

Field Trips and Offsite Activities Policy

1 Introduction

- 1.1 This policy forms part of, and should be read in conjunction with the University's Health and Safety Management Policy.
- 1.2 A breach of this policy may be addressed via the University's Code of Conduct and Disciplinary Policy and Procedure.
- 1.3 This policy will be reviewed by Estates and Campus Services on a 3-year basis or amended in response to changes in future legislation and/or case law.

2 Ownership

- 2.1 Estates and Campus Services owns and manages this policy on behalf of The University of Northampton.

3 Organisational Scope

- 3.1 The scope of this policy includes academic and practical work carried out by University staff or students for the purpose of teaching and/or research in places that are not under University control, but where the University is responsible for the safety of its staff, students and others exposed to their activities. It includes medical elective placements, but voluntary and leisure activities are excluded along with work experience placements and activities controlled by other employers.
- 3.2 This policy applies to all staff, students and associates. It includes, but is not limited to, activities ranging from visits to institutions, off site research, educational trips, conferences, and activities more traditionally associated with the term 'Field Trip' such as survey collection carried out by geologists or biologist. It does not include students on work placements.
- 3.3 This Policy applies to all field trips and offsite activities intended to be undertaken in the UK and within or outside of the European Union.

4 Definitions

Educational Visit

An educational visit is any trip that takes students away from the confines of the University premise to enhance their learning experience. These visits may form part of the learning curriculum.

Offsite Activity

Any activity that organised by the University which involves students and staff leaving the confines of the University premise to undertake activities that are not possible on University premise. e.g. enrichment activities, conferences, off site research, educational trips, conferences etc.

Field Trip

Any activity that organised by the University which involves students and staff leaving the confines of the University premise to undertake fieldwork.

Participant

An individual who is undertaking education visits, offsite activities including fieldwork as part of a supervised group.

Independent fieldworker

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

Authoriser

Any person authorising field trips and offsite activities for their area of responsibility on behalf of the University

Threat Analysis

Threat analysis relates to consideration of security and political threat levels, significant natural hazards and health risks

FCO

Foreign and Commonwealth Office <https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice>

5 Policy Statement

- 5.1 This policy is designed to ensure so far as is reasonably practicable, that field trips and offsite activities carried out through the University happen safely and without any incident or injury occurring to any of the participants or others who may be affected.
- 5.2 It is the policy of Northampton University that all field trips and offsite activities are properly planned, approved and organised and managed so as to protect the health and safety of all staff, students, visitors and any other persons who may be affected by these activities.
- 5.3 The University recognises expeditions to hostile, remote and/or inaccessible locations present a higher degree of risk than standard field expeditions. As such they will require rigorous risk assessment and identification of control measures to reduce risks to a level that is acceptable to both the University and the individual participants for the activity to be authorised.
- 5.4 It is envisaged that Faculties and Heads of professional services manage their own processes that allow fieldwork and offsite activities to be authorised at a level **appropriate to the risk**. The person authorising the fieldwork is responsible for ensuring that due regard has been paid to the health and safety considerations.
- 5.5 Where the responsibility of authorising field work and offsite activities has been delegated by the Dean or Director, they must ensure the authoriser is competent and is aware of the responsibility as set out in this Policy.
- 5.6 University staff who are engaged with the organisation of education visits or offsite activities must be conversant with and conform to the provisions of this policy and associated procedures.
- 5.7 The University will undertake a Threat Analysis on destinations for participants intending to undertake activities in areas where security and political threat levels, significant natural hazards and health risks have been identified and refer to FCO advice in these instances.

6 Responsibilities of Duty Holders

6.1 **The University Management Team** will have the overall responsibility for the approval of field trips and offsite activities where the nature of the intended activity or destination is deemed too hazardous for the sole approval of the Dean or Head of Director including:

- Security risks and travel to areas of political instability or war zones
- Natural disasters and extreme climates
- Areas of endemic and epidemic disease

6.2 **Deans and Directors** will be responsible for:

- The implementation of this Policy
- Authorising field trips and offsite activities for their area of responsibility on behalf of the University
- Escalate approval to the senior management team if the nature of the intended fieldwork, offsite activity or destination is deemed too hazardous for their sole approval
- The organizational structure within the Faculty/Department is appropriate to manage educational visits, and offsite activities including fieldwork
- Ensuring that adequate resources e.g. finance, personnel, time etc. are provided to meet the requirements of this Policy
- Ensuring that the organisers of these activities are competent to lead, and have sufficient awareness of the legal obligations to those under their supervision
- Ensuring supervisors and leaders of these activities are aware of their responsibilities and are sufficiently empowered to undertake that responsibility
- Arrangements and systems for ensuring that suitable and sufficient risk assessments are completed for these activities
- Ensuring there is a consistent approach across the whole Faculty Department regarding these activities

6.3 **Authorisers** will be responsible for:

- Authorising field trips and offsite activities for their area of responsibility on behalf of the Dean or Head of Professional Service
- Escalate approval to the Dean or Director if the nature of the intended field work, offsite activity or destination is deemed too hazardous for their sole approval
- Ensuring that the organisers of these activities are competent to lead, and have sufficient awareness of the legal obligations to those under their supervision
- Ensuring supervisors and leaders of these activities are aware of their responsibilities and are sufficiently empowered to undertake that responsibility
- Arrangements and systems for ensuring that suitable and sufficient risk assessments are completed for these activities

6.4 **Persons Arranging or Supervising Field Work or Offsite activities**

The person(s) with delegated operational responsibility for all aspects of these activities, in particular the overall supervision of the activity and ensuring compliance with the legislation and this policy, are responsible for:

- Thoroughly planning field work and offsite activities
- Ensuring that the necessary approvals are sought, and that health or safety hazards are risk assessed and that any preventative or precautionary measures are put in place, communicated to all participants and are adhered to for the duration of the activity

- Adequate levels of supervision are provided which need to be assessed as appropriate for the activity and environment. There should be flexibility to deal with any potential changes in fluid situations. This will include, if necessary, ceasing the activity if it cannot be completed safely
- Ensuring that those undertaking these activities have received adequate information, instruction and training
- Booking suitable arrangements for travel and transport by the most appropriate means
- Taking the appropriate action to ensure adequate and appropriate insurance cover is provided for the activity
- Ensuring they are explicitly empowered to discharge the responsibilities stated in this Policy and to implement emergency or contingency plans where needed

6.5 Participants

- All staff and students are required to support and comply with this Policy
- Must ensure they understand and comply with any instruction given to them by the activity Leader or Supervisor, as well as reporting any potential hazards, defective equipment etc.
- They must accept responsibility for their own health and safety and that of others who may be affected by their actions whilst participating in these activities
- Must declare any health concerns they have that may affect their safety or others whilst undertaking these activities

6.6 The Safety Health and Environment Department will:

- Provide competent health and safety advice to persons arranging or supervising educational visits, offsite activities and fieldwork
- Review Travel, Educational Visits and Offsite Activity Risk Assessments including Fieldwork as required by the organiser and Travel Team.
- Raise any health and safety, welfare concerns about the nature of the activity or the intended destination of the participants
- Organise and provide suitable Health and Safety training for staff and in some instances Research Students as required

Contact: safety@northampton.ac.uk

6.7 The Safety Health and Environment Team and Travel Team will:

- Check travel advice on the UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office website as required
- Consult more sources of information for less politically stable destinations, or where there is a more complex spread of threats.

6.8 Independent Fieldworkers:

Independent undertaking solo travel or self-managed fieldwork have a responsibility to take reasonable care in their activities. In practice they will assume many of the duties of the fieldwork leader or supervisor and therefore some of their responsibilities, which should be agreed in advance with the Dean or Director.

7 Associated Documents and references

7.1 References that should be used in conjunction with this policy.

- **The Health and Safety at Work Act 2007**
- **The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999**
- **The Corporate Manslaughter and Homicide Act 2007**

- The University **Health and Safety Management Policy**
- The University **Guidance on Safety in Fieldwork, Offsite Activities and Educational Visits**
- The University **International Travel Policy and Procedure**
- **USHA Guidance on Health and Safety in Fieldwork**
https://www.gla.ac.uk/media/Media_575064_smxx.pdf

8 Information, Instruction and Training

The University will provide appropriate health and safety training to staff in relation to field trips and offsite activities as appropriate.

9 Approval Process

- Trade Union Liaison Group
- Health, Safety, Security and Environment Committees

10 Equality Analysis

An Equality Impact Assessment has been completed for this Policy.

11 Version Control

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Author:	Gary O'Rourke	Approval:	HSSE (Local) TU Liaison HSSE
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November 2019	This Policy replaces the previous Educational Visits and Offsite Activities Policy.		
February 2020	Policy amended following Local HSSE meetings and comments.	HSSE	
April 2020	Record of amendments updated.	TU Liaison	