

Appendix 14 Health and Safety and Fieldwork Approval Procedures

Extracts from the University Policy Statement Relating to Health and Safety in the Supervision of Students

2.4 General Responsibilities of Students

- 2.4.1 All students are expected to keep themselves reasonably informed through the information and instruction provided by the University of the health and safety issues which are relevant to their activities.
- 2.4.2 Each student whilst involved in University activities, on University premises or elsewhere must:
- take reasonable care for the health and safety of themselves and of other persons who may be affected by their acts or omissions
 - co-operate with the University in the implementation of the health and safety policy including following health and safety instructions given by members of staff
 - not to intentionally or recklessly interfere with or misuse anything provided in the interests of health, safety or welfare in pursuance of any of the relevant statutory provisions
 - not, without the consent of the member of staff in charge of the area or activity, introduce any equipment for use on University premises, alter any fixed installations, alter or remove health and safety notices or equipment, or otherwise take any action which may create hazards for employees of the University or for other persons using the premises.

Supervisors are advised that they should be familiar with the University's guidance notes relating to Health and Safety in the supervision of students.

Higher-Risk Fieldwork Approval Procedures – PhD students

1. Any proposed fieldwork involving activity which is potentially dangerous (for political, societal or geographical reasons), involves research into illegal activities or which will take place in a country which has been determined to be unsafe by the FCO or is known to be in a state of high volatility and under monitoring by the FCO, must be approved in advance by the Head of Research Graduate School and, where appropriate (ie, studies involving human participants), UREC or other appropriate ethics committee.
2. For all such studies:
 - i. reference must be made to the University's fieldwork policy and procedures
<http://www.ulster.ac.uk/hr/healthandsafety/Procedures/fieldwork.pdf>
and a compliance statement provided by the CI/supervisor indicating that appropriate contingency plans and resources are in place, including in-country support where available, routine and emergency contact protocols, an emergency exit strategy (including, where appropriate, confirmation of access to funds) letters of approval/permission and other necessary documentation;
 - ii. a statement must be obtained by the HoRGS from Finance, indicating that cover is provided under the University's current insurance policies;

- iii. a risk assessment must be completed indicating all likely risks and how these have been addressed/mitigated (this should include consideration of travel, accommodation, personal safety, lone working, equipment/clothing, first aid/ medical and other arrangements);
 - iv. an RS7 must be completed and submitted, accompanied by the above documentation; and
 - v. the student is responsible for obtaining travel permits/visas and immunisations required by/for the country to which they are travelling.
3. Where the study involves access to human participants, review by an appropriate filter committee and/or UREC (or appropriate ethics committee in the country concerned) must also be undertaken via the normal application process. The application must be accompanied by the risk assessment, the compliance statement, confirmation of insurance and the RS7 referred to above. Notification of the ethical opinion will be communicated to the researcher who should then provide it to the HoRGS.
 4. The process of consideration for approval or otherwise should include the above and also take account of the urgency, novelty, value and likely impact of the research; it is not the University's intention to delay unnecessarily or stop valuable and ethically-approved research, but risks to individuals and the institution must be weighed carefully.
 5. Written confirmation of approval must be provided by the HoRGS before any travel takes place.
 6. If approval is not provided, reasons should be given.
 7. If a student chooses to travel when approval has been declined, he or she does so at his or her own risk and might, additionally, be subject to disciplinary action.
 8. If the FCO advisory status for any destination should change while the research is being undertaken, advice will be sought from the University's insurer and other organisations as appropriate. If necessary, researchers will be requested to reapply for approval to remain in the country concerned or return to the UK pending a review of the situation.
 9. The University's normal insurance limitations will apply and all travel arrangements must be made in accordance with approved procedures.
 10. Following the return of the student concerned, a review of the activities and suitability of arrangements should be undertaken, and any adverse events reported and actioned appropriately using form RG5.