

WHS OP010 Fieldwork Procedure

Section 1 - Overview

(1) The University has an obligation to ensure the health, safety and welfare of UNE Representatives while undertaking fieldwork activities for University purposes.

(2) Fieldwork is often conducted off-campus and outdoors and therefore can expose participants to health and safety hazards different to those encountered in their normal on-campus duties and activities. Fieldwork may be undertaken by a single person or a group of people.

(3) The fieldwork location will normally be regarded as a workplace of the University and all relevant UNE policies will apply. Where the location is a workplace under the control of another entity the rules of that workplace will apply.

Section 2 - Scope

(4) Fieldwork is any off-campus activity for purposes of teaching, research or other educational pursuits (including relevant community service) under the control of the University. Indicative examples include the systematic collection of information, data or specific source material, practical and demonstration activities. N.B. Practicum supervision and workplace-based training are not considered fieldwork for the purposes of this procedure, since the staff involved will be subject to the safety management systems applying in those workplaces.

(5) This Procedure applies to the range of stages in the fieldwork process, including planning, preparation, travelling, fieldwork activity, returning and post-fieldwork follow up.

(6) These Procedures apply to UNE Representatives and Students.

Section 3 - Procedure

(7) All fieldwork must have a Person in Control. Ideally, the Person in Control is a staff member.

(8) The Person in Control has responsibility and accountability for the particular fieldwork activity and for ensuring that adequate planning, risk assessment and management systems are implemented to ensure the health and safety of fieldworkers. This is completed through the WHS F020 Risk Assessment.

(9) Although one person must have overall control of the fieldwork, at times there may be several people in the field in control of particular activities.

(10) The Person in Control does not necessarily have to be at the fieldwork location.

(11) Prior to the commencement of any fieldwork the Person in Control will carry out a documented risk assessment to identify and document hazards and associated risks.

(12) In preparation and planning for the fieldwork activity, the Person in Control will:

- a. implement the necessary risk control procedures;
- b. develop appropriate communication and emergency plans;
- c. obtain adequate information from the prospective fieldworkers about their health status to ensure that suitable measures can be implemented in a medical emergency; and
- d. Consider the appropriate travel, accommodation and supervision arrangements for fieldworkers, taking into account the experience/maturity of all participants.

(13) The Person in Control may, or may not, participate in the actual fieldwork activity.

(14) Responsibilities and accountabilities may be delegated to field supervisors or leaders undertaking fieldwork activities. If control is delegated, the exchange and extent of delegation must be documented. The responsibility for safety cannot be delegated, however tasks associated with fulfilling safety obligations can be delegated to Competent Persons. Safety duties or obligations cannot be delegated but more than one person can have the same safety duty.

(15) The Person in Control shall endeavour to maintain standards of behavior in the group throughout the duration of the fieldwork exercise in order to protect the right of others to work and study in an environment free from personal intimidation or harassment.

(16) The Person in Control shall monitor environmental factors (including weather) before and during the fieldwork. This weather evaluation may include temperature range, rain or snow, climate conditions such as dry, hot conditions and fire risk, UV exposure, tidal and weather events such as currents, cyclones and electrical storms.

Responsibilities of Fieldworkers

(17) Each member of a fieldwork party has a responsibility, under UNE [Work Health and Safety \(WHS\) Rule](#) and WHS legislation to work safely, taking all reasonable, practicable steps to protect the health and safety of themselves and others.

(18) It is the responsibility of each member of the fieldwork party to bring to the attention of the Person in Control or any delegated supervisor, all situations which may pose a risk to an individual's health and safety.

(19) Each person also has an obligation to minimize any impact on the environment.

(20) Prior to undertaking any fieldwork the Fieldworker will be required to sign WHS F012 Fieldwork Participation Declaration, agreeing to comply with the controls of the Risk Assessment.

(21) Generally, children will not be permitted to undertake fieldwork or attend fieldwork sites when fieldwork is being undertaken. Exceptions may be granted in accordance with [WHS OP015 Children in the Workplace Procedure](#).

(22) Where family members accompany a fieldworker, written permission must be obtained from Head of School /Head of Cost Centre. Any exclusion, special consideration, dates of attendance and insurance arrangements must be documented.

(23) Fieldworkers who undertake fieldwork where children are present or undertake fieldwork which involves child related work will need to document their assessment, using WHS F020 Risk Assessment and determine if a Working With Children Check is a mandatory precondition. If it is known that children will be at a fieldwork location the risk assessment must include hazards, risks and duty of care related to children being in a workplace.

Transport

(24) Drivers of vehicles on fieldwork activities are required to comply with the UNE Motor Vehicle related rules.

(25) Vehicles hired from outside companies will be subject to the provisions of those contracts.

(26) All drivers of vehicles on fieldwork activities, whether they are University or privately-owned vehicles, are expected to comply with the Australian Road Rules and will be personally responsible for any traffic infringements incurred.

Communication and Emergency Procedures

(27) As part of the planning process, a designated contact person at the University must be identified prior to departure. This person needs to be someone who is available by phone, in case of emergency, throughout the period of the fieldwork activity. Where this is nominated as UNE Safety, Security and Information, then the Person in Control shall provide Safety, Security and Information with contact details and full information about the trip prior to departure.

(28) Communication strategies and emergency procedures must be established before departure, including contact procedures for relevant local emergency agencies (e.g. police, ambulance, flying doctor, park ranger etc.) particularly when the fieldwork activity is undertaken in isolated or remote locations. When developing communication plans, consideration must be given to the sensitivity of personal information.

(29) On completion of the fieldwork the Person in Control of fieldwork must notify the designated contact person.

Documentation Procedures

(30) Prior to the commencement of the fieldwork activity, the Person in Control/Supervisor will complete or ensure completion of:

- a. WHS F010 Fieldwork Planning Guide and Checklist;
- b. WHS F020 Risk Assessment; and if required
- c. WHS F012 Fieldwork Participant Declaration.

(31) The Person in Control or nominee will submit these forms, and any other required documentation, to the Head of School/Head of Cost Centre/Directorate and WHS for approval.

(32) The WHS Team is available to provide advice and review any risk assessment if required.

(33) It is the responsibility of the Cost Centre to maintain records pertaining to risk management of fieldwork in TRIM.

(34) All staff required to participate in fieldwork must be given access to a copy of the Risk Assessment.

(35) All participants will be given WHS F012 Fieldwork Participation Declaration, which they must sign stating that they will comply with its requirements and the instructions of the Person in Control.

(36) The Person in Control has the right to refuse to allow a student to participate in the fieldwork activity if the student refuses to comply with requirements.

Fieldwork Planning Guide and Checklist

(37) WHS F010 Fieldwork Planning Guide and Checklist provides additional guidance on how fieldwork needs to be conducted. The checklist will assist in identifying hazards and risks.

Overseas Fieldwork

(38) Fieldworkers going overseas should consult a doctor with experience in travel medicine. The consultation should take place at least six (6) months before departure wherever possible, to ensure adequate time for completion of required immunizations, and the evaluation of protective measures against infectious diseases and other medical hazards that may be prevalent in the fieldwork location.

(39) Overseas travel is to be assessed within the WHS F020 Risk Assessment.

(40) Suitable first aid requirements should be identified as part of the initial risk assessment (see WHS F010 (Interim) Fieldwork Planning Checklist).

Authority and Compliance

(41) The Procedure Administrator, pursuant to the University's [Workplace Health and Safety Rule](#), makes these Procedures.

(42) UNE Representatives and Students must observe these Procedures in relation to University matters.

(43) These Procedures operate as and from the Effective Date.

(44) Previous Procedures relating to fieldwork are replaced and have no further operation from the Effective Date of this new Procedure.

Section 4 - Definitions specific to this Procedure

(45) Competent Person means a person who has acquired through training, qualification or experience the knowledge and skills to carry out the task.

(46) Fieldwork is any off-campus activity for purposes of teaching, research or other educational pursuits (including relevant community service) under the control of the University. Practicums and Work Experience is not fieldwork.

Status and Details

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Unit Head	Kirsten Clayton Director People and Culture
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Glossary Terms and Definitions

"UNE Representative" - Means a University employee (casual, fixed term and permanent), contractor, agent, appointee, UNE Council member, adjunct, visiting academic and any other person engaged by the University to undertake some activity for or on behalf of the University. It includes corporations and other bodies falling into one or more of these categories.

"Student" - Is an admitted student or an enrolled student, at the relevant time: 1. an admitted student is a student who has been admitted to a UNE course of study and who is entitled to enrol in a unit of study or who has completed all of the units in the UNE course of study; 2. an enrolled student is a student who is enrolled in a unit of study at UNE.

"Cost Centre" - Is the relevant Faculty, Directorate or other business unit.

"Effective Date" - means the Rule/Policy takes effect on the day on which it is published, or such later day as may be specified in the policy document.

"Working With Children Check" - Is a requirement for people who work or volunteer in child-related work. It involves a national criminal history check and a review of findings of workplace misconduct.