School of Environment Education and Development (SEED)

Safety Policy for undertaking fieldwork during Covid-19

This is a temporary policy which covers essential outdoor fieldwork during Alert level 4, it will be revised as the alert level changes. It is intended to support the continuation of fieldwork where further interruption is highly damaging to the project and where essential work, which cannot be carried out remotely, can be completed outside in line with government guidance. Fieldwork carried out under this policy should not involve as its objective interaction with human subjects even if physically distanced (for the avoidance of doubt, collecting environmental data is likely to be ok…interviews and focus groups are not).

The policy applies only to essential staff and PGR fieldwork which meets the criteria above.

The School recognises that fieldwork is an essential part of data collection and analysis for a large number of research activities undertaken as a core activity within SEED. This policy will say how SEED will manage its health and safety obligations during Covid-19. Any fieldwork undertaken must adhere to any legislative requirements and rules from or University of Manchester codes of practice.

Fieldwork may be classed as data collection and analysis and includes all land based activity where data is collected and analysed outdoors. As an outdoor activity and a class of work that cannot be completed from home fieldwork is permitted under Alert level 4 regulations and the school will approve fieldwork under the conditions outlined in this policy.

Only approved fieldwork which is critical to ongoing staff or PGR research and approved by the Head of School should be undertaken.

This policy and guidance is designed to ensure as far as is possible that fieldwork activities happen safely and without any incident or injury occurring to any of the participants or others who may be affected.

Types of fieldwork:

The scope of fieldwork which is possible will be constrained by the government regulations pertaining at the current Covid alert level. At the current level 4 overnight stays are not allowed so that fieldwork is limited to day trips. This may change as the alert level changes. All fieldwork must occur in outdoor locations.

Risk assessment - Covid specific considerations

In addition to the normal risk assessments required for fieldwork special consideration must be given to risks of transmission. The risk assessment must specify how social distancing will be maintained, use of hand sanitiser, disinfection of equipment, and safe travel to fieldwork sites (avoiding public transport and multi occupant vehicles -any person using their own vehicle to travel to a field site must check with their insurance company to ensure that they are covered for business travel.). Risks of interaction with members of the public must also be considered including any concerns that the fieldwork activity might raise with local communities. Under these conditions having clear permissions to operate in any private outdoor space is particularly important

Permission to Proceed

For each fieldwork activity permission should be sought from the Head of School through the school office including relevant risk assessments and self declarations (see below). Fieldwork should not proceed until permission has been given.

Self Declaration

All participants must complete a self declaration which must be submitted with the risk assessment to the school office (for HoS approval) stating that they are well, they are not self isolating they are not at particular risk and that they or members of their household are not shielding.

Roles and Responsibilities

Heads of School have overall responsibility for health and safety in the department including fieldwork activities. The Head of School will delegate the practical management of all aspects of fieldwork, including the health and safety requirements, to the fieldwork leader.

The Fieldwork Leader is responsible for the overall supervision of the activity. There should only be one leader per activity. They must ensure that health or safety issues are considered, that any precautions required are put in place, communicated to all participants and are adhered to for the duration of the activity. Levels of supervision need to be assessed as appropriate for the activity and environment and there needs to be the potential to change this with a fluid situation. This will include if necessary ceasing the activity if it cannot be completed safely.

Participants must ensure they understand and comply with any instruction given to them by a leader or supervisor, as well as reporting any potential hazard. They must accept responsibility for their own health and safety and that of others who may be affected by them.

Generic Covid Risk assessment

To add

MANCHESTER 1824
The University of Manchester

General Risk Assessment Form

Date: (1) 5.6.20.	**Assessed by:** (2) John Moore	**Checked / Validated* by:** (3) Martin Evans	**Location:** (4)	**Assessment ref no** (5)	**Review date:** (6) This risk assessment should be reviewed on any change on COVID-19 government guidance
Task / premises: (7) Undertaking fieldwork during COVID-19. **This risk assessment should be accompanied with a further risk assessment detailing the specific fieldwork that will be undertaken.**					

Activity (8)	**Hazard** (9)	**Who might be harmed and how** (10)	**Existing measures to control risk** (11)	**Risk rating** (12)	**Result** (13)
Permission to undertake fieldwork during COVID-19	Transfer of COVID-19	Fieldwork participants	• For each fieldwork activity permission should be sought from the Head of School through the school office including relevant risk assessments and self declarations (see below). Fieldwork should not proceed until permission has been given. • Only approved fieldwork which is critical to ongoing staff or PGR research and approved by the Head of School should be undertaken. • At the current level 4 overnight stays are not allowed so that fieldwork is limited to day trips • All fieldwork must occur in outdoor locations. • Permission must be sought by land owner and any other relevant agencies that may be associated with the field site.		
Undertaking fieldwork	Participants could could transmit COVID-19 to other workers within the team	Fieldwork participants	All participants must complete a self declaration which must be submitted with the risk assessment to the school office (for HoS approval) stating that they are well, they are not self isolating they are not at particular risk and that they or members of their household are not shielding.		

Activity (8)	**Hazard** (9)	**Who might be harmed and how** (10)	**Existing measures to control risk** (11)	**Risk rating** (12)	**Result** (13)
Travel to field site	Transfer of COVID-19	Participants sharing a vehicle	• Participants should travel to field sites alone in a vehicle. • Public transport should be avoided • Participants should check with their insurance company that they are covered for travel to field site.		
interaction with members of the public	Transfer of COVID-19/fieldwork causes health concerns within a community.		• Interaction with members of the public should be avoided where possible. • Any concerns that the fieldwork activity might raise with local communities. Under these conditions having clear permissions to operate in any private outdoor space is particularly important. • Be sensitive to how members of the public may view your presence in the current situation.		
Handwashing	Transfer of COVID-19	Fieldwork participants	• Hands should be washed before fieldwork commences for 20 seconds with soap and warm water and then washed regularly during the period of fieldwork. • Where washing facilities are not available then sanitising hand gel should be used and at regular intervals. • Hand sanitiser and disinfectant must be provided for all participants.		
Use of PPE	Injury caused by lack of PPE	Fieldwork participants	Where you are already using PPE in your work activity to protect against non-COVID-19 risks, you should continue to do so.		

Activity (8)	**Hazard** (9)	**Who might be harmed and how** (10)	**Existing measures to control risk** (11)	**Risk rating** (12)	**Result** (13)
Wearing a face mask	Transfer of COVID-19	Fieldwork participants	• wash your hands thoroughly with soap and water for 20 seconds or use hand sanitiser before putting a face covering on, and after removing it • when wearing a face covering, avoid touching your face or face covering, as you could contaminate them with germs from your hands • change your face covering if it becomes damp or if you've touched it • continue to wash your hands regularly • change and wash your face covering daily • if the material is washable, wash in line with manufacturer's instructions. If it's not washable, dispose of it carefully in your usual waste • practise social distancing wherever possible		
Social distancing	Transfer of COVID-19	Fieldwork participants	• You should maintain 2m social distancing wherever possible, including while arriving at and departing from work, while in work, and when travelling between sites. • use back-to-back or side-to-side working (rather than face-to-face) whenever possible. • The duration of fieldwork should be kept to the shortest possible.		
Using tools or equipment	Transfer of COVID-19	Fieldwork participants	Where possible tools and equipment should be used by one person. Where that isn't possible, tools should be sanitised using anti-viral disinfectant		
Line of command	Poor communication	Fieldwork participants	The Fieldwork Leader is responsible for the overall supervision of the activity. There should only be one leader per activity. They must ensure that health or safety issues are considered, that any precautions required are put in place, communicated to all participants and are adhered to for the duration of the activity. Participants must ensure they understand and comply with any instruction given to them by a leader or supervisor, as well as reporting any potential hazard.		

Activity (8)	**Hazard** (9)	**Who might be harmed and how** (10)	**Existing measures to control risk** (11)	**Risk rating** (12)	**Result** (13)
Dealing with an emergency	Transfer of COVID-19	Fieldwork participants	• In an emergency, for example, an accident, fire, break-in or trespass, people do not have to stay 2m apart if it would be unsafe. • People involved in the provision of assistance to others should pay particular attention to sanitation measures immediately afterwards, including washing hands.		

Action plan (14)				
Ref No	**Further action required**	**Action by whom**	**Action by when**	**Done**

Notes to accompany General Risk Assessment Form

This form is the one recommended by Safety Services, and used on the University's risk assessment training courses. It is strongly suggested that you use it for all new assessments, and when existing assessments are being substantially revised. However, its use is not compulsory. Providing the assessor addresses the same issues, alternative layouts may be used.

(1) **Date** : Insert date that assessment form is completed. The assessment must be valid on that day, and subsequent days, unless circumstances change and amendments are necessary.

(2) **Assessed by** : Insert the name and signature of the assessor. For assessments other than very simple ones, the assessor should have attended the University course on risk assessments (THS 15 Principles of Risk Assessment)

(3) **Checked / Validated* by** : delete one.

Checked by : Insert the name and signature of someone in a position to check that the assessment has been carried out by a competent person who can identify hazards and assess risk, and that the control measures are reasonable and in place. The checker will normally be a line manager, supervisor, principal investigator, etc. Checking will be appropriate for most risk assessments.

Validated by : Use this for higher risk scenarios, eg where complex calculations have to be validated by another "independent" person who is competent to do so, or where the control measure is a strict permit-to-work procedure requiring thorough preparation of a workplace. The validator should also have attended the University's risk assessment course or equivalent, and will probably be a chartered engineer or professional with expertise in the task being considered. Examples of where validation is required include designs for pressure vessels, load-bearing equipment, lifting equipment carrying personnel or items over populated areas, and similar situations.

(4) **Location** : insert details of the exact location, ie building, floor, room or laboratory etc. If off-campus, provide information about expected location(s) or attach itinerary.

(5) **Assessment ref no** : use this to insert any local tracking references used by the school or administrative directorate.

(6) **Review date** : insert details of when the assessment will be reviewed as a matter of routine. This might be in 1 year's time, at the end of a short programme of work, or longer period if risks are known to be stable. Note that any assessment must be reviewed if there are any significant changes – to the work activity, the vicinity, the people exposed to the risk, etc

(7) **Task / premises** : insert a brief summary of the task, eg typical office activities such as filing, DSE work, lifting and moving small objects, use of misc electrical equipment. Or, research project [title] involving the use of typical laboratory hardware, including fume cupboards, hot plates, ovens, analysis equipment, flammable solvents, etc.

(8) **Activity** : use the column to describe each separate activity covered by the assessment. The number of rows is unlimited, although how many are used for one assessment will depend on how the task / premises is sub-divided. For laboratory work, activities in one particular lab or for one particular project might include: use of gas cylinders, use of fume cupboard, use of computer or other electrical equipment, use of lab ovens, hot plates or heaters, use of substances hazardous to health, etc

(9) **Hazard** : for each activity, list the hazards. Remember to look at hazards that are not immediately obvious. For example, use of a lathe will require identification of the machine hazards, but also identification of hazards associated with the use of cutting oils (dermatitis), poor lighting, slipping on oil leaks, repetitive actions, etc. The same activity might well have several hazards associated with it. Assessment of simple chemical risks (eg use of cleaning chemicals in accordance with the instructions on the bottle) may be recorded here. More complex COSHH assessments eg for laboratory processes, should be recorded on the specific COSHH forms.

(10) **Who might be harmed and how** : insert everyone who might be affected by the activity and specify groups particularly at risk. Remember those who are not immediately involved in the work, including cleaners, young persons on work experience, maintenance contractors, Estates personnel carrying out routine maintenance and other work. Remember also that the risks for different groups will vary. Eg someone who needs to repair a laser may need to expose the beam path more than users of the laser would do. Vulnerable groups could include children on organised visits, someone who is pregnant, or employees and students with known disabilities or health conditions (this is not a definitive list).

For each group, describe how harm might come about, eg an obstruction or wet patch on an exit route is a hazard that might cause a trip and fall; use of electrical equipment might give rise to a risk of electric shock; use of a ultraviolet light source could burn eyes or skin.

(11) **Existing measures to control the risk** : list all measures that already mitigate the risk. Many of these will have been implemented for other reasons, but should nevertheless be recognised as means of controlling risk. For example, restricting access to laboratories or machine rooms for security reasons also controls the risk of unauthorised and unskilled access to dangerous equipment. A standard operating procedure or local rules (eg for work with ionising radiation, lasers or biological hazards) will often address risks. Some specific hazards may require detailed assessments in accordance with specific legislation (eg COSHH, DSEAR, manual handling, DSE work). Where this is the case, and a detailed assessment

has already been done in another format, the master risk assessment can simply cross-reference to other documentation. For example, the activity might be use of a carcinogen, the hazard might be exposure to hazardous substances, the existing control measures might all be listed in a COSHH assessment. Controls might also include use of qualified and/or experienced staff who are competent to carry out certain tasks; an action plan might include training requirements for other people who will be carrying out those tasks.

(12) **Risk Rating** : the simplest form of risk assessment is to rate the remaining risk as high, medium or low, depending on how likely the activity is to cause harm and how serious that harm might be.

The risk is **LOW** - if it is most unlikely that harm would arise under the controlled conditions listed, and even if exposure occurred, the injury would be relatively slight.

The risk is **MEDIUM** - if it is more likely that harm might actually occur and the outcome could be more serious (eg some time off work, or a minor physical injury.

The risk is **HIGH** - if injury is likely to arise (eg there have been previous incidents, the situation "looks like an accident waiting to happen") and that injury might be serious (broken bones, trip to the hospital, loss of consciousness), or even a fatality.

Schools or administrative directorates may choose to use other rating systems. Typical amongst these are matrices (of 3x3, 4x4, 5x5 or even more complex) which require the assessor to select a numerical rating for both "likelihood that harm will arise" and "severity of that harm". These may give a spurious sense of accuracy and reliability – none are based on quantitative methods. There are methods of estimating risk quantitatively, and these may be appropriate for complex design of load bearing structures and the like. Advice on methods of risk assessment is available from Safety Services. Whatever system of assessment is adopted, it is **essential** that the assessor has received suitable training and is familiar with the meaning of the terms (or numbers) used.

(13) **Result** : this stage of assessment is often overlooked, but is probably the most important. Assigning a number or rating to a risk does not mean that the risk is necessarily adequately controlled. The options for this column are:

T = trivial risk. Use for very low risk activities to show that you have correctly identified a hazard, but that in the particular circumstances, the risk is insignificant.

A = adequately controlled, no further action necessary. If your control measures lead you to conclude that the risk is low, and that all legislative requirements have been met (and University policies complied with), then insert A in this column.

N = not adequately controlled, actions required. Sometimes, particularly when setting up new procedures or adapting existing processes, the risk assessment might identify that the risk is high or medium when it is capable of being reduced by methods that are reasonably practicable. In these cases, an action plan is required. The plan should list the actions necessary, who they are to be carried out by, a date for completing the actions, and a signature box for the assessor to sign off that the action(s) has been satisfactorily completed. Some action plans will be complex documents; others may be one or two actions that can be completed with a short timescale.

U = unable to decide. Further information required. Use this designation if the assessor is unable to complete any of the boxes, for any reason. Sometimes, additional information can be obtained readily (eg from equipment or chemicals suppliers, specialist University advisors) but sometimes detailed and prolonged enquiries might be required. Eg is someone is moving a research programme from a research establishment overseas where health and safety legislation is very different from that in the UK.

For T and A results, the assessment is complete.
For N or U results, more work is required before the assessment can be signed off.

(14) **Action Plan**. Include details of any actions necessary in order to meet the requirements of the information in Section 11 'Existing measures to control the risk'. Identify someone who will be responsible for ensuring the action is taken and the date by which this should be completed. Put the date when the action has been completed in the final column.