice on Fieldwork in University Units

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## General Introduction and Policy Statements

NUI Galway has a number of legal health and safety obligations to its students and staff. These are detailed in Part 2.2 of the NUI Galway Safety Statement and can be accessed at (<http://www.nuigalway.ie/healthsaf/?menu=3>). Briefly, the university:

- has a duty to provide a safe system of work for its staff and to manage and conduct its work activities in such a way as to prevent, so far as is reasonably practicable, any improper conduct or behaviour likely to put the safety, health or welfare at work of employees at risk (Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act, 2007).
- owes a common law duty of care to its staff, students and visitors.
- has implicit and explicit contractual obligations to its students and others who are affected by its undertakings.

Such duties and obligations must be achieved 'as far as reasonably practicable', and it may not be possible to eliminate all risks in order discharge these duties. There are, in turn, legal obligations on university staff and contractual obligations on students to comply with any and all risk reduction measures that the university so requires of its staff and students.

It is university policy to apply high standards of health and safety management wherever teaching and research take place. There is no specific legislation associated with fieldwork, but it is university policy to exercise a duty of care to employees and those under its supervision. It is university policy that organisers of fieldwork must consider health and safety legislation, regulations, prohibitions, bye-laws or local rules that apply in the jurisdiction where the fieldwork is being planned; this includes legislation applicable to environmental, wildlife and countryside issues.

This policy and code of practice contains information on the university's position with respect to its legal obligations to the safety, health and welfare of staff, students and visitors, and helpful guidelines to those planning and undertaking fieldwork activities. It contains elements of relevant guidance published by the UK's Universities Safety and Health Association and the Universities and Colleges Employers Association.

It is university policy to ensure that the requirement to conduct risk assessments for fieldwork is no different to that when conducting risk assessments for all other university activities and workplace hazards. This requirement follows the same principles for risk assessment as for all other workplace risks and is subject to the same rigours of management effectiveness.

### Introduction

**Definition of fieldwork.** For the purposes of this document fieldwork is defined as any activity associated with a university-accredited student teaching and /or research programme which takes place beyond the normal scope of a class room or laboratory. It includes activities associated with the social sciences, outdoor surveys/observations of the natural and built environments, specimen observations/analyses/collections, which are conducted by student and staff engineers, clinicians and scientists on land and water, in Ireland and abroad.

Exclusions: This document does not address other university activities such as:

- academic staff exchange programmes
- attending meetings, conferences, recruitment fairs
- conducting consumer surveys
- student placement and work experience programmes
- voluntary activities
- attending sporting or cultural events on behalf of the university
- building projects or other works commissioned by the university Buildings Office.

**Scope of challenges during fieldwork.** Fieldwork is a necessary component of teaching and research programmes which deal with exploring, understanding and improving the natural world. However, the open-air environment is less controllable than a laboratory. The duration of fieldwork can range from a few minutes to weeks, and may be relatively simple and low risk or complex with higher risk and specialist elements. Weather conditions may be unpredictable and terrain remote and hostile. Communications and transport may be difficult and adequate food and potable water may be problematic. Equipment may be difficult to maintain, and damaged or lost items may not be readily replaceable. Other materials necessary for fieldwork, for example chemicals, may have specific handling and storage requirements. Medical and welfare facilities may be basic, normal medical support interventions may be remote and personal security and safety may be challenged. In relation to health and safety there may be medical, political, cultural, social, ethical, and legal (see below) factors presented by other persons associated with the fieldwork or by those working, living, or on leisure pursuits practiced in the geographical location of interest.

**Requirement for a code of practice (COP).** Fieldwork requires careful planning and assessment to ensure that any risks are considered, and that appropriate action is taken to control the risks and to reduce them to acceptable levels. Due to the diverse nature of fieldwork students and some university staff may not be fully familiar with the associated health, safety and welfare aspects. A COP is an essential means of assisting organisers of fieldwork in identifying hazards, assessing risks and determining the most suitable means to control and reduce such risks.

## Particular Roles and Responsibilities

**Head of school or research institute.** Heads of schools and research institutes, hereinafter called 'units', have been delegated the authority for health and safety for their unit. Therefore the head is responsible for having in place a fieldwork safety policy and authorisation process which reflects the particular teaching aims and research needs and activities of the unit and which controls the manner in which the fieldwork activities are conducted. The head is responsible for ensuring that risk assessments of the fieldwork are made and that a safe system of work has been established for all staff and students in their unit. The task of conducting risk assessments may be delegated to the member of academic staff under whose authority the particular fieldwork is being organised. If this happens the head must be satisfied that the fieldwork meets certain safety criteria and that the fieldwork organiser and fieldwork leader are competent to plan for and lead the fieldwork. Because of the over-arching responsibility placed on them, the head is authorised to reject any proposal for fieldwork where it is felt that there are inadequate measures to ensure the health, safety and welfare of the participants.

**Fieldwork organiser.** This person, normally a member of academic staff of the unit, requires the fieldwork to be conducted as part of a university teaching and/or research activity. The fieldwork organiser must be experienced in planning fieldwork and leading fieldwork teams and be fully familiar with all foreseeable health, safety and welfare hazards and risks. This person may not actually lead or accompany those conducting fieldwork activities, but must be satisfied that the fieldwork leader has more than adequate personal capability and competence to lead a team or party, especially under possible adverse conditions, and has sufficient awareness of the obligations to those under supervision.

**Fieldwork leader.** This person has the task of overall leadership and supervision of the fieldwork party, both severally and individually. The person is normally a member of staff of the unit although the role may be delegated to an experienced person from a third-party organisation. The person must be fully familiar with the plans made for the fieldwork, the hazards and risks which may reasonably be encountered during the fieldwork, the total number of participants in the fieldwork party including the identities (and other specific details) of each member, and the measures to ensure that a safe system is in place. Excellent communication skills are essential for a fieldwork leader, who is responsible for effectively communicating the associated safety measures to all members of the fieldwork party, and to others as appropriate, and for ensuring that such measures are fully understood and complied with. These communication skills are necessary in the field of activity where team members must receive clear and unambiguous instructions and guidance especially during emergency situations. The fieldwork leader must be satisfied that all members of the party are capable and willing to handle the challenges (general and specific, physical and intellectual) posed by the fieldtrip. The fieldwork leader may:

- allocate specific supervisory duties to particular team members, or others as appropriate
- allocate a competent person to lead sub-groups, as necessary
- delegate explicit responsibility to the leader of any sub-group to know the identities of the participants they are responsible for supervising.

In any such delegation, the fieldwork leader must be satisfied that the person(s) so appointed have all the necessary competencies to manage others in all foreseeable circumstances. Furthermore, the fieldwork leader must ensure that there is an adequate gender balance in numbers between the leadership team and the member team, if necessary.

The fieldwork leader must be explicitly authorised by the head to make any necessary adjustments to the fieldwork itinerary in the interests of health and safety, including cessation of activity or the disciplining of team members or invoking emergency or contingency plans if necessary.

**Fieldwork team member.** Each member of the fieldwork team has a responsibility to understand the role and authority of the fieldwork leader or sub-group leader, to comply with any instruction given by them and to notify them of any problems or hazards. Each team member must accept responsibility for their own safety, health and welfare and must ensure that their own actions do not endanger or adversely affect the health, safety and welfare of their colleagues. They are required to inform the fieldwork leader, at the planning stage, of any medical conditions, injuries, inabilities or impairments that they may have that may affect their health or safety or that of their colleagues.

Each member must understand the consequences of non-compliance with those in authority over the team or sub-group.

**Independent fieldworker.** This person undertakes self-managed fieldwork and has responsibilities, duties, experience and skills akin to a fieldwork organiser and a fieldwork leader. The independent fieldworker is subject to additional health and safety requirements (such as assessments for lone working) and must possess a series of capabilities and resources which are concomitant to the fieldwork proposed and consistent with ensuring health and safety. The health and safety elements of all such fieldwork undertaken in this manner must be explicitly agreed with the head.

## Health and Safety Policy, Procedure and Authorisation Process

Each unit must have in place a fieldwork health and safety policy, procedure and authorisation process which reflects the unit's particular teaching aims and research needs and activities, and which controls the manner in which the fieldwork activities are conducted. It is essential that any planned fieldwork is subjected to a rigorous, systematic, and objective process which is made accountable to an agreed level of authorisation within the unit. The policy and authorisation process should account for the particular activities, hazards and risks that are intrinsic to the unit's fieldwork activities, and should give clear guidance on the level of safety tolerance that the head of unit permits. For example, a head of unit should never allow staff or students to travel to a war zone or where a life-threatening epidemic is in sway, and its policy should categorically state this. However, some fieldwork may be assessed as being low risk. In between these are the various grades of risk that the unit needs to foresee, consider, assess and control. The policy document should detail the processes for risk analysis and management, and should include the following:

- Fieldwork planning and risk assessments
- Authorisation, appeals and escalation procedures
- Threat analysis during travel and at destination(s)
- Incident management and emergency plans
- Insurance matters
- Accident and near-miss reporting processes and procedures
- Competency and training
- Post-fieldwork review processes.

For further details on how to construct a unit fieldwork health and safety policy document see Appendix A.

## Threat Analysis

Some field trips, including those abroad, may require consideration of particular threats, such as political unrest, security issues, significant natural hazards, or health risks. In addition to the field/site destination(s), thought should also be given to the associated travel elements. Should such threats be deemed foreseeable then the competencies of the fieldwork planners and leaders and the capabilities of the team members should be given particular consideration. Adequate briefing sessions should be held for all team members highlighting any particular potential threats and giving

clear instructions on how to deal with them. A number of agencies or other sources could assist (see Appendix B).

## Planning and Risk Assessment

The head of unit must be satisfied that the academic learning outcomes of the fieldwork are worth the inherent risks. However, in addition to planning the academic teaching or research aims and objectives of the fieldwork, the head must ensure that the health and safety elements of the fieldwork are also planned for. Particular attention must be paid by fieldwork planners and leaders against complacency when conducting well established but high-risk activities or with routine activities in unfamiliar locations. The head must ensure that all fieldwork planned and carried out by staff is consistent with both university safety policy and guidelines, and with the unit's own policy for fieldwork health and safety.

Some fieldwork trips may be relatively simple, routine, repetitive and low risk, requiring very limited planning. Such activities may rely on more generic risk assessments. However, despite their apparent similarities all fieldwork trips are unique. Competencies in each group may differ, weather conditions may be a factor, individual special needs may have to be accommodated, and there may be minor changes to site locations or the introduction of new methods, routes, or activities. Fieldwork is no different from any other university activity which is subject to occupational health and safety law. Legislation requires that every work activity is assessed for risk and that risk reduction controls be put in place before the activity commences. This process requires:

- identifying hazards associated with the planned fieldwork
- determining the harm that such hazards present
- identifying who might be harmed
- assessing the levels of risks associated with the hazards
- putting in place measures to control or reduce the risks
- naming persons responsible for putting the control measures in place
- reviewing the effectiveness of the control measures and taking the necessary action

The fieldwork risk assessment should be undertaken by a competent person, one who has knowledge and experience of the tasks and locations being considered as well as an understanding of risk assessment and management procedures; this person is usually the fieldwork planner or fieldwork leader. General guidelines and methodology for conducting risk assessments are given at the link <http://www.nuigalway.ie/healthsaf/?menu=3>, which details the considerations for making a risk assessment. The nature of fieldwork undertaken by members of the university is extremely varied and it is not possible to be prescriptive in this document on all the hazards that may be present in the various types of fieldwork. A checklist of general fieldwork hazards is given in Appendix C. Of particular note in this context is the requirement on the planners to ensure that they have permission and approval from the relevant authorities to enter the fieldwork site and perform the intended activities. Furthermore, consideration must be given by the planners to the possibility of students or staff members making unauthorised return visits to the fieldwork site under the auspices of the university. Appendix D shows the information that is required to complete a risk assessment for fieldwork and has a step-wise approach to ensuring that all the necessary issues are considered by all the relevant persons.

## Accidents and Emergency Response Planning

The level and depth of emergency planning relates directly to the levels of risk in the fieldwork. Emergency issues will have been considered at the general planning and risk assessment stage, but their critical importance merits separate attention here. An emergency plan must be prepared specifically, or generically, depending upon the circumstances of the fieldwork, the number of participants involved, the complexity of the location and the activities envisaged. An emergency plan must be prepared for all types of fieldwork, particularly where independent, that is lone fieldwork, is planned. A fieldwork emergency plan should address the following issues, as appropriate:

- available support, including named home-support contacts
- methods for contacting next-of-kin
- missing persons procedure
- medical emergencies
- first aid emergencies
- repatriation protocols
- financial resources
- communication strategies
- civil unrest and natural disasters
- embassy/consular contacts
- media management

The emergency plan must be agreed in advance with other collaborating/cooperating institutions, university departments, expedition centres or service providers. The plan must be made clear to all fieldwork team members, and to the parents/guardians of any members who are vulnerable adults or who are under 18 years of age. A list of emergency contact numbers should be given to all team members. Relevant fieldwork first aid and rescue training must be considered, completed and refreshed (as appropriate) by team members if deemed appropriate by the risk assessment. Standard first aid packs should be included with the fieldwork equipment, their contents appropriate to the risk assessment and numbers on the team. Accident and emergency procedures must be clearly understood by all participants. An outline procedure to follow in the event of an accident is given in Appendix E.

## Insurance

Having insurance in place will not of itself prevent accidents or incidents. Insurance cover is one means of controlling the effects that an accident or incident has on the individual, the university or a third-party during a fieldtrip. The fieldwork planner and/or head of unit are strongly advised to engage with the university insurer via the Buildings Office to ensure that their planned activities comply with the terms and restrictions of the relevant insurance policies. The fieldwork planner is also responsible for ensuring that all members of the fieldwork party have relevant insurance cover appropriate to the fieldwork location and activities, including, for example:

- travel
- personal liability



- personal accident
- professional indemnity
- vehicle/boat (including on borrowed and hired vehicles)

In addition, insurance against failed equipment or instrumentation should be considered particularly if such equipment is critical to the success or failure of the fieldwork.

## Supply of Information

Success in any fieldwork is very dependent upon the exchange and supply of information between the fieldwork planners, leaders, team members and others. This is particularly important for emergency situations or where responsibility for health, safety and welfare of the team members is split between cooperating institutions, etc. It is the responsibility of the planners and leaders to ensure that they receive the necessary personal information about each of their team, and in return to inform their team and other parties, including the home university contact, with the necessary information to ensure a safe and healthy fieldwork experience. Fieldwork planners and team leaders must ensure that all such necessary information is readily accessible as required, particularly hazards, risk assessments, control measures, persons responsible and resources available. A checklist of the range of information issues that fieldwork planners must consider is given in Appendix F. Personal information is protected under legislation and planners and leaders must comply with its provisions.

## Communications

Clear and efficient communication structures underpin the success of fieldwork, especially in emergency situations. This equally applies to supervised, routine, low risk fieldwork as it does to independent/lone fieldwork. Clear lines of communications must exist at the outset of planning the fieldwork, and it is the responsibility of the fieldwork planner and leaders to ensure that such lines are kept open at all times. This is particularly important when dealing with team members or students who may be relatively inexperienced in some social skills, or knowledge of fieldwork in general, or of the specific hazards and academic aims of the proposed fieldwork. In addition, team leaders must be aware of sensitive or personal issues that may affect some team members, and must have the skill set to deal and communicate on such matters with tact and discretion. In emergency situations, the communication and leadership skills of the team leader and associates are tested to the full. Communication technologies and equipment in the field must be sufficiently robust and have proven effectiveness; it is the responsibility of the team leader to ensure this. Effective communications with third parties, such as collaborators, support services, intermediaries, tour operators, host organisations and emergency services, will ensure that all such parties are clear on their services and obligations particularly in relation to safety, health and welfare.

## Competence and Training

Competence in fieldwork health and safety is required of all team participants. The issue of competence not only includes the three commonly-accepted parameters of knowledge, experience and qualifications, but also includes acceptance by which one's own limitations in certain areas may be limited or insufficient. These limitations or insufficiencies must be assessed by the fieldwork

organisers and the appropriate action taken. It must also be accepted that academic knowledge of a particular subject, geographic location or research technique is different from fieldwork leadership and people management skills. The head of unit must be satisfied that the planners and leaders and any lone fieldworkers have the necessary skills, judgement and resources to conduct fieldwork before approval is granted. Where training is given it may be necessary to assess competence and knowledge by means of a written test. This is particularly important for first aid and for the use of safety-critical equipment and equipment designed for emergency use. Core training aspects are listed in Appendix G.

## Supervision

The level of safety supervision will vary greatly in fieldwork activities and will be dependent on the risk assessment. The factors which influence decision making include:

- the nature of the fieldwork
- the location and weather conditions of the fieldwork
- the fieldwork experience of the leadership team
- the individual needs of the team members, including age, maturity levels, fieldwork experience, special needs
- the external requirements of other parties, including enforcement and regulatory authorities

There are two approaches to fieldwork safety supervision:

1. Direct supervision, where a member of the leadership team is present with one or all team members all the time, thus being in a position to intervene in person immediately if necessary in the event of a safety related issue. This type of supervision is necessary where there are high risk activities, high risk locations, and where any team member may require direct support or assistance.
2. Indirect supervision, where a member of the leadership team is present but not able to intervene immediately. This type of supervision may be appropriate where team individuals have the competencies and resources to deal with any foreseeable hazards which have been previously assessed for risk, and is consistent with experienced technical and academic staff field work and some types of post-graduate project, or for low-risk group fieldwork or group social activities.

Supervision also applies to the recreational and social components, in terms of personal time, while on fieldwork. Personal time can be defined as:

1. Time when programmed fieldwork is not taking place but fieldworkers remain under the responsibility of the university or other host institution. Examples of this category of personal time include scheduled group dining, recreational pursuits, sporting activities, sightseeing, social activities and outings.
2. Time apart from programmed fieldwork and scheduled pursuits listed in 1. above. Examples of this category of personal time include social and sporting activities organised or pursued by one or more team members, including late night activities to bars, clubs or other venues.

The unit's fieldwork code of conduct should detail the expectations placed on fieldwork members in terms of behaviour and the measures available to leaders to sanction and discipline those who do not abide by the code. The unit's fieldwork code of conduct must clearly state the circumstances where the responsibilities for safety, health and welfare rest with individual team members and where the responsibilities lay with the university. Fieldwork leaders and team members must consider the risks arising from unscheduled individual and group pursuits where local knowledge is made available to indicate that such risks exist. Where such risks are known but ignored fieldwork leaders must explain the consequences of the risk to the intended persons and clearly explain where responsibilities for health, safety and welfare lay.

## Health and Medical Issues

The fieldwork risk assessment exercise must identify all foreseeable hazards that may affect the health of fieldworkers, such as certain diseases or parasites, in the target location and travelling to and from it. The assessment must also include any pre-disposition that fieldworkers may have to certain hazards or conditions (e.g. sea-sickness, vertigo) and any pre-existing medical conditions that they may have (e.g. diabetes, epilepsy, asthma) which may be exacerbated by fieldwork or travel. The assessment must also account for the general physical fitness of every team member to cope with the general challenges that fieldwork may pose (e.g. long-haul flying, adverse weather, and traversing difficult terrain). Fieldwork planners should consider whether specialist medical assessments are needed for fieldworkers presenting with health issues before they are accepted on the fieldtrip. To this end, planners and leaders should ensure that they have clear lines of communication with the university's occupational physician and/or the physician in the Student Health Unit. Individual consent forms for fieldworkers, outlining any health hazards and measures that may need to be taken in the event of an emergency, should be considered by the fieldwork planners. A checklist on health issues for planners and leaders is in Appendix H. It is important that planners and leaders have detailed information on the health status of the participants. Appendix J is a specimen health questionnaire which should be offered for each person to complete and which should be checked by the appropriate physician.

## Fieldworkers with Special Needs

The university has a duty to ensure that staff and student fieldworkers with special needs are not put at a significant disadvantage compared with their colleagues. Fieldwork planners and leaders must consider how best to make reasonable adjustments to their fieldwork plans and activities so as to facilitate persons with special needs. Nevertheless, this consideration needs to be set against the wider safety issues that planners and leaders must consider when they are judging the suitability of participants from a health and safety perspective. Planners and leaders are advised to seek advice from the appropriate University authorities if they need clarification on this issue.

## Third Party Providers

The success of many fieldwork expeditions depends on the cooperation of third party providers (TPP). This is particularly important when dealing with providers outside the State. TPPs can supply a wide variety of travel and fieldwork services and products including transportation and package travel, specialist outdoor activity leaders, specialist advisors, dive services, field study centres, in-

country guides, vehicle and boat suppliers and drivers, specialist equipment, laboratory facilities, and accommodation and catering specialisms. Host and partner organisations and collaborators (including academic institutions) and property owners (including county councils and building contractors) should be regarded as TPPs. The head of unit has a responsibility to ensure that any TPP involved in the fieldwork has considered the health and safety implications of its services and/or products for its clients. The head must also ensure that TPPs are vetted on the risks of failure of their operations and the potential impact on the safety, health and welfare of the fieldwork team. Such vetting is again particularly important when dealing with TPPs in other countries, and/or where a TPP has a safety-critical role in the fieldwork. It is insufficient to engage a TPP simply on word-of-mouth recommendation or reputation. Health and safety statements, risk assessments, insurance cover, accident records, etc, of the TPP should be considered (as necessary) at the risk assessment stage by the fieldwork planners to determine suitability. Issues to consider when engaging a TPP are listed in Appendix K.

### Accommodation and Catering

Accommodation and catering contribute significantly to the learning outcomes of the fieldwork and to the health and safety of the fieldwork party. This aspect of fieldwork depends upon its location and purpose, with accommodation ranging from city centre hotels and hostels to home-stays to isolated bunkhouses and tents. The aim of the fieldwork planners is to identify and control the many intrinsic risks that are associated with fieldwork accommodation and catering facilities. It is the responsibility of the fieldwork planner and the fieldwork leader to assess the suitability and standard of accommodation and catering arrangements prior to the work; specialist guidance may be required to fulfil this obligation. This can be a challenge particularly if the accommodation and catering is arranged by others in another country. In these circumstances the accommodation and catering providers must be regarded as third party providers and be subject to the necessary management control measures (see Third Party Providers, above). Issues to consider when planning accommodation and catering are listed in Appendix L.

### Travel and Transport

Transport and travel requirements include all journeys to and from the fieldwork destination location(s) and in and between locations. It includes international travel. The risk and/or complexity of the travel arrangements may require a greater degree of active management by the fieldwork leader to ensure that all team members arrive safely and in good health. The provision of transport may range from public transport and major commercial carriers to TPPs (see above), in addition to fieldworkers using their own vehicles. Travel and transport insurance (see above) must be considered as a means by which risks are managed. The fieldwork team leader must be allowed the flexibility and given the resources to amend travel and transport arrangements where safety-critical issues become evident, either at the planning stage or when fieldwork has commenced. This includes planning for back-up support in remote and isolated locations. It is the responsibility of the planners and leaders to ensure the suitability of persons either in the fieldwork team or from TPPs to drive vehicles in terms of competence and licensing. A checklist of issues to consider for travel and transport is in Appendix M.

## Equipment

The suitability of equipment, including safety equipment, safety clothing and personal protective equipment (PPE) is decided at the planning stage. Planners must ensure that all equipment is used only for the purpose that it was manufactured and that it is suitable for its intended use. Equipment must be operated or worn only by competent persons who may have to undergo training to meet this requirement. Equipment must be checked and tested well before departure by competent persons following, where necessary, written schemes of examination. Hired equipment must also meet appropriate safety standards and be properly maintained. Safety-critical damaged equipment must be removed from circulation and repaired and re-tested before use. Items required for safety purposes should be duplicated and transported separately where possible. Electrical equipment in particular must be tested and maintained to certified standards such as portable appliance testing (PAT). Equipment with reduced voltage (110 volts or less), earth leakage measures, water -proofed and spark proof, should be used out of doors. Firearms, explosives, chemical and biological agents necessary for equipment must only be managed by licensed, trained and competent persons. PPE used as a risk reduction measure of final resort must be supplied according to the risk assessment and must be suitable, approved (where appropriate), fitted and comfortable to the wearer. A checklist for equipment issues is in Appendix N.

## Appendix A. Topics for Consideration in a School Fieldwork Safety Policy

PLEASE NOTE: This is a not an exhaustive list

- The scope of the policy
  - Specific risk assessment for every fieldwork event?
  - Exclude low risk sedentary fieldwork?
  - Can any fieldwork activities be excluded by default?
  - Accounts for international fieldwork?
  - Accommodates staff, students and others' activities?
  - Recognises fieldworkers with special needs?
  - Specifies minimum requirements for any fieldwork event?
  - Does it need to address ethical issues?
- The limits of approval authority
  - Does the policy clearly set out the roles and responsibilities of heads of units, fieldwork planners and fieldwork leaders in relation to pre-approval of all/some types of fieldwork, and provide for a step-wise escalation to ensure a robust approval process?
  - Under which conditions does it specify approval/advice to be sought/required from the university or the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) for travel to certain locations or countries?
- Situations where fieldwork members refuse to travel or to comply with pre-conditions notwithstanding approval being granted
- Basic codes of conduct for procedure and behaviour for both fieldwork leaders and supervisors, and for team members
- Requirement for written threat analysis
  - For all fieldwork?
  - Where indicated by the university or the DFA?
- Insurance issues and clear instruction on how these are to be managed
- The standards of accommodation and catering required for the various fieldwork activities.
- General procedures on how to deal with 3<sup>rd</sup> party providers, collaborators, intermediaries, in terms of safety responsibilities of team members
- Information exchange, including personal data, with other parties, and under which circumstances, and what pre-conditions (such as informed consent) need to be in place beforehand
- Minimum competency levels for fieldwork planners, fieldwork leaders and fieldwork team members
- Language interpreter or interpretation facilities for overseas fieldtrips
- Specify conditions in which minimum first aid support must be available
- Staff:student ratios and gender balances
- Provision and payment for immunisations. What if immunisation is declined?
- Policy review – who conducts it, when, and who follows through?

**Appendix B. Resources and Agencies to Assist with Threat Analysis**

1. The university insurer (via the Buildings Office)
2. The Government Department of Foreign Affairs:  
<http://www.dfa.ie/home/index.aspx?id=275>
3. Met Eireann
4. In-country contacts
5. US ([http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis\\_pa\\_tw/tw/tw\\_1764.html](http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis_pa_tw/tw/tw_1764.html)) and UK ([www.fco.gov.uk/](http://www.fco.gov.uk/)) governments travel advisory bodies
6. Academic and professional bodies' websites

## Appendix C. Checklist of General Fieldwork Hazards

PLEASE NOTE: This is a not an exhaustive list

Consider the following:

- Travelling to the destination
- Lack of permission to access the fieldwork location(s)
- Unlicensed drivers, non-road worthy vehicles, non-competent drivers (e.g. handling trailers, AWD vehicles, breakdowns)
- Travelling around in the vicinity of fieldwork location (e.g. pipelines, power lines, rivers)
- The specific activity undertaken
- Threats to personal security from terrorism, crime, or aggression from members of the public
- Equipment, instruments and chemical agents (manual handling, electrical defects, failures, chemical release and harm)
- Unsafe accommodation (fire, carbon monoxide poisoning, electrical safety, security)
- Extremes of weather (hypothermia, sunstroke, dehydration, frost bite)
- Location (sea or fresh water courses, quicksand, marshes, landslide, rough terrain, mountains, cliffs, avalanche, work in trenches, quarries, slurry pits, confined spaces)
- Contact with hazardous flora and fauna
- Pesticides, dusts, contaminated air or soils or water courses
- Locations with low infrastructure and support
- Ill-health (prevalence of disease, food-borne illness, distance from medical facilities)
- Inadequate or lack of competent supervision
- Lone working, night working
- Fitness or competence of participants on supervised courses (e.g. pre-existing medical conditions, vaccinations, pregnancy)
- Inherently dangerous activities (e.g. climbing, diving, caving)
- Inability to communicate or summon assistance
- Poor or inappropriate participant behaviour
- Failure to develop suitable contingency plans and possible consequences of failure
- In addition, inadequate insurance cover (e.g. travel, personal and public liabilities, personal accident, professional indemnity)
- Also, consider the potential for introduction of any hazards into the environment by the fieldwork activities (e.g. contamination [litter, leakages], disturbance of ecosystems, fire)
- Risk of bringing home some dangerous disease or pest or prohibited animal or plant species
- Unauthorised return to the fieldwork location either during the trip or, while still a student/staff member, after the trip has finished



## Appendix D. Risk Assessment Form for Fieldwork

School/Research Unit \_\_\_\_\_

Discipline \_\_\_\_\_

Type of fieldwork \_\_\_\_\_

(e.g. independent student project, research, supervised field trip, other {describe})

Dates: From \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_

Location(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Address of residential base \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Fieldwork Organiser (PRINT) \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Fieldwork Leader (PRINT) \_\_\_\_\_

**STEP 1:** Consider all foreseeable hazards (refer to Appendix C):

- PHYSICAL HAZARDS
- BIOLOGICAL HAZARDS
- CHEMICAL HAZARDS
- MAN-MADE HAZARDS
- PERSONAL SAFETY HAZARDS
- OTHER (specify)

**Step 2:** Assess the risks that each hazard poses, accounting for:

- the LIKELIHOOD of exposure to the hazard
- the NUMBER of persons exposed
- the FREQUENCY of exposure
- the CONSEQUENCES of exposure

**Step 3:** List the current control measures that are in place to reduce the risk associated with each hazard. These measures may include:

- Written procedures, including those for emergencies
- Certified and checked equipment
- Safety clothing and equipment
- Skills training and competencies
- Vaccinations
- Other measures, as necessary

**Step 4:** List the additional control measures required to reduce the risks to acceptable levels. These measures must include those listed in step 3 above. All necessary measures must be in place and understood by all relevant persons well-before the fieldwork starts.

**Step 5:** Specify the names of those responsible for ensuring the control measures are in place

**Step 6:** Review the risk assessment after the fieldtrip to determine its robustness

The procedure for conducting, checking and approving risk assessments should be detailed in the school's own policy on fieldwork safety. The sequence below is a suggested guide:

1. Person conducting this risk assessment: (e.g. post-graduate student, post-doctoral researcher, technical officer, fieldwork organiser, fieldwork leader, lecturer, supervisor)

Name (PRINT) \_\_\_\_\_

Title/position (PRINT) \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

2. This risk assessment has been checked by (e.g. fieldwork organiser, leader, lecturer, supervisor, who is more competent/senior to the person named in 1. above):

Name (PRINT) \_\_\_\_\_

Title/position (PRINT) \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

3. This risk assessment has been approved (if necessary) by (head of discipline, head of school, or a deputy):

Name (PRINT) \_\_\_\_\_

Title/position (PRINT) \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

## **Appendix E. Accident Protocol Outline**

- Ensure that one accident does not produce more; withdraw the remainder of the team (if relevant) to a safe place as conditions may be dangerous or may deteriorate
- Attend to the injured person, keeping only the minimum number of persons to assist as necessary
- Send for help, if the injuries are serious. Ensure that the emergency services are given all the information required including the exact location
- Warn others of the dangers
- Inform the fieldwork leader
- Depending on the seriousness of the injuries the fieldwork leader must inform the University authorities as soon as practicable. Serious trauma and death must be reported to the University immediately.
- As discretion permits, do not discuss the situation with anyone except emergency service personnel and University officials
- Conduct an investigation when practicable. Compile a factual account, recording the date, time, location, weather conditions, those present, witnesses, taking personal statements as necessary. Complete a university accident report form and submit it to the Safety Office

## Appendix F. Example Checklist of Information to be Provided to Fieldwork Team Members

- Full itinerary, including travel dates, travel arrangements, modes of transport, overnight stops and sleeping arrangements, connections, etc
- Detailed explanation of the aims of the fieldwork and the activities involved
- Names and contact details of all team leaders and other relevant persons
- Gender mix of leadership team
- Associated personal costs or financial outlay
- General and specific foreseeable hazards of the fieldwork
- Actions required, written if necessary, of certain persons following the risk assessments
- Details of safety training, instruction or information related to any fieldwork activities or peculiar to the fieldwork location, including security issues
- Details of any emergency measures, such as evacuation procedures and contact numbers
- Purchase, use and maintenance of personal safety equipment and clothing, as advised by team leader
- Cultural and language issues
- Preventive medical treatment, such as vaccinations of other prophylactic measures
- Standards of physical fitness, competence and ability concomitant with the fieldwork envisaged, and method for proving such fitness if deemed necessary by the risk assessment, e.g. ability to swim [clothed] for 50 metres
- Sufficient in-country orientation information and advice
- Recreational and leisure options and procedures
- Relevant mandatory and discretionary insurance cover
- Code of conduct
- Requirements for passports, visas and other transit regulatory issues
- Relevant contact details of appropriate 3<sup>rd</sup>-party collaborators and service providers
- Contact details of home-contact, and communication protocols for international dialling and emailing
- Accommodation and catering arrangements, including sleeping arrangements, food preparation and hygiene protocols (if appropriate)
- Relevant reading and website research

## **Appendix G. Suggested Issues for Training**

- General risk assessment
- Fieldwork risk assessment
- Fieldwork planning
- Fieldwork induction and dynamics
- Leadership and team dynamics
- Emergency incident management
- Behaviour code
- Physical fitness
- Equipment and instrument use and maintenance
- Manual handling
- Preventive medicine and travel health
- First-aid and fieldwork first-aid
- Survival and rescue techniques
- Specific activity training (e.g. navigation, chain-saw usage)
- Language and cultural awareness

## Appendix H. Checklist on Medical Issues

- Long-haul flights
- Driving
- Pre-existing medical conditions (diabetes, asthma, epilepsy, vertigo, mental health)
- Pre-disposition to certain conditions and hazards (phobias, travel sickness)
- Pregnancy, insofar as the individual has brought this to the attention of the leadership, and where the pregnancy may require certain management measures or actions as advised by the individual's medical practitioner
- Method of disclosure of personal information and sharing such information with 3<sup>rd</sup> parties as necessary
- Information on hazards that may affect fieldworkers' health, such as those associated with:
  - information on individual's general health requirements necessary for the fieldwork
  - food and drink, hygiene and welfare (e.g. water supplies, certain food types)
  - climatic and environmental illnesses (e.g. heat related illnesses, altitude sickness)
  - distances to and from, or communications with medical facilities
  - pre-trip vaccinations and other prophylactic measures, including arrangements for the suitable storage of such prophylaxis in the field
- Written consent from parents or guardians for administering medication or first-aid on young persons (<18 yrs) or vulnerable adults
- Ensure that participants with current medical prescriptions bring sufficient quantities, in accordance with the host country's allowances
- Authorised medical validation certificates of prescription medicines for cross-border or other regulatory matters
- Medical and dental check-up, particularly before travelling to extreme or remote areas for extended periods
- Adequate number of trained first aiders with competencies proportionate to the risks identified in the risk assessment

## Appendix J. Health Questionnaire

To allow for accurate risk assessments to be made of the fieldwork by the planners, the health of the fieldwork team members must be known. This information is private and confidential (subject to NUI Galway protocols) and will only be shared with authorised 3<sup>rd</sup> parties in the event of an emergency requiring such disclosure. Please complete all parts of this form and return it to the person named\* at the bottom of the form.

DO YOU CURRENTLY OR HAVE YOU SUFFERED WITH THE FOLLOWING:	YES	NO
<b>1. HEART AND CIRCULATORY DISORDERS</b>		
a. Heart attack	___	___
b. Angina	___	___
c. Murmurs	___	___
d. Reynaud's disease	___	___
e. High or Low blood pressure	___	___
<b>2. BLOOD DISORDERS</b>		
a. Anaemia	___	___
b. Sickle cell anaemia	___	___
c. Haemophilia	___	___
<b>3. MEDICAL CONDITIONS</b>		
a. Asthma	___	___
b. Hay fever	___	___
c. Diabetes	___	___
d. Epilepsy	___	___
e. Crohn's disease	___	___
f. Ulcerative colitis	___	___
g. Allergies (pollen, Penicillin, food types)	___	___
h. If you have an allergy do you carry medication to treat it?	___	___
i. Skin conditions - please specify: _____		
<b>4. PSYCHIATRIC CONDITIONS</b>		
a. Depression	___	___
b. Nervous debility	___	___
c. Other – please specify: _____		
<b>5. REGISTERED / UNREGISTERED DISABILITY</b>		
a. Visually impaired	___	___
b. Hearing impaired	___	___
c. Ambulatory impaired	___	___
d. Other – please specify: _____		
e. Back pain, neck pain condition	___	___
f. Arm, leg or foot injury	___	___
g. Arthritis or joint problems	___	___

h. Hernia \_\_\_\_\_

6. GENERAL

a. Are you in good health? \_\_\_\_\_

b. Can you swim? \_\_\_\_\_

c. Do you have specific dietary requirements? \_\_\_\_\_

d. If yes to c. above, please specify: \_\_\_\_\_

e. Is there anything which to your knowledge may impact or restrict the activities and objectives of the field trip as explained to you? \_\_\_\_\_

f. If yes to e. above, please specify: \_\_\_\_\_

g. Are you currently taking medicine or under treatment? \_\_\_\_\_

h. If yes to g. above, please specify: \_\_\_\_\_

i. Have you checked with the team leader if your vaccination status is appropriate? \_\_\_\_\_

PARTICIPANT'S NAME (please print) \_\_\_\_\_

PARTICIPANT'S SIGNATURE \_\_\_\_\_ DATE \_\_\_\_\_

SUPERVISOR'S NAME (please print) \_\_\_\_\_

SUPERVISOR'S SIGNATURE \_\_\_\_\_ DATE \_\_\_\_\_

PHYSICIAN'S NAME (please print) \_\_\_\_\_

PHYSICIAN'S SIGNATURE \_\_\_\_\_ DATE \_\_\_\_\_

\*The named person highlighted from those above



## **Appendix K. Example Checklist when Considering Third Party Providers**

- Evidence of professional competencies, accredited memberships, and similar affiliations to demonstrate suitability to act as a TPP
- Evidence of excellent track record on health and safety services to clients
- Availability of risk assessments to cover the services sought
- Adequate insurance cover, particularly public liability. Advice from the university insurer should be sought on all insurance matters
- Evidence of adoption of best practice in fieldwork safety at home or abroad. Compliance with/adherence to relevant and recognised codes of practice or standards, such as BS 8848:2007+A1:2009 Specification for the provision of visits, fieldwork, expeditions, and adventurous activities, outside the United Kingdom
- Awareness of monitoring records of positive or negative experiences, including reliability, of TPPs under consideration
- Suitability of TPP to enter into agreement on supervision of health and safety of field party members, with particular regard for safety-critical activities or locations
- Clear and written designation of responsibilities, including emergency or contingency measures, towards field party members
- Clear command and control responsibilities for health and safety when transfer of supervision occurs from the fieldwork leader to, for example, a boat skipper or diving organiser
- Contingency plans if the TPP proves, in practice, to be unsuitable.

## **Appendix L. Example Checklist when Considering Accommodation and Catering**

- Take proportionate steps to assess the suitability of accommodation and catering facilities
- Fire management, including fire safety certification, monitoring and alarms systems, well lit and unobstructed emergency evacuation routes, written instructions, extinguishers
- General safety of accommodation structure and facilities, including elevators, balconies, stairs, pool, electric and gas supply and usage
- Personal security, danger from fauna/flora, naturally occurring hazards, political and social unrest, isolation, telecommunications coverage
- Measures available to planners and leaders to change accommodation booking or venue if it proves unsuitable from a health and safety perspective
- Information for team members on the accommodation and catering arrangements giving additional guidance if it is likely to be outside the participants' experience
- Basic guidelines on drinking water, food choices and food handling. This is more important in locations where food hygiene may be a challenge, avoiding foods such as washed salads, cold cooked meats, un-pasteurised milk, cheeses, untreated tap water, unwashed fruit, ice in drinks, etc
- Measures to assist team members who may suffer from upset stomachs due to dietary changes and measures to manage more serious contracted illnesses such as cholera, typhoid and hepatitis A
- Measures to acknowledge food preferences (e.g. vegetarian) and food allergies (e.g. gluten)
- Guidelines on personal hygiene and hand washing, sanitation protocols. Ensure that hand washing facilities are available and that hygiene protocols are followed
- Guidelines on ensuring a balanced diet
- Provide a checklist for fieldworkers who arrange their own accommodation and catering

## **Appendix M. Example Checklist for Travel and Transport**

- Fully inform all team members of the travel arrangements, preferably face-to-face in a group
- Compliance with University's policies on travel, transport, licensing and insurance
- Vehicle/boat suitability, overloading, vehicle breakdown
- Travel sickness and illness measures
- Knowledge of speed limits, local arrangements and seat restraint usage and requirements
- Measures to manage fines for breaking transportation laws (speeding, illegal parking, etc)
- Arrangements to ensure that safety-critical fieldwork equipment and supplies are undamaged in transit
- Back up measures where transport arrangements fail or are assessed in situ as unsuitable
- Driver experience with vehicles, trailers and loads, groups and parties (extra responsibility, noise and distraction, etc), driver fatigue
- Ensure that loads carried by persons when travelling by foot are not excessive and that there are planned stops for rest and refreshment en route
- Considerations that avoid, where possible, lengthy episodes of unbroken travel or travelling at night or travelling through known security sensitive areas

## Appendix N. Example Checklist for Equipment

- Suitable for intended use
- Examined, checked, tested and maintained by competent persons according to specified protocols
- Emergency equipment and safety-critical equipment specified in the risk assessment
- Electrical equipment suitable for outdoor use, where relevant
- PAT records on electrical equipment
- Personal protective equipment suitable, fitted, checked and comfortable. PPE must be regarded as a control measure of final resort to supplement other risk reduction measures. Higher priority measures include avoidance/elimination of the hazard
- Provision and detailed inventory of duplicate equipment that has a safety critical or emergency use function
- Fieldwork leader (and deputy) has full knowledge on operation of safety critical and emergency equipment
- Hired equipment suitable and safe to use at point of hire, with demonstrations of use offered if necessary
- Manual handling risk assessment completed and manual handling training given
- Training given on correct and safe use of all equipment and instruments