

Code of Practice for Off Campus Activities

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1. Overview

A healthy and safe environment is an important part of any work and study place, regardless of where that may be.

In line with the University Health and Safety Policy and associated legal requirements, Faculties and Directorates are expected to make arrangements for managing the health, safety and welfare of those who may be affected by university activities. This includes any “fieldwork” and / or activity that takes place at a location away from our campuses.

2. Purpose

The university recognises that the approaches and methods used in fieldwork can vary across disciplines and can be carried out in almost all parts of the world. As such the risks associated with fieldwork / off campus working can be multiple and complex. It is important therefore that any assessment and mitigation of risk is carried out in a sensible, informed and pragmatic way.

This document sets out the measures in place at the University, to enable the many forms of off-campus activity to take place, whilst ensuring the health and safety of those involved.

3. Scope

This Code of Practice and the [Higher Education \(HE\) sector Guidance](#) on which it is based, is primarily intended to cover off-campus activities where a university member of staff or student is planning, arranging and/or carrying out the activity.

Typical examples of relevant off-campus activities are:

- Any activity that involves taking a flight or an overnight stay, regardless of the location
- Using hired facilities for teaching or promotional activities
- Supervised undergraduate student group visits to industrial sites
- Independent undergraduate or post-graduate student research projects
- Staff research or consultancy work in remote locations

Dependent on the complexity of an off-campus activity, the University's responsibilities will include:

- choosing suitable venues and providers;
- cooperating and coordinating with third parties, for example on any special staff/student requirements;
- arranging suitable travel to/from/between locations and suitable accommodation;
- appropriate authorisations, risk assessments and arrangements for practical work involving staff and students;
- competent individuals and adequate supervision;
- adequate communications and emergency arrangements; and
- staff and student briefings on arrangements and codes of behaviour.

3.1. Exemptions:

Although the University retains overall responsibility for the health and safety of its staff and students in all off-campus activities, there may be some simple UK based activities, where the University does not have management control in the same way as it does on campus, for example meetings with collaborators, attending conferences and training courses, visits to museums and guided tours. In practice, responsibility for completing a risk assessment for these activities may therefore be shared with third parties, for example the organisation hosting the visit or providing the facilities. However, the University can and must take reasonable steps to ensure that there is a safe system of work for the activity, and that the arrangements it makes with its own staff, students and any third parties are adequate to ensure the activity does not cause harm to them, or to anyone else who may be affected. These types of trips will not require a risk assessment but should still be recorded on the FORESIGHT platform (see section 6.1).

See also our [Placement of students webpages](#) for information about the specific arrangements expected for managing the health and safety of students whilst on placements, which are not covered by this code of practice and do not need to be recorded on the FORESIGHT platform.

Commuting to / from or between campuses also does not require a risk assessment and does not need to be recorded on the FORESIGHT system.

4. Definitions

“Competence” - the ability to undertake responsibilities and perform activities to a recognised standard, on a regular basis. It is a combination of practical and thinking skills, experience and knowledge. It will include the ability to deal with the circumstances likely to be encountered and also foreseeable emergencies, to exercise judgement and take action, perhaps more than would be the case on university premises. Competence under normal University or UK conditions may not automatically mean competence under adverse or stressful conditions overseas, for example the ability to make sound decisions about alternative safe work procedures if facilities are not available. The physical capabilities and maturity of the individual - as indicated by their performance during previous off-campus activities and/or practical work - together with their medical conditions must also be considered. Experience gained in other disciplines, other institutions, or other countries may not provide the same preparedness for the planned work. Demonstrated competence in similar work and conditions, or having already acted successfully as leader, supervisor or deputy may be essential.

“Downtime” - a period of time, occurring before, after or within the overall duration of the trip, but outside the jurisdiction of the institution. This must be agreed in advance and is then excluded from arrangements. An example could be staff annual leave taken before, during or after an overseas trip.

“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 includes external visits, teaching, study, research or consultancy-related activities, and in particular any “practical work”, carried out by university staff and/or students.

“Local conditions” - This includes all geographical, climatic, seasonal, political, cultural and social elements that may contribute to the safety or otherwise of university staff and/or students in the country or area being visited. It may also include the resources and facilities available to the Leader/Supervisor and participants, for example from third parties. Changing local conditions may be a key factor in making an otherwise safe activity become hazardous, for example by reducing the effectiveness of the arrangements.

“Practical work” - This includes laboratory work, sports teaching, exhibitions, archaeological digs, social survey interviews and scuba diving in addition to the well-recognised survey/collection work carried out by geologists, geographers, environmental scientists and biologists and field-based scientists. This work may be considered hazardous but may also involve routine low risk activities away from the institution. It includes any associated storage, handling, setting up, clearing away and disposal of equipment and materials.

“Personal time” - time when programmed fieldwork activities are not taking place but fieldworkers remain under the general jurisdiction of the institution and under the overall supervision of the leadership team. This must be included in the arrangements. An example would be a student group being allowed to split up to look around or have meals during a visit to a museum.

5. Roles and Responsibilities

5.1. Faculty Operating Officers / Directors of Professional Service

These individuals have overall responsibility for the off-campus activities undertaken by their staff and students, as part of their work or study, and must ensure that adequate arrangements have been made before the activity is approved, resources released, and the activity commences. This includes ensuring:

- Adequate resources (time, budgets and personnel) are allocated for planning and carrying out the activity safely
- Fieldwork leaders and supervisors are authorised and competent, training is arranged where necessary and all role holders are clear on their responsibilities.
- Competent authorised personnel are appointed at all levels, including training if necessary
- Safe systems of work are established for the planned activities and foreseeable emergencies
- Suitable and sufficient risk assessment(s) are carried out, and necessary actions taken, for any practical work involving staff and/or students

5.2. Organisers

The Organiser is the person responsible for the planning, organisation, monitoring and review of the activity and all the associated arrangements. The Organiser may delegate specific tasks but is responsible to their FOO/DPS for ensuring that adequate safety arrangements exist and are observed. Organisers must:

- Liaise with any third parties hosting activities or providing resources and facilities, to ensure coordination of arrangements for safe working
- Ensure adequate provision of competent (subgroup) Leaders and Supervisors for the planned activities, including training and information if necessary

- Ensure the leader / supervisor / solo traveller(s) has sought approval for the planned work via the [FORESIGHT platform](#) and that the relevant unique ID number is included on any related purchase orders.

5.3. Leader / Supervisor

The Leader / Supervisor is the person directly responsible for leading the activity and the arrangements, ensuring there is a detailed knowledge and understanding of safety measures and that these have been communicated to, and understood by, the other members of the leadership team and all participants. They may have other (sub-group) supervisors under their control. Leaders must:

- Ensure a pre-travel risk assessment is submitted via the [FORESIGHT platform](#) and kept up-to-date and all related safety precautions are observed for the duration of the fieldwork.
- Ensure other supervisors and participants are tagged in the submission, so they have up-to-date, comprehensive and appropriate information on arrangements.
- Take action to ensure safe working, including stopping work or adjusting itineraries, if necessary, in the interest of safety.
- Delegate tasks to competent Supervisors, including explicit responsibility to know the total number and identities of the fieldworkers they are responsible for supervising.
- Deal with emergencies and disciplinary issues.
- Seek advice from the Organiser if necessary

5.4. Independent Fieldworkers / Solo Travellers

Any individual who is undertaking fieldwork on their own without direct supervision is considered an independent fieldworker / solo traveller. These individuals have a responsibility to take reasonable care in their activities.

In practice, they will assume the role and associated responsibilities of the fieldwork leader. Any exceptions to this must be agreed in advance with the Faculty Operating Officer/Director of Professional Service.

5.5. Hosts / Third Parties

Hosts are responsible for:

- ensuring their own premises and arrangements are adequate for the activity and in a safe condition that will not cause harm to university staff and students
- providing relevant health and safety information to the university, including about any specific requirements or constraints for the planned activity

5.6. Insurance Team

The Insurance team will:

- make available information on the University's insurance arrangements and cover in relation to off-campus activities
- Inform the University's insurers of notified activities
- Provide University staff with information on any specific requirements or conditions imposed by the insurers.

5.7. Transport Team

The transport team will ensure any University vehicles provided for an off-campus activity are in a safe condition and drivers have been assessed as competent.

5.8. All Travellers

Individuals must take care that their actions do not put themselves or other people at risk. Where the individual is an Organiser, Leader or Supervisor their actions may have crucial effects on the safety of fellow staff and/or students, the Host and local people. Individuals must:

- Ensure they are competent to undertake the allocated tasks, seeking additional information or training if necessary.
- Ensure they are fit to undertake the planned activities, and give full and accurate information on any relevant special requirements, medical conditions or disabilities
- Follow instructions given by the Organiser, Leader, Supervisor or Host, and immediately report any concerns about the arrangements or procedures
- Give feedback to the Leader or Organiser during or after the work to improve arrangements for future work
- Report accidents, injuries and ill health as they occur, particularly if they may present a risk to safety of self or others. Report any illnesses that occur later but may be attributable to overseas travel.

5.9. Occupational Health Service

Where a traveller's health may introduce additional risk to the activity and / or a fitness to travel assessment is required, the Universities Occupational Health Service can provide advice.

5.10. Student Wellbeing Services (Disability and Dyslexia Team)

The Disability and Dyslexia team can advise on students' disabilities in relation to planned activities, especially where practical work is a required part of the course.

6. Procedure

A suitable and sufficient risk assessment must be carried out in advance, for any practical work involving staff and/or students. This assessment must be kept under review and if necessary revised at the start of the activity and throughout. The assessment must also be reviewed/revised for each visit if there is a planned series during the life of the activity. See our [Risk Assessment webpages](#) for further information about the general arrangements and responsibilities associated with completing and approving risk assessments.

6.1. Recording of health and safety arrangements for off-campus activities

The University uses a platform called FORESIGHT, provided by Peregrine Risk Management, to document risk assessments (and other approval requirements*) related to "fieldwork" / off campus activities.

*This includes requirements related to financial regulations, as well as serving to 'notify the insurance team' as required under the universities insurance policy.

(NOTE: The University's Insurance Policy includes cover for off-campus activities where these have been notified to the University's Insurance team, and if necessary, agreed with

the Insurers. The cover includes third parties, University property, professional indemnity, personal accident and travel insurance, and visits to 'third party properties'. Hired vehicles are not covered. Personal belongings are covered if the travel incorporates an overnight stay in the UK or if travelling abroad for one day or more. Full details are available from the Insurance Team).

The FORESIGHT system incorporates the [Universities risk assessment matrix](#) and allows for formal comments to be included in the planning and approval process. For example, a Health & Safety Manager (HSM) or Local Officer (HaSLO) may be nominated to comment and advise on improvements to the arrangements for the activity (and any associated risk assessments), prior to the record being submitted for formal approval by an appropriate manager.

Arrangements, and where necessary risk assessments, may also be considered in the marking of student projects, particularly where awards have relevance to professional competence.

6.2. Travelling Against FCDO Advice

The Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) advice is built into the FORESIGHT platform, along with Peregrines own security intelligence information. Travellers are expected to check this information prior to travel and incorporate relevant contingencies into their risk assessment, where necessary.

Where the FCDO advice against all travel to a country or part of a country, visits must be avoided whenever possible. Approval for such trips must be escalated to the Insurance Team (and Insurers), Faculty Operating Officer (FOO)/Director of Professional Service (DPS), and, if necessary, University senior managers. The decision-making process must be clearly documented within the FORESIGHT system and will include the academic and/or business justification for the visit to the specific location at the specific time (including alternatives) and the detailed risk assessments and arrangements to ensure safety. This may include written confirmation that a host organisation, such as a non-government organisation (NGO) or agency working in that location, will include the member of staff or student in arrangements for their own team, specifically in relation to emergency evacuation, should it become necessary.

6.3. Training

All health and safety training expectations are documented on the [central H&S training matrix](#).

All staff who conduct fieldwork are required to attend the universities '**Traveller safety awareness**' training course.

Any staff involved in approving travel related risk assessments are required to attend the universities '**Travel Safety for Managers**' training course.

Both courses include training in how to use the FORESIGHT platform and are available to book via the Horizon system.

Separate videos, demonstrating how to use the FORESIGHT platform are also available to view on the Horizon platform. These cover the use of the system only. Watching these videos without attending one of the above courses, does not, therefore, meet the training requirements for travellers / managers as described above.

7. Further Guidance

7.1. Related University documents:

- [HSS019 Guidance on Simple off Campus visits](#)

7.2. Other related guidance:

- [HE Sector Guidance on Health and Safety in Fieldwork and Travel](#) (USHA)
- [Foreign Travel Advice \(FCDO\) Webpages](#)

8. Document History

This document will be reviewed at least annually.

Details of previous reviews are as follows:

Review Date	Reviewer	Summary of Review
03-Apr-2025	Vikki Wood, Associate Director of Health & Safety	New document (Converted from a webpage) Content updated to reflect introduction of FORESIGHT software.