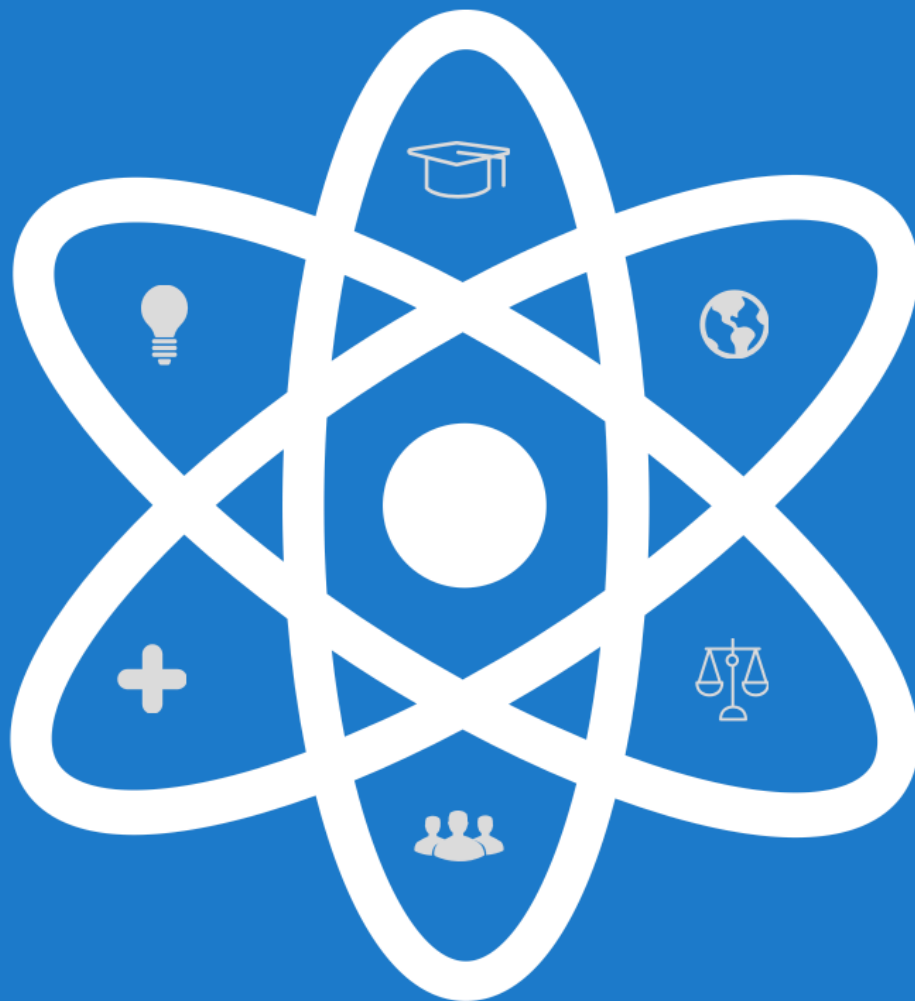


STUDENT GUIDELINES



[2016]

ETHICAL FIELDWORK OVERSEAS

A Practical Reference Tool Developed for Students, by Students, to Guide the Ethical Conduct of Overseas Fieldwork

The Development Studies Association of Ireland (DSAI) and the Irish Forum for Global Health (IFGH) supported the development and publication of this document, through collaborations with both the DSAI Postgraduate Working Group and the IFGH Student Outreach Group. The contents of this document have been prepared by Bianca van Bavel, Brynne Gilmore, and Olivia Wilkinson, and are the responsibility of Students for Ethical Engagement (SEE). They do not necessarily reflect the views of the DSAI or IFGH. The graphics and design of this document are contributed by Hanna Phelan.

SEE encourages the use and adaptation of these guidelines, including the citation, reproduction and/or translation of this document, either in full or in part, provided the source is acknowledged.

Suggested Citation: van Bavel, B., Gilmore, B., and Wilkinson, O. (2016) Student Guidelines for Ethical Fieldwork Overseas. Dublin, Ireland: Development Studies Association and Irish Forum for Global Health.

ISBN: 978-1-5272-0177-4



CONTENTS.

Executive Summary	4
Background	5
Aim & Objectives	6
Reading & Understanding the Guidelines	7
Applying the Guidelines	7
I. Foundational Principles	9
A. Academic Accountability & Social Responsibility	9
B. Respect & Protection	9
C. Conduct & Integrity	10
D. Competence.....	10
II. Prior	11
Preparations & Inductions.....	11
Establishing Contacts & Building Partnerships.....	11
Setting Expectations	11
Obtaining Ethical Approval	12
Ensuring Safety & Wellbeing	12
Pre-Departure Training & Orientation	13
III. During	14
Maintaining Partnerships	14
Managing Expectations	14
Obtaining Ethical Approval	14
Ensuring Safety & Wellbeing	14
IV. Post	15
Strengthening Partnerships	15
Evaluating Expectations	15
Disseminating Information	15
Post Debriefing	15
Acknowledgements	16
Disclaimer	16
Annexes.....	17
Terms & Definitions	17
Relevant Resources	18
Declaration of Helsinki	18
Nuremberg Code.....	18
Belmont Report.....	18
Online Ethical Certification Courses	18
Dóchas Network Codes & Guidelines	18
Working Group on Ethics Guidelines for Global Health Training (WEIGHT)	19
Association for Research Ethics (AfRE)	19
Additional References	20
Templates	21
Memorandum of Understanding.....	21
Terms of Reference	23
Participant Information Leaflet	24
Risk Assessment Form	27
Checklists.....	31

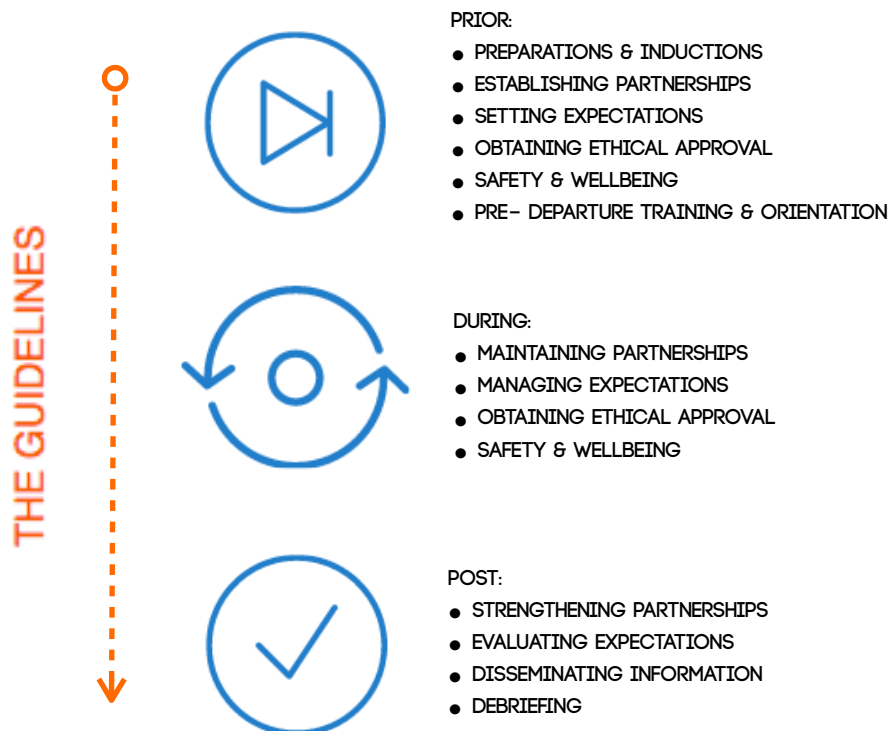
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY.

A lack of clear procedures and guidance for undertaking fieldwork for one's study can result in unethical practices and degrade the experience of both students and their partners. It is important that any student undertaking fieldwork, including research, training placements, and/or internships as part of their curriculum, be knowledgeable and mindful of challenges for such work and follow appropriate procedures to assist in ensuring the most beneficial and ethical experience for all stakeholders. The following guidelines developed for students, by students, through an extensive research process, have been proposed as a reference for students to engage in the ethical conduct of fieldwork.

FOUNDATIONAL PRINCIPLES

- A. Academic Accountability and Social Responsibility
- B. Respect and Protection
- C. Conduct and Integrity
- D. Competence

These principles provide an ethos for conducting ethical fieldwork and should be applied across all stages of student engagement. For their application, the guidelines have been developed into three chronological categories of engagement: prior to, during, and after fieldwork. There should always be a level of responsibility held by the student's home institution to ensure that the academic engagement is ethical and in the best interest of the students as well as the individuals, communities and organisations with whom they interact.



FULL REPORT AVAILABLE ONLINE AT WWW.GLOBALHEALTH.IE/STUDENT-ETHICAL-GUIDELINES

BACKGROUND.

Fieldwork and academic placements in different countries worldwide have the potential to provide students with invaluable learning experiences and professional development. While practice-based learning offers a unique academic opportunity for students and institutions to bridge theoretical inquiry to experiential learning, there are many unaddressed issues of engagement, particularly across different contexts, locations and professions. International academic placements are becoming increasingly available across a range of academic programmes, degrees, and disciplines including global health, international relations, humanitarian and development studies, peace studies, social work, and policy.

Such variability has led to instances where the academic purpose and rationale for engaging in overseas fieldwork is not always clear. The lack of tailored policies and guidelines available for academic programmes with accredited international fieldwork components creates challenges for students as well as the people and places they engage with during their fieldwork. Wider institutional support structures are not uniformly available. From courses that have robust pre/post-departure training and in-country supervisory support, to students who are completely isolated, having to set up these structures themselves, the discrepancies in institutional and programmatic support can result in similar variations in professional practice and ethical conduct.

“While practice-based learning offers a unique academic opportunity for students and institutions to bridge theoretical inquiry to experiential learning, there are many unaddressed issues of engagement, particularly across different contexts, locations and professions.”

The following document is a practical guide developed for students, by students, on the ethical conduct of international fieldwork, inclusive of study and research placements. The guidelines have been developed using primary data generated from focused discussions and facilitated workshops, as well as an extensive document review and analysis of existing policies, statements, guidelines, codes, handbooks and manuals on research ethics and practice within selected Irish Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) and programmes.

The approach to involve students in the development of the guidelines highlights the existing need and limitations of supports for overseas fieldwork from a student perspective, as well as enhancing the guidelines' suitability, credibility, and future applicability. There are wider academic and professional implications of having clear, supportive, ethical guidelines that represent the perspectives of those at the heart of such engagements. The guidelines can be used to encourage students, supervisors, as well as institutions, to uphold a standard of practice that ensures the responsibility, accountability, protection, respect, conduct, integrity, and competence of student engagement wherever, with whomever, they are conducting fieldwork. We envision that the application of these guidelines will be used to inform the broader conduct of international academic fieldwork.

AIM.

To develop guidelines on the ethical engagement of students within Irish Higher Education Institutions participating in international activities in fulfillment of their academic curricula.

OBJECTIVES.



To provide a resource for students to ensure they are receiving appropriate support for their work to better enhance their learning and experience;



To provide a resource for institutions, programmes and international partners to ensure that students are engaging in international work responsibly, ethically and for the mutual benefit of all parties;

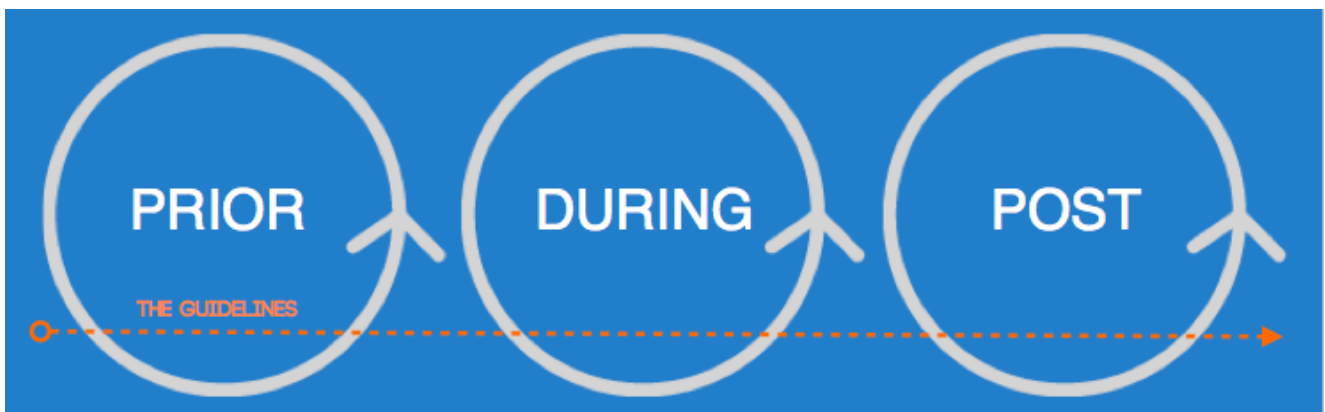


To encourage the adoption of a guiding framework that is standardised across higher education institutions and relevant academic programmes.

READING & UNDERSTANDING THE GUIDELINES.

The following document outlines generic guidance and basic procedural support for students and partners engaging in overseas fieldwork. For the purpose of these guidelines the term 'fieldwork' refers to any work, study, research, instruction, or other academic related activities, carried out by students while representing a higher education institution off-site. For reference, a complete list of terms, definitions, and supplemental material are annexed at the end of the guide.

The guidelines have been developed into three chronological categories of engagement: prior to, during, and after fieldwork. These guidelines cannot account for the variety of individuals, institutions, communities, places, disciplines, programmes, nature, or duration of fieldwork, nor can they cover all events and circumstances in explicit detail. In order to suitably inform and support students and partners engaging in overseas fieldwork, we recommend these guidelines be used in conjunction with existing materials and relevant resources that would be more specific to certain areas, expertise, and disciplines.



It is important to remember that across all stages of fieldwork, while the extent of individual engagement will vary by student, as well as host-partners, the academic interests of the student should always be represented and protected by their home-institution.

There should always be a level of responsibility held by student's home-institution to ensure that this academic engagement is ethical and in the best interest of the student as well as the individuals, communities and organisations, with whom they interact, wherever that may be. If there is ever a doubt, then greater reflection is required as to whether or not such international fieldwork should be undertaken at all.

APPLYING THE GUIDELINES.

These guidelines were specifically developed to assist students to engage ethically in their overseas placements and to assist in ensuring positive experiences throughout their study. As such, students engaging in overseas fieldwork are the main audience for these guidelines. However, that does not limit their applicability and potential usefulness to other stakeholders engaged in the partnership. Table 1 outlines how students, hosting organisations in the student's country of fieldwork, as well as home institutions, can utilise these guidelines to assist in strengthening partnerships and ensuring a mutually beneficial working relationship while supporting the international reputation of both institutions.

Table 1. Targeted Applications of the guidelines for three engaged partnership groups.

	HOW TO USE THE GUIDELINES	POTENTIAL BENEFITS	SPECIFIC SECTIONS & RESOURCES
STUDENTS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➔ To ensure home institutions are aware of guidelines and students' intentions to follow them ➔ To send a copy of guidelines to hosting institution outlining specific intentions and expectations ➔ To discuss with institutions and prevent any possible problems that may arise ➔ To clarify individual, as well as institutional, roles and responsibilities throughout all stages of fieldwork 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➔ Promoting ethical engagement ➔ Setting realistic expectations for fieldwork ➔ Ensuring one's own safety and wellbeing, as well as that of others ➔ Developing collaborative partnerships ➔ Ensuring successful overseas fieldwork ➔ Receiving support from both home institution and hosting organisation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➔ Full Document
HOSTING ORGANISATION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➔ To understand the potential issues arising from conducting overseas fieldwork ➔ To ensure students adhere to appropriate local and international ethical practices ➔ To develop partnership protocols between the stakeholders for accountability and communication ➔ To understand the role and responsibilities of a hosting organisation throughout all stages of fieldwork 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➔ Building positive reputations and accountable partnerships internationally ➔ Upholding transparent and explicit procedures for partnering ➔ Creating opportunity to feed in and develop fieldwork and exchange programmes ➔ Ensuring student's work is in-line with current hosting practices ➔ Ensuring the safety and wellbeing of students and those they are working with 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➔ Foundational Principles (pg. 9-10) ➔ Building Partnerships (pg. 11) ➔ Expectations (pg. 11) ➔ Ethics (pg. 12) ➔ During Fieldwork (pg. 14) ➔ Strengthening Partnerships (pg. 15) ➔ Evaluation (pg. 15) ➔ Dissemination (pg. 15) ➔ Memorandum of Understanding (pg. 21) ➔ Terms of Reference (pg. 23)
HOME INSTITUTION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➔ To ensure students adhere to appropriate local and international ethical practices ➔ To disseminate guidelines to relevant courses and/or individuals ➔ To standardise support for students conducting fieldwork overseas ➔ To provide organisational support, security, and guidance for students following guidelines ➔ To understand the role and responsibilities of a home institutions throughout all stages of fieldwork 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➔ Building positive reputations and accountable partnerships internationally ➔ Having ethical and robust projects attributed to your institution ➔ Upholding transparent and explicit procedures for partnering ➔ Ensuring the safety and wellbeing of students and those they are working with ➔ Creating opportunity to feed in and develop fieldwork and exchange programmes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➔ Foundational Principles (pg. 9-10) ➔ Prior to Fieldwork (pg. 11-13) ➔ Partnerships (pg. 11) ➔ Safety (pg. 12) ➔ Post Fieldwork (pg. 15) ➔ Memorandum of Understanding (pg. 21) ➔ Terms of Reference (pg. 23)

I. FOUNDATIONAL PRINCIPLES.

The following foundational principles help to situate the following recommendations and guiding chronological categories (prior, during, and after) within the context of overseas placements. This ethos should be applied at all stages of overseas work.

A. ACADEMIC ACCOUNTABILITY & SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

Ethical engagement should be embedded in balancing the objectivity of fieldwork with subjectivity (and sensitivity) for the people and places involved. As well, students should be aware of their own positionality and privilege when engaging in fieldwork¹. These guidelines are to apprise students, programmes and institutions of their individual social responsibility and greater organisational accountability, so that they too can uphold their own ethical engagement.

B. RESPECT & PROTECTION

Any fieldwork with human participants should be conducted in a manner that respects and protects the rights, dignity, diversity and equality of all persons, communities and places. This includes the protection and storage of data that ensures privacy, confidentiality, and anonymity as appropriate², while publicly promoting academic freedom, disseminating knowledge, and privileged information³.

“Ethical engagement should be embedded in balancing the objectivity of fieldwork with subjectivity (and sensitivity) for the people and places involved.”

In an effort to ensure the protection and safety of students, as well as the people and places with whom they work, the principles of ‘Do No Harm’⁴ should extend to participants, students, and all partners engaging in fieldwork⁵.

We recognise that conducting fieldwork in regions across the Global South may introduce inequitable power dynamics for populations and communities⁶. Students should bring awareness to certain contextual factors (i.e. social, economic, political, gendered, and cultural) that may enhance individual or group vulnerabilities, such as risk of coercion and exploitation, and make every attempt to minimise any potential

¹Pitts, M. & Smith, A. (2007). *Researching the Margins: Strategies for Ethical and Rigorous Research with Marginalised Communities*. Basingstoke: Palgrave MacMillan.

² In accordance with each (Irish and international) institutions’ ethical policies and processes.

³ Sociological Association of Ireland, *Ethical Guidelines*.

⁴ Meaning beneficence in the absence of maleficence, at all times the maximum benefit with the minimum harm (See Annexes: The Belmont Report, and Nuremberg Code).

⁵ School of Social Sciences & Philosophy, TCD, *Ethics Policy on Good Research Practice*.

⁶ MURPHY J, HATFIELD J, AFSANA K, NEUFELD V. (2015). *Making a Commitment to Ethics in Global Health Research Partnerships: A Practical Tool to Support Ethical Practice*. *Bioethical Inquiry*. 12 (1):137-46.

harm resulting from power imbalances, either directly or indirectly, associated with their fieldwork⁷. In particular, there should be special concern taken for fieldwork of ethically vulnerable groups, specifically individuals who face excessive risk of being enrolled in research overseas, including those with limitations in their ability to provide consent to research because of factors such as immaturity or cognitive impairment.

C. CONDUCT & INTEGRITY

These guidelines are intended to emphasise the potential benefit and wider influences of conducting such fieldwork. However, in order for these benefits to be reciprocal and these influences bear positively on all persons, communities, and partners involved, there must be resolve to uphold fieldwork integrity through good practice and ethical conduct⁸.

D. COMPETENCE

Students engaged in overseas fieldwork are representatives of their home academic institution and should strive to ensure that their conduct of fieldwork, prior to, during, and after fieldwork, reflects appropriately the level of academic and professional standards⁹. Maintaining and developing competence to uphold such standards requires students to be knowledgeable and aware of relevant practices and techniques, including ethical and safety procedures, specific to their fieldwork¹⁰. In order to protect themselves, as well as the individuals with whom they are working, students should be aware of their own competences so as not to engage in activities beyond their level of expertise. In following with the principle of respect and protection, students engaging in the fieldwork of vulnerable groups MUST exercise deliberate consideration to inform themselves of the necessary precautions and relevant protocols¹¹.

⁷ M. Berghs (2011) 'Paying for stories of impairment – parasitic or ethical? Reflections undertaking anthropological research in post-conflict Sierra Leone', *Scandinavian Journal of Disability Research*, 13(4), 255-270.

⁸ MacFarlane, B. (2008) *Researching With Integrity: The Ethics of Academic Research*. Oxford: Routledge.

⁹ Student Code of Conduct, NUIG (2010).

¹⁰ Code of Good Practice in Research, UCD Policy (2016).

¹¹ For example the National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children, Government of Ireland, Department of Children and Youth Affairs (2012); and the Guidelines for Women of Childbearing Age, Research Ethics Committee Guidance Documents, TCD (2015).

II. PRIOR

PREPARATIONS & INDUCTIONS

It is important to recognise that not all students may be suitable for international fieldwork. As such, programmes and institutions should have appropriate screening processes and selection criteria for students wishing to conduct fieldwork overseas. These processes and criteria should (or may already) be developed collaboratively by home and hosting partners. Depending on the nature of the fieldwork, this may include background checks (with local authorities), medical checks (fitness and vaccination), academic records, language requirement, and technical testing of specific skills¹². Refer to annexed checklists for more specific examples.

ESTABLISHING CONTACTS & BUILDING PARTNERSHIPS

Students must have a designated person/point of contact linking the student with the hosting institution and local partners. There is documented support for the assignment of more than one supervisor in the case of students conducting research in a physical location or academic structure outside of the university¹³. Under these circumstances however, it is important that all partners, in particular those with supervisory roles, be sufficiently able, disposed, and well-resourced to engage in the fieldwork.

Establishing contacts, both within, as well as outside of, formal/institutional partners is important for students to connect with their fieldwork experiences, and can offer valuable insight into cultural-appropriateness, 'everyday' awareness, and logistical knowledge. The earlier that partners are able to equitably engage and feed into this process, the more beneficial it will be to students' fieldwork experience.



SETTING EXPECTATIONS

Supervisory supports (both home and hosting) should work in collaboration to develop (TORs and/or MoUs) with defined objectives, outcomes, and deliverables that are in accordance with the fulfillment of institutional or programme fieldwork requirements. The development of a TOR should be prioritised, while depending on the preference and nature of the partners involved, an MOU may be considered appropriate.

¹² University Policy and Model Code of Practice on Fieldwork in University Units, NUIG (2011).

¹³ Postgraduate Handbook, UL (2012).

TORs and/or MoUs should introduce communication procedures, including minimum requirements throughout the fieldwork process, as well as reporting mechanisms that involve students as well as supervisory supports from both home and hosting institutions.

TORs and/or MoUs should specify standards of safety, health and welfare conditions pertaining to the fieldwork, such as the quality of supervision, hours of engagement, means of transportation, and physical environment^{14 15 16}.

TORs and/or MoUs should be in reference to existing academic codes of conduct and discipline¹⁷. This should include detailed measures for monitoring and evaluating fieldwork objectives, along with a discontinuation plan in case a partner is in breach of these fieldwork agreements.

TORs and/or MoUs should have a dissemination plan for results, including targeted forums and stakeholders, as well as details of ownership and authorship that are in accordance with the fulfillment of institutional or programme fieldwork requirements.

OBTAINING ETHICAL APPROVAL

Students must obtain formal ethical approval from the appropriately designated commissions and bodies both at home and in the hosting country. At a minimum, the enquiry into this process should be initiated prior to departure, so that even if the approval has not officially been granted prior to arrival in their overseas fieldwork, students have made the necessary considerations and planned accordingly for the time it will take before they are eligible to initiate fieldwork. If there is no mechanism or infrastructure by which to obtain local ethical review, this must be supported with written documentation from the local governing authority¹⁸, and efforts to ensure ethical coherence at the local level must be made¹⁹.

Students must obtain the appropriate Visas necessary for conducting fieldwork. Criteria for these categories and engagements will differ by country, and sometimes region, as well as institution, and so it is the student's own responsibility to inform themselves and follow the necessary protocol²⁰.

ENSURING SAFETY AND WELLBEING

Students should be aware of existing academic/professional standards both within the hosting country and Irish context. Students should have the necessary: health/travel insurance; immunization and medication; contact information of support services and bodies (i.e. Embassies)²¹. Students should identify areas of

¹⁴ Government of Ireland (2005) *Safety, Health, and Welfare at Work Act*.

¹⁵ Faculty of Health Sciences, TCD (2015) *Lone Worker Guidelines*; and Faculty of Natural Sciences, TCD (2016) *Field Lone Working Guidelines*.

¹⁶ Department of Clinical Speech & Language Studies, TCD (2014) *Lone Working Policy*.

¹⁷ Student Code, UCD (2015); Student Code of Conduct and Discipline, DCU (2015); Student Code of Practice, UL (2015); Student Rules, UCC (2014).

¹⁸ Research Ethical Committee Guidance Documents, TCD.

¹⁹ Bhat, S. B., & Hegde, T. T. (2006). Ethical international research on human subjects research in the absence of local institutional review boards. *Journal of Medical Ethics*, 32(9), 535–536. <http://doi.org/10.1136/jme.2005.013516>.

²⁰ Student Code of Practice for Work/Study Placements, UL (2015).

²¹ Research Checklist, TCD.

concern, potential risk, hazards, as well as supportive services with hosting partners/institutions. Partners should agree on a plan of action and safety protocol (MoU) to follow in the event of personal injury, sickness, or accident²².

PRE-DEPARTURE TRAINING AND ORIENTATION

Pre-departure training should take place for all students, regardless of affiliated programme or institution. Such training should take place well in advance of departure with qualified instruction, and may be tailored to specific student cohorts based on their respective areas of fieldwork. Training should cover aspects of general and travel health and safety, risk assessment, security and emergency measures, including planning for logistics and critical incidents procedures, as well as leadership and team dynamics²³. Additionally, there should be specific elements regarding language awareness, cultural sensitivity, respectful representation of groups and individuals, understandings of reciprocity, and the management of expectations. Please refer to annexes for checklists of specific examples.

Furthermore, for students engaged in individual fieldwork projects, for example Masters and PhD research programmes, any specific concerns or training requirements should be managed by way of their supervisors²⁴. Students should profile their respective host-country and partnering institutions (language, dialects, currency, governing structure, geography, and demographics, etc.). In addition, a personal risk assessment should be undertaken, and reflect the country context as well as the nature of fieldwork.

²² Fieldwork Safety Guidelines, UCD (2015).

²³ University Policy and Model Code of Practice on Fieldwork in University Units, NUIG (2011).

²⁴ Postgraduate Handbook, UL (2012).

IV. DURING

MAINTAINING PARTNERSHIPS

Emphasise on-going collaboration between partners to facilitate ethically appropriate and academically sound fieldwork engagement. Maintaining regular communication channels and support networks between students and supervisors (from both home and hosting institutions) would help to maintain a working relationship, and prevent inappropriate conduct and/or unintentional fieldwork outcomes.

MANAGING EXPECTATIONS

Students should adhere to pre-determined protocols and contracts between partners (ToR; MoU) with the necessary and appropriate (self) monitoring and evaluation measures in place. This can include the discontinuation of the fieldwork at any time if a partner is in breach of said agreements. Such agreements should refer to existing academic codes of conduct and discipline²⁵. Supervisory supports (both home and hosting) should work in collaboration to manage the entire fieldwork process (prior; during; and post).



OBTAINING ETHICAL APPROVAL

If it was not possible to be granted country-specific ethical approval prior to arrival in country, students must complete this process and obtain the necessary documentation from authorised bodies prior to undertaking their fieldwork.

ENSURING SAFETY AND WELLBEING

Students should adhere to the same academic/professional standards both within the hosting country and Irish context. Students should be aware of the ethical issues around the safeguarding, engagement, and potential sensitivity of participants during their fieldwork conduct, and especially if working with vulnerable populations²⁶. Partner institutions, supervisors and students should monitor areas of concern, potential risk, hazards, as well as access to supportive services throughout the in-country fieldwork period. Should the situation in-country change then students, in collaboration with their academic supervisors, should complete a new risk assessment that reflects this and can be used to guide decision making relating to the safety and wellbeing of all individuals involved.

²⁵ Student Code, UCD (2015); Student Code of Conduct and Discipline, DCU (2015); Student Code of Practice, UL (2015); Student Rules, UCC (2014).

²⁶ Section II & III.

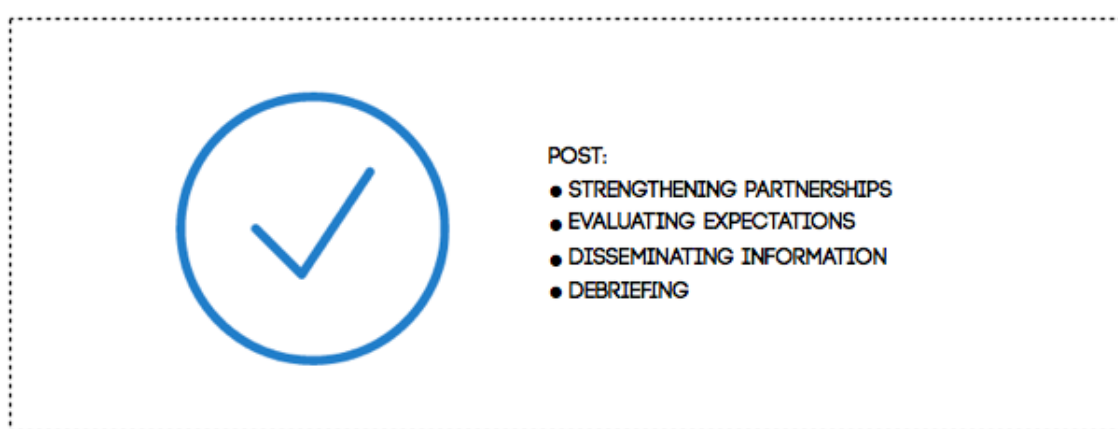
IV. POST.

STRENGTHENING PARTNERSHIPS

All partners (students, supervisors, home and hosting institutions) should be required to complete a feedback assessment of the fieldwork experience, including challenges, recommendations, and benefits. Feedback procedures promote organisational learning and ensure the carry-over of positive aspects and improvement of negative ones, towards the benefit of future fieldwork.

EVALUATING EXPECTATIONS

The TOR and MoU should be evaluated to ensure the adherence to initial agreements and fulfillment of institutional or programme fieldwork requirements. Partners may wish to hold an exit meeting to undertake a formal evaluation of the fieldwork.



DISSEMINATING INFORMATION

Students should adhere to the dissemination plan outlined in the TOR and MoU. This includes scheduled forums for distribution, presentation and formatting of results, as well as details of ownership and authorship.

POST DEBRIEFING

Debriefing should take place for all students, regardless of affiliated programme or institution. Sessions should take place in a timely fashion, upon the return and completion of fieldwork, with qualified instruction either resourced through internal support services within the students' home institution or by a specialising external resources as needed²⁷. These may also be tailored to specific student cohorts based on their respective areas of fieldwork. The debriefing process should provide an outlet to engage students in critical reflection and begin the process of integrating learning from their fieldwork experiences²⁸. If necessary, additional access to support services and resources should be made available for returning students on an individual-needs basis²⁹.

²⁷ Student Charter, TCD (2009), pp 13.

²⁸ Ash, S.L., & Clayton, P.H. (2009). Generating, deepening, and documenting learning: The power of critical reflection in applied learning. *Journal of Applied Learning in Higher Education*, 1(1), 25-48.

²⁹ Resources available from: Comhlamh (2015). Code of Good Practice.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.

The guidelines development team would like to thank the Development Studies Association of Ireland (DSAI) and the Irish Forum for Global Health (IFGH) for their contributions and support of this research. We would also like to acknowledge Comhlámh for their guidance throughout this development process. Much appreciation to Hanna Phelan for her time and effort designing the final document. Finally, a special thanks to the Post-Graduate Work Group (DSAI) and the Student Outreach Group (IFGH) for their collaborative efforts and assistance facilitating this work.

DISCLAIMER

These guidelines serve as a pointer for ethical fieldwork and do not substitute ethical review procedures in home and host institutions or in the country and region where the fieldwork will take place. It is the responsibility of the students and supervisors at the home institution to ensure the necessary ethical reviews are undertaken. The guidelines are published for general information only and any action the reader takes is at their own risk. The authors are not liable for any losses, damages or injuries experienced in the course of fieldwork.

ANNEXES

TERMS AND DEFINITIONS

Prior: Refers to the initiation and pre-departure period of overseas fieldwork.

During: Refers to the overseas period of engagement in fieldwork.

Post: Refers to the follow-up and period of return from overseas fieldwork.

Home-Institution: Refers to the Third Level Academic Institution in Ireland where the student is enrolled and which is accrediting the international fieldwork.

Host-Institution or Organisation: Refers to an international institution or organisation (governmental or non-governmental; public, or private) where the student is being facilitated to conduct their fieldwork.

Supervisor(s): An academic advisor affiliated with the home institution, as well as any person taking on an advisory or mentoring role affiliated with the host institution (academic or otherwise).

Partners: Includes students, home academic institutions (Ireland), hosting institutions or organisation (International), supervisors (Irish, International).

Community: Persons and settings where students are carrying out fieldwork.

Fieldwork: Any work related to teaching, research, or other academic activities, carried out by students while representing an academic institution off-site.

Terms of Reference (ToR): Describe the aims, objectives, negotiations and expectations of the fieldwork engagement agreed by all partners involved.

Memorandum of Understanding (MoU): A formal agreement between partners indicating their mutual involvement and commitment to the fieldwork engagement.

Informed Consent: Refers to an active process of agreement to participate in proposed activities, involving understanding and judgement, which requires full disclosure of information to participants (or relevant responsible parties). Therefore, consent forms should clearly outline and inform any prospective participants about the aims of the research, the participants' role, the procedures of collecting information, the right to privacy (confidentiality and/or anonymity), and the right to discontinue at any time, as well as the subsequent use and dissemination of information.

Informed Assent: Refers to the particular process of consent involving children (minors), whereby their parents or legal guardians must also give permission.

RELEVANT RESOURCES

Declaration of Helsinki: First adopted by the 18th World Medical Assembly in Helsinki Finland(1964), it is a statement of ethical principles meant to guide medical practitioners and researchers working/studying/researching human participants, as well as identifiable human materials and data. Given the history and context of human subject research within the field of medicine, this is more often the field in which the majority of resources, such as policies and guidelines, relating to ethical best practice were first established and published. While resources are not always directly applicable, considerations erring more on the side of caution, can still be applied within other fields and disciplines in conjunction with relevant and current resources to ensure the proper safeguarding of human health and wellbeing.

Nuremberg Code: First established in 1947, the code outlines principles of respect for voluntary human participation in research, including principles of informed consent and right to withdraw from the research at any time. It also outlines the ethical responsibility of researchers to ensure the safety and wellbeing of participants, that research should involve minimal risk and harm, and any benefit should outweigh the potential of risk associated with participating. The code was adopted internationally in 1949 with its basic principles applied to numerous other codes of practice.

Belmont Report: First published in 1979 by the National Commission for the Protection of Human Subjects of Biomedical and Behavioural Research (USA), the report outlines principles of respect for person, beneficence, justice, and competence.

Online Ethical Certification Courses: Tools and courses provide basic introduction to research ethics involving human participants, including the history, context, definition, application, and evaluation of ethical processes. While some training appears specific to health research, focussed on the protection of persons, majority of principles, regulations, policies and guidelines can be usefully applied to other disciplines of fieldwork involving human participants. These are friendly resources requiring minimal commitment, which should be referenced and utilised as a guiding resource by students.

- The Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative (CITI)³⁰
- FHI 360³¹
- Training and Resources in Research Ethics Evaluation (TRREE)³²
- National Institutes of Health (NIH) Ethics Training³³

Dóchas Network Codes and Guidelines: Since 2007, members of the Dóchas network have been developing regulatory and support resources for overseas development and humanitarian organisations³⁴. These Codes and Guidelines are aimed at ensuring effective, transparent, responsible, and sustainable practice.

³⁰ Available from <https://www.citiprogram.org/>.

³¹ Available from <http://www.fhi360.org/sites/all/libraries/webpages/fhi-retc2/RETCTraditional/intro.html>.

³² Available from <http://elearning.trree.org/>.

³³ Available from <https://phrp.nihtraining.com/users/login.php>.

³⁴ Available from <http://www.dochas.ie/knowledge-hub/standards-excellence-codes-and-guidelines>.

Working Group on Ethics Guidelines for Global Health Training (WEIGHT): In addition to developing their own guidelines for institutions, trainees, and sponsors of field-based global health training on ethics and best practices, WEIGHT also assesses the beneficial and negative impacts of global health training programmes³⁵.

Association for Research Ethics (AfRE): AfRE has a free open access Library of Policy and Guidance resources³⁶, which includes simple and practical checklists and examples for ethical considerations. Again, while this is focussed on health research, only some resources pertain specifically to clinical and medical research, while most are transferrable and can be used as basic tools and resources in preparing and conducting research to a standard approved by ethical committee review.

³⁵ Crump, J.A., & Sugarman, J. (2010). *Global Health Training: Ethics and best practice guidelines for training experiences in Global health*. American Journal of Tropical Medicine and Hygiene. 83 (6), 1178-1182.

³⁶ Available from <http://arec.org.uk/policy-and-guidance/guidelines-library/>.

ADDITIONAL REFERENCES.

HILHORST, D., HODGSON, L., JANSEN, B., MENA, R. 2016. Security Guidelines for Field Research in Complex, Remote, and Hazardous Places. Rotterdam: International Institute of Social Studies, Erasmus University.

ISRAEL, M. 2006. Research Ethics for Social Scientists: Between Ethical Conduct and Regulatory Compliance. London: Sage.

LEWIN, R. 2009. The Handbook of Practice and Research in Study Abroad: Higher Education and the Quest for Global Citizenship. New York: Routledge.

LOEWENSON, R., LAURELL, A. C., HOGSTEDT, C., D'AMBUOSO, L., SHROFF, Z. 2014. Participatory Action Research in Health Systems: A Methods Reader.

MURPHY, J., HATFIELD, J., AFSANA, K., NEUFELD, V. (2015). Making a Commitment to Ethics in Global Health Research Partnerships: A Practical Tool to Support Ethical Practice. *Bioethical Inquiry*. 12 (1):137-46.

PINTO, A. D., UPSHUR, R. E. G. 2013. An Introduction to Global Health Ethics, Taylor & Francis.

REASON, P., BRADBURY, H. 2008. The Sage Handbook of Action Research: Participative Inquiry and Practice.

TEMPLATES.

MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

The following is an example of a MoU³⁷

Memorandum of Understanding

<SUB HEADING>, <YEAR>

INSTRUCTIONS: Complete the following tables with details of the organisations that will be signing the MoU. If there are more than two parties then copy and paste the tables and label each party consecutively (Party A, B, C, D etc).

This MoU is an agreement made between the following parties:

Party A:

Organisation Name	<Insert>
Address	<Insert>
Telephone	<Insert>

Party B:

Organisation Name	<Insert>
Address	<Insert>
Telephone	<Insert>

SUBJECT

INSTRUCTIONS: Insert 3-4 bullet points describing what the MoU is about, how long it will last, and why it has been created.

PARTY A REPRESENTATIVE:

Signature: _____

Name: _____

Position: _____

Date: _____

PARTY B REPRESENTATIVE:

Signature: _____

Name: _____

Position: _____

Date: _____

1	<Insert>
2	<Insert>
3	<Insert>

COMMITMENTS

³⁷ Tools4Dev Template available from: <http://www.tools4dev.org/resources/memorandum-of-understanding-mou-template/>.

INSTRUCTIONS: List the specific commitments that have been made by each party. Describe what they have committed to do, and by when.

Party A commits to:

1	<Insert>
2	<Insert>
3	<Insert>

Party B commits to:

1	<Insert>
2	<Insert>
3	<Insert>

POLICIES

INSTRUCTIONS: Describe any policies that will apply to this MoU. For example, if all parties agree to use a particular per-diem or allowance policy during meetings then it should be described here.

	<Insert>
	<Insert>
	<Insert>

AMENDMENTS

INSTRUCTIONS: Describe when this MoU can be amended (e.g. can it only be amended at the end of the period? What if all parties agree to the amendment before the period has ended?).

1	<Insert>
2	<Insert>
3	<Insert>

BREACHES

INSTRUCTIONS: Describe what will happen if one of the parties does not fulfil its commitments.

1	<Insert>
2	<Insert>
3	<Insert>

The parties affirm to know, understand and agree to all articles of this MoU as negotiated together.

TERMS OF REFERENCE

The following is an example of a ToR³⁸

[Title of Field Work/Study/Research]

[Date and Draft No.]

[Drafted by]

1. BACKGROUND AND RATIONALE
2. AUDIENCE AND USE OF FINDINGS
3. RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

4. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1	<Insert>
2	<Insert>
3	<Insert>

5. RESEARCH METHODS
6. ETHICS AND RISKS
7. KEY SOURCES AND PEOPLE TO BE CONSULTED
8. STYLE AND LENGTH OF REPORT / RESEARCH PRODUCTS*

[*edit as appropriate]

9. TIMETABLE

	OUTPUTS	DATE DUE	FORMAT
1.	<Insert>		
2.	<Insert>		
3.	<Insert>		
4.	<Insert>		

10. RESEARCH MANAGEMENT

³⁸ Oxfam Template available from: <http://policy-practice.oxfam.org.uk/publications/terms-of-reference-for-research-template-253035>.

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION LEAFLET

The following is an example of key points to be included in the Participant's Information Leaflet³⁹. It is recommended that leaflets be written in clear, non-technical language (translated accordingly), and aimed at the potential participants in the project.

NAMES OF RESEARCHERS

WORKING TITLE OF STUDY

DESCRIPTION OF STUDY

- Aims and objectives of study (what the study is about, why this population)
- Contribution required from participant (what the study involves, what the participant will be asked to do)
- Possible benefits of the study
- Possible risks to participants and after effects
- Location of research
- What will happen to the results of the study

CONFIDENTIALITY OF INFORMATION

- How information will be stored
- How confidentiality will be ensured

COMPENSATION

VOLUNTARY PARTICIPATION

- Not obliged to take part
- May withdraw at any time

PERMISSION

- Ethical approval from X institutions

FURTHER INFORMATION AND HOW TO TAKE PART

- Contact details of researcher

³⁹ SoPPS Level 1 Research Ethics Committee Guidance Documents, TCD (2015).

CONSENT AND ASSENT FORMS

The following is an example of the Participant’s Declaration of Agreement⁴⁰ and the Statement of Investigator’s Responsibility.

PROJECT TITLE:

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATORS:

BACKGROUND:

(Provide short summary of what project involves for participants, including the procedures to be carried out and the assurance of confidentiality.)

DECLARATION:

I have read, or had read to me, the information leaflet for this project and I understand the contents. I have had the opportunity to ask questions and all my questions have been answered to my satisfaction. I freely and voluntarily agree to be part of this research study, though without prejudice to my legal and ethical rights. I understand that I may withdraw from the study at any time and I have received a copy of this agreement.

PARTICIPANT'S NAME:

CONTACT DETAILS:

PARTICIPANT'S SIGNATURE:

Date:

Statement of investigator's responsibility: I have explained the nature and purpose of this research study, the procedures to be undertaken and any risks that may be involved. I have offered to answer any questions and fully answered such questions. I believe that the participant understands my explanation and has freely given informed consent.

INVESTIGATOR'S SIGNATURE:.....

Date:.....

(Keep the original of this form in the investigator’s file, give one copy to the participant, and send one copy to the sponsor (if there is a sponsor).

The following is an example of the Parent or Guardian’s Consent and Child’s Assent to Participate⁴¹.

DECLARATION of Parent or guardian’s consent to allow child to participate: I have read this consent form and discussed it with my child. I have had time to consider whether my child will take part in this study. I understand that his/her participation is voluntary (it is his or her choice) and that we are free to withdraw from the research at any time without disadvantage. I agree that my child may take part in this research.

Name of Parent or Guardian (in block letters): _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

⁴⁰ SoPPS Level 1 Research Ethics Committee Guidance Documents, TCD (2015).

⁴¹ Human Research Ethics Committee Further Exploration of the Process of Seeking Informed Consent, UCD (2008).

DECLARATION of Child's assent to participate:

I have read this consent form and I agree to take part in this research.

Name of Child (in block letters): _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

RISK ASSESSMENT FORM

The following is an example of the Risk Assessment Form⁴²

- Provide General Information (name, position, supervisor/person responsible for ensuring safety, other team members)
- Provide details of proposed work/study/research (objectives, activities, duration, participants, equipment, location, transport, third party facilitation, etc.)
- Identify the hazards in undertaking this fieldwork
- Evaluate the associated risks and consider who might be harmed and how, including any persons with health problems or lacking experience who may be at greater risk
- List control measures to reduce the risk - procedures, equipment, training etc.
- Establish the residual risk rating after the implementation of controls

Severity		Low	Medium	High
		Likelihood	Low	Trivial
Medium	Acceptable		Moderate	Substantial
High	Moderate		Substantial	Intolerable

Risk Rating = Likelihood of risk occurring x Severity of outcome

Assessment of Likelihood and Severity:

	Severity of Outcome	Likelihood of Exposure
Low	Slightly Harmful	Unlikely
Medium	Harmful	Likely
High	Very Harmful	Very Likely

1. **Trivial Risk:** No further action needed
2. **Acceptable Risk:** No additional risk control measures required
3. **Moderate Risk:** Implement further risk control measures if possible
4. **Substantial Risk:** Further control measures must be implemented. If this is not possible then work must be strictly managed to ensure safety
5. **Intolerable:** Work must be prohibited until further control measures are implemented

⁴² Fieldwork Risk Assessment Form, UCD & TCD (2015).

Hazard		Risk(s)	Control Measure(s)
A. Physical Hazards (E.g. extreme weather; mountains and cliffs, quarries, marshes; fresh or seawater)			
Residual Risk Rating:			
B. Biological Hazards (E.g. poisonous plants; aggressive animals; insects, soil or water micro organisms)			
Residual Risk Rating:			
C. Chemical Hazards (E.g. pesticides; dusts; contaminated soils; chemicals brought into site)			
Residual Risk Rating:			
D. Man-Made Hazards (E.g. electrical equipment; vehicles, insecure buildings; slurry pits; power and pipelines)			
Residual Risk Rating:			
E. Personal Safety (E.g. lone working, violence and aggression)			
Residual Risk Rating:			

Hazard	Risk(s)	Control Measure(s)
F. Environmental Impact (E.g. rubbish; pollution, extreme heat/ cold)		
Residual Risk Rating:		
G. Other Hazards (E.g. manual handling, fatigue, etc.)		
Residual Risk Rating:		

Is the risk rating acceptable: Yes/No

*If yes sign and date below and ensure all risk control measures have been implemented.

If no identify further control measures and reassess risk. If the risk cannot be reduced to an acceptable level then the process cannot be carried out.

Is this work suitable for lone working: Yes/No

*This document must be signed by the person carrying out the assessment and their academic supervisor / manager / head of school (person responsible for ensuring safety).

The procedure for conducting, checking and approving risk assessments should be detailed in the school's own policy on fieldwork safety. The following is a suggested guide for this process⁴³.

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 _____

⁴³ University Policy and Model Code of Practice on Fieldwork in University Units, NUIG (2011).

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 _____

CHECKLISTS

The following is an example of a Medical Checklist⁴⁴

- ✓ 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 3rd 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

The following is an example of a Pre-Departure Training Checklist⁴⁵

- ✓ General and 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

⁴⁴ University Policy and Model Code of Practice on Fieldwork in University Units, NUIG (2011).

⁴⁵ University Policy and Model Code of Practice on Fieldwork in University Units, NUIG (2011).

The following is an example of a Fieldwork Logistics Checklist⁴⁶

- ✓ 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 3rd-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

⁴⁶ University Policy and Model Code of Practice on Fieldwork in University Units, NUIG (2011).

LEARN MORE AT: WWW.GLOBALHEALTH.IE | WWW.DSAIRELAND.ORG

