



HEALTH AND SAFETY

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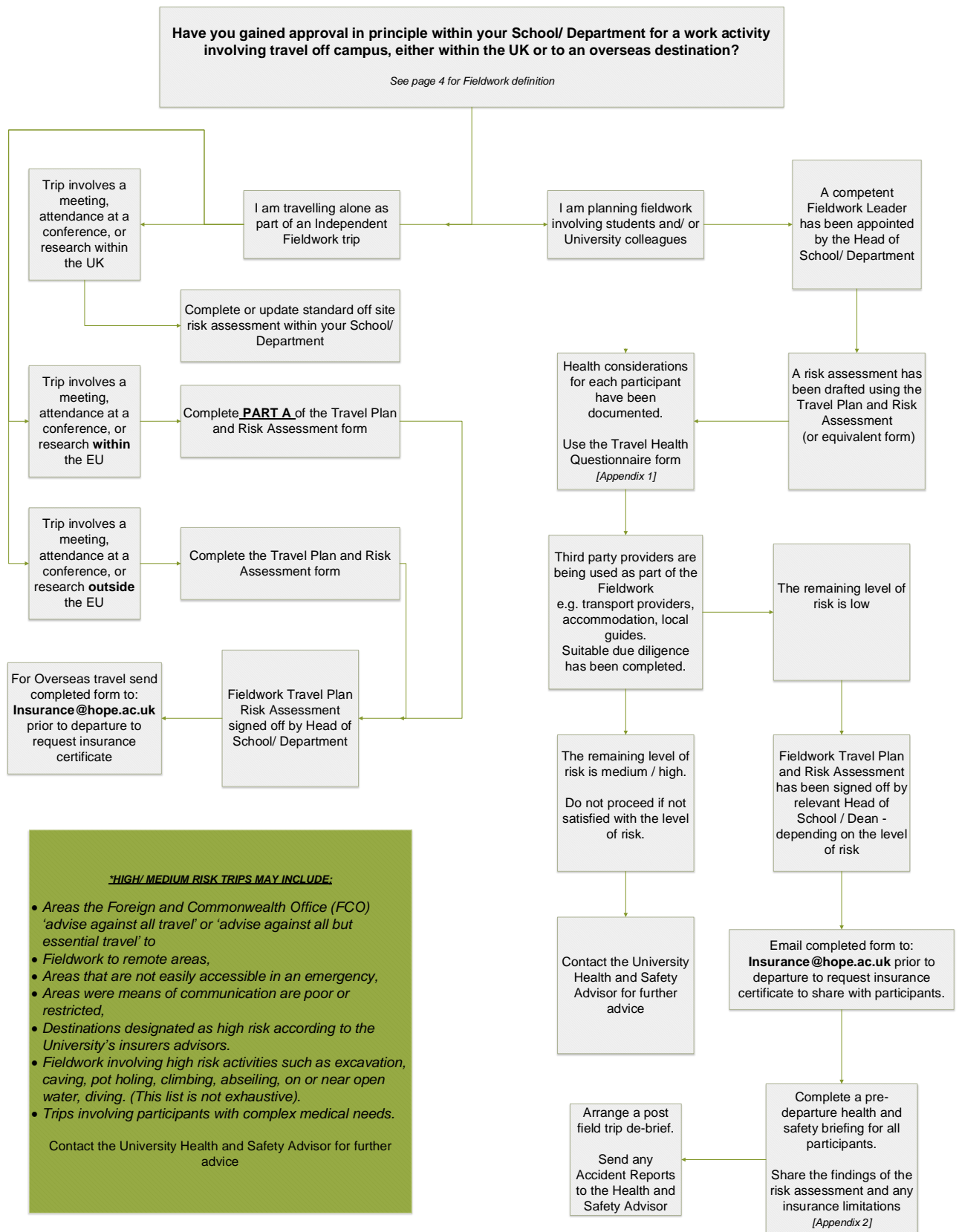
FIELDWORK

CODE OF PRACTICE

Responsibility for Policy:	Executive Director of Finance, Services and Resources
Approved by and date:	University Council - Ratified 28 November 2017
Frequency of Review:	Three Years
Next Review date:	Nov 2020
Related Policies:	Health and Safety Policy Driving at Work Policy Induction Code of Practice
Minor Revisions:	30/10/2012 12/11/2013 (added flowchart) 13/10/2017 altered Fieldwork definition, Updated risk assessment template added. 24/10/2017 Altered wording around vaccination guidance (Appendix 2) 22/06/2022 – Mental health section. Flowchart updated.
EIA:	

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Health and Safety in Fieldwork Policy Flowchart



1. Definitions used within this document:

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

This definition includes activities as diverse as attendance at recruitment fairs or undertaking social science interviews as well as activities associated with the term “fieldwork” such as survey/collection work carried out by geography students or biologists. The definition also includes Global Hope overseas trips.

This guidance does not cover student placements where the direct supervision of a student is transferred to a third party and the placement is integral to the individual student’s course. Student placements are covered by a separate code of practice.

This guidance does not cover attendance at meetings or conferences in the UK which can be demonstrably assessed as low risk and therefore excluded from most of the recommendations within this document. The University’s standard risk assessment can be used in these circumstances

Fieldwork Leader: The person with delegated operational responsibility for all aspects of the fieldwork.

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

Due Diligence: Level of investigation specifically into the health and safety capability and practice of third-party providers prior to engaging them.

Home Contact: The person in the institution, usually within the respective School/ department who is knowledgeable about the Fieldwork – nominated and contactable in an emergency and for general support. Level of knowledge or involvement should be linked to the level of risk arising from the Fieldwork.

Threat Analysis: A consideration of security and political threats, significant natural hazards and health risks.

Local Contact: A person or organisation or acts in support of the fieldwork in the location of the off-site work.

Supervised Fieldwork: Under direct supervision such as taught undergraduate or post-graduate courses however there may be periods where participants are indirectly supervised.

Independent

Fieldwork: An individual who is undertaking fieldwork on their own without direct supervision.

Dynamic Risk

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

Emergency Plan: Plans which are required to respond to an emergency situation such as a natural disaster or medical or security emergency.

Contingency Plan: An alternative plan to be put in operation if needed; the “plan B” that is required to ensure that the fieldwork is able to continue safely in foreseeable circumstances, whether or not emergency plans are invoked.

Personal Time: Time when the programmed fieldwork activities are not taking place but fieldworkers remain under the general jurisdiction of the University.

Down Time: A period of time occurring before, after, or within the overall duration of the fieldwork, but outside the jurisdiction of the University.

2. Policy Statement

This Code of Practice is intended to provide information to support the safe management of fieldwork. The Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974 and the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 place duties on the University towards employees and students while on fieldwork. It is the responsibility of the University to ensure appropriate standards are met in relation to health and safety in fieldwork and work off University premises.

A risk related approach must be considered and applied to ensure an appropriate and proportionate management system is in place that is flexible enough to cover diverse University working and travel. There will be many instances of fieldwork (e.g. attendance at recruitment fairs or short visits to European destinations) that can be assessed as low risk and can therefore be excluded from the majority of the recommendations in this Code of Practice.

The University has adopted the USHA Guidance on Health and Safety in Fieldwork (June 2018) and the UCEA Health and Safety Guidance when Working Overseas (1998). These guidance notes should be read in conjunction with this Code of Practice.

3. Summary of Typical Requirements

- a. Each department must have a robust authorisation and approval process for fieldwork and this must check and ensure competency and training of staff involved.
- b. Risk assessments may need to be prepared for the fieldwork and should control any risks by ensuring that:
 - i. A suitable number of supervisors are always present;
 - ii. Supervisors are competent and have adequate training (including first aid if necessary);
 - iii. All participants are adequately prepared and suitable lines of communication are available;
 - iv. A contingency and emergency plan is in place;
 - v. All accidents and incidents are reported and investigated.
- c. No fieldwork should be carried out until the Fieldwork Leader has considered all of the significant hazards and identified appropriate safety precautions to reduce risk to an acceptable level. This includes a threat analysis for the destination and travel.
- d. Planning must be made for reasonably foreseeable emergencies bearing in mind the likely hazards of the environment and the type of activity undertaken.
- e. All participants must be given a safety briefing before the trip. This should include adequate instruction and information on the likely, foreseeable hazards associated with the trip and the safe working practices that need to be followed, including arrangements for emergency situations.

4. Roles and Responsibilities

i. Heads of School or Department

Heads of School/ Department are delegated overall responsibility for health and safety during fieldwork activities and a suitable authorisation process must be in place. The Head of School/ Department authorising the Fieldwork is responsible for ensuring due regard has been paid to health and safety considerations.

The Head of School/Department has responsibility to ensure that any appointed Fieldwork Leader is competent and there is clarity of roles and responsibilities. Competence in this context is defined as being an appropriate combination of knowledge, experience and qualifications, but also importantly being able to acknowledge one's own limitations. The Head of School/ Department has broad responsibility to ensure risk assessments for the activity are undertaken. The completion and detail of a risk assessment will be delegated to the Fieldwork Leader or Independent Fieldworker but with the Head/Manager retaining accountability for the activity.

ii. Fieldwork Leader

The Fieldwork Leader should have detailed knowledge and understanding of the safety measures in place relevant to the activity. The fieldwork leader also assumes responsibility for ensuring such measures have been communicated to accompanying staff, participants and are understood by all.

In addition, the Fieldwork Leader must;

- ensure via the risk assessment that all safety precautions are observed for the duration of the work.
- ensure the level of supervision is adequate, allocating specific supervisory duties to leaders of any sub-groups identified during the course of the activity.
- Ensure there is a clear command structure for larger or multi-site activities. In high risk environments, duties may be passed onto other responsible persons, but the overall duty for ensuring the safety of the Fieldwork remains with the Fieldwork leader.
- Ensure any adjustments to itineraries are made in the interests of safety including the potential cessation of the activity. The Fieldwork Leader will be responsible for all instructions being issued to participants including pre-departure briefings and ensuring control measures in the risk assessment are implemented.
- be prepared to carry out dynamic risk assessments and have the authority to implement emergency or contingency plans if necessary.
- actively monitor where the fieldwork carries a high level of threat, and review itinerary's in response to any change to the level of threat. The University should be alerted to any change in threat level.

iii. Independent Fieldworkers

Independent Fieldworkers undertaking travel alone or self-managed fieldwork have a responsibility to take reasonable care in their activities. In practice independent fieldworkers will assume many of the responsibilities outlined above, the detail of these should be agreed in advance with the Head of School/ Department.

iv. Participants

Fieldwork participants shall acknowledge their own responsibility for the health and safety of both themselves and others. They must make sure they understand and observe any instruction given to them by the Fieldwork Leader or other supervisor and to bring any questions or problems, particularly those of understanding, to the attention of their supervisor. Participants should comply with the expected standards of behaviour including local laws, rules of custom within the host country or institution.

The authority and responsibilities of the Fieldwork Leader in relation to safety should be clearly defined and understood by all members of the party.

They should also consider advising the Fieldwork Leader of their personal circumstances (such as disability or ill health) or restrictions that might affect their ability to participate or put them or others at increased risk of harm. Participants must report any accident or dangerous occurrence as soon as possible.

5. Planning

Departments should have a management system in place that includes approval protocols that meet their needs for fieldwork, without creating unnecessary bureaucracy.

Heads of School/ Department are responsible for ensuring that there is a procedure in place to ensure where necessary that a suitable and sufficient risk assessment is carried out for off-site activities and that approval has been given.

It is vital that all fieldwork is planned sufficiently in advance of the intended date of departure to allow the institution to consider the proposal in suitable detail and approve it at an appropriate level. The effort and detail required in planning fieldwork is largely commensurate with the risks identified. Particular attention should be paid to fieldwork leaders becoming complacent with conducting well established but high risk activities and/or conducting routine work in unfamiliar or higher risk surroundings.

It is University practice that visits to countries or regions where the Foreign & Commonwealth Office (FCO) advises against travel should be avoided wherever possible. If necessary any requests for travel which present unusual or high residual risks should be referred to the Pro Vice Chancellor to review the purpose of the fieldwork and expected outcomes. This may align with Research/ Ethical approval protocols. The Health and Safety Advisor can provide guidance on whether the residual health and safety risks associated with the trip would be considered tolerable.

6. Risk Assessment

During the planning stages of any field trip a thorough written risk assessment must be carried out. The Fieldwork Leader is responsible for planning the fieldwork, making appropriate risk assessments and ensuring that any training or equipment required by staff or students is provided.

The purpose of the risk assessment is to identify the significant foreseeable hazards that may be associated with a trip so the actual risk from these can then be minimised. The complexity of the assessment should reflect the level of risk. For routine trips which are undertaken locally, standard (generic) risk assessments may be made. This should be reviewed prior to departure to ensure any changes to the risk status of the destination are considered. Overseas visits or those which contain higher elements of risk must be assessed individually and details of the plans and risk assessments recorded.

Factors to consider when carrying out such risk assessments include (non-exhaustive):

- Travel to the destination
- Travel around the vicinity of the fieldwork location
- The nature of the specific activity to be carried out,
- The location and environment in which they are to be carried out,
- Likely weather extremes
- Threats to personal security
- Unsafe accommodation
- Contact with any dangerous substances including flora or fauna
- Locations with low infrastructure or support
- Limited supervision or lone working
- Inherently dangerous activities – climbing, diving, caving

- Fitness or competence of participants
- Risk of poor or inappropriate participant behaviour
- Risk of ill health or prevalence of disease - plus standard of local medical facilities
- Failure to develop suitable contingency plans

When drawing up risk assessments, simply circulating a risk assessment document in advance to participants will not achieve safe practice in isolation. Clear and timely management arrangements must also be in place to facilitate the implementation of suitable controls. A programme of skill development and training may be required in advance of the fieldwork as part of this process.

Participants should be given an information pack or other form of communication which is easy to read and understand that can demonstrate, for example how to mitigate against sunstroke, dehydration, insect bites etc. USHA and UCEA's guidance provide more information on this area. Issues to address in a participant briefing and information pack are set out at Appendix Two.

7. Incident and Emergency response planning

The level and depth of emergency planning required will relate directly to the level of risk associated with the work off-site. The emergency plan should ensure essential actions are not forgotten in the aftermath of an incident and the staff assigned to respond are competent and understand their role in an emergency. Open source security information should be reviewed prior to travel to ensure the threat level is understood. An emergency plan should be in place before the field work begins and communicated to all participants who should know what to do and where to go in a crisis situation.

The emergency plan should, where relevant, cover the following:

- Methods for contacting next of kin.
- Available support.
- Leadership of the Fieldwork and who takes over if the Fieldwork Leader is unavailable.
- Medical emergencies and repatriation.
- Financial plan for emergencies.
- Missing persons procedure.
- Civil unrest and natural disasters.
- Media management plan.

Dealing with a medical emergency is a possibility which should be considered for ALL off-site work. Factors to consider affecting control measures include the duration of the work, the remoteness of the destination, the fitness of participants, the access to hospital facilities and standards of health care available in the country

8. Third Party Providers

One of the more challenging aspects of organising fieldwork is the vetting of third party providers, particularly if they are overseas. Typical third party providers include: accommodation providers; transport facilities; specialist outdoor activity leaders, field study centres, in-country guides and suppliers of specialist equipment or facilities. Host or partner organisations should also be treated as third party providers.

Using a third-party provider does not absolve the University of its obligations under the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974. All third party providers used or sourced should undergo suitable risk related checks on their suitability. The level of due diligence required will depend upon the individual circumstances of the work and the provider itself. It is particularly important to check out competence in relation to specialist providers e.g. diving instructors. If companies or individuals are used regularly, it is useful to keep a note of positive and negative experiences to inform future planning on courses. Public liability insurances should be checked as a standard requirement.

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

Unless there is due diligence in the selection of the third party, overall risks to the institution and its fieldworkers may increase. It may be tempting to solely rely on previous experience or word of mouth recommendation for a third party provider as the major means of control of approval, and in many cases – particularly overseas – such controls may be the most meaningful and practicable measures available. However, the University will be exposed to potential legal action in the event of an incident unless formal checks are made prior to the fieldwork and records kept – particularly if the third party provider has a safety-critical or supervisory role. An appropriate level of vetting is expected. For example, Fieldwork leaders will need to make sure as far as possible that transport arrangements overseas are suitable and fit for purpose. Consideration should be given to the safety record of providers when selecting the mode of transport (e.g. ferries and airlines in developing countries). Although national standards may differ, it is expected that fieldwork leaders source forms of transport which give appropriate standards of safety, so far as is possible. An example of this would be ensuring seat belts are fitted on hired vehicles, even in cases where there is no in-country legal requirement.

9. Health and Medical Considerations

The fieldwork risk assessment should consider the presence of health hazards associated with activity to be undertaken. These hazards may include, for example, the prevalence of certain diseases and parasites, the possibility of exposure to hazardous substances including chemicals or radioactive substances.

The assessment should also outline any minimum capabilities expected of participants, for example physical fitness, also any immunisations or prophylactic medication needed and/ or health surveillance requirements. Depending on the risk assessment the number of qualified first aiders on the trip will need to be established.

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

verification that specified minimum capabilities are met. Any request for information from a participant must comply with the Equality Act 2010.

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

10. Mental Health Considerations

Psychosocial issues can be exacerbated by being in an unfamiliar environment and separated from familiar social support systems, therefore travelling abroad can increase stress factors. This increase may lead to surfacing of more complex mental health issues. The presentation and management of these will be influenced by the available standard of healthcare at the destination, together with cultural or language related constraints therefore the incidence of additional support including repatriation for mental health issues is typically higher when compared with other medical conditions.

Discussions with fieldworkers who have disclosed a mental health condition should take place prior to departure so there is an understanding of the risks involved and support can be provided to control and mitigate those risks.

It is suggested a process to manage health concerns arising from Fieldwork is planned. Participants should be encouraged to disclose health issues to enable any necessary adjustments or support to be provided.

Consider pre-departure training as an opportunity to cover issues that may prove emotionally challenging and provide opportunity for further confidential support.

11. Insurance

The University has travel insurance in place that acts as an umbrella for travel requirements related to University business. The level of cover may differ based on each fieldwork activity so it is important fieldworkers and participants are aware of which insurances the University provides and which they may need to arrange themselves to ensure an adequate level of cover. The University Insurance Officer can provide advice during the Fieldwork planning phase.

Typically, the University's travel insurance may include;

- Emergency medical expenses
- 24-hour emergency helpline
- Search and rescue/ repatriation costs
- Cancellation/ curtailment and delay.
- Personal liability
- Personal accident
- Kidnap and ransom

Exclusions are in place for specific hazardous activities, specific countries or territories where the FCO advise against travel, incidental holiday time, some pre-existing medical conditions and curtailment exclusions linked to some infectious diseases. Where driving a vehicle overseas, there are various considerations depending on who

owns the vehicle and the carriage of passengers - if appropriate. Exclusions, limits or conditions may also apply where specialist equipment is being used and transported.

The Fieldwork Leader should liaise with University Insurance Officer to ensure an appropriate level of cover is in place prior to departure.

The Fieldwork risk assessment and emergency plan should include a consideration of the insurance capabilities overseas, based on pre-travel advice along with details of any specialist medical and travel security assistance where required to complement the existing insurance cover.

The University shall keep a central record of all travel in compliance with its duties under the Insurance Act 2015 and to aid the implementation of emergency response plans in the event of a disaster or significant event that may present a reputational risk to the institution.

12. Monitoring and review

A risk related review of fieldwork should be undertaken. It is recommended that fieldwork leaders/supervisors 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:

- Significant accidents or near-misses
- Occasions where dynamic risk assessments were needed
- There was a significant change to plans or itineraries
- Where unexpected training was needed during the fieldwork
- Potential shortcomings in planning, processes and procedures
- Management of the fieldwork



APPENDIX ONE

Health and Safety in Fieldwork Code of Practice Travel Health Questionnaire

The purpose of this questionnaire, which complies with the Equality Act 2010, is to assist Liverpool Hope University meet its statutory duty to ensure the safety of its staff and 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 that cause difficulty standing, walking, bending, lifting or stair climbing?	Yes	No
6. Do you have a current Learning Support Plan in place?	Yes	No

If you have answered yes to any of the above questions, please provide further information below:

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:

.....

Date of Birth:

.....

Signed:

.....

Date:

.....

PLEASE RETURN TO THE FIELDWORK LEADER

APPENDIX TWO – Participant Briefings

Pre Departure Participant Briefings and Participant Information Packs

Pre-departure meetings

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

- Introduce those with specific roles and responsibilities.
- Explain any inherent residual risks associated with the trip which have not been managed out.
- To advise participants on the assessed level of fitness required (ensuring Equality Act 2010 compliance), and seek confirmation in writing as appropriate.
- Act as a deadline for completion of any requested health declarations or updated personal details forms.
- Allow expectations of participants, differences in standards of accommodation, eating arrangements, sleeping arrangements, cultural differences and behavioural and security requirements to be re-enforced.
- Confirmation of travel arrangements.
- Signpost participants to vaccination requirements prior to travel.
- Provide detailed participant information packs with kit lists and general advice for the fieldwork, this may include identification of hazardous specimens and general food safety advice for the country visited.
- Ensure it is clear that the fieldwork is an educational visit/work rather than a holiday. If participants are planning to extend their stay there should be a very clear distinction between the time the course/work finishes and independent travel begins. A mixture of the two should not be permitted.

Definitions of 'Down time' and 'Personal time' should be communicated and an outline of how personal time will be arranged.

- Explain the circumstances in which a participant may be asked to leave the fieldwork and return home at their own cost, and the likely consequences of disciplinary action.

Participant information pack

For supervised courses a participant information pack should be produced. This will contain all the information the participant needs to know about the fieldwork in a user-friendly format. The health and safety elements mentioned below are just one element of the information likely to be included with this pack. Off-site work can be intense and demanding, key to minimising these negative effects is effective briefing of the participants with suitable information. Participants need to be able to mentally prepare themselves so they are not surprised about the environment in which they find themselves once on the course or during the fieldwork.

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

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

