

## RESEARCH DEGREES AND SCHOLARSHIPS COMMITTEE

**FIELDWORK POLICY for RESEARCH STUDENTS****1. BACKGROUND AND DEFINITION****Background**

This fieldwork policy has been developed to provide guidance to Murdoch University research students engaged in fieldwork activities. Research students frequently conduct fieldwork activities which are diverse in their nature and which may take place in unfamiliar surroundings. Some tasks undertaken during fieldwork may involve a potentially high level of risk to the health and safety of students, and the fieldwork environment may be potentially hazardous.

Foremost in the development of this policy is a commitment to ensure risks are carefully assessed and that safe working practices are planned and implemented to minimise the risks in the field for all students engaged in field activities.

**Definition**

Fieldwork involves the systematic collection of information, data or specific other source material, or the carrying out of research which can only be done in a specific geographical area.

For the purpose of this policy the definition of fieldwork shall be any research, authorised by the University, which is conducted at a site other than a Murdoch University campus. Fieldwork does not include interview situations, inter-campus travel, meetings off-site or attendance at conferences. It does include, for example, most work in natural areas, remote areas field work (see definition later in this document), international field trips, work in hazardous situations, work in industrial premises, and in other areas where risk is higher that would normally be the case of the student was working on campus.

For the purpose of this policy research students shall include any student enrolled in a postgraduate research degree or an honours degree.

**2. PURPOSE**

The purpose of this policy is to provide a framework for the identification of risks and hazards in fieldwork by research students, and their management to ensure a safe working environment during fieldwork.

**3. RESPONSIBILITIES**

Students have a responsibility to work safely in the field, taking reasonable care to protect their own health and safety and that of fellow participants (which may include visitors and volunteers).

It is the duty of the University to advise students of their responsibilities and to help minimise risks involved through the discussion, planning and approval of fieldwork trips. The University, including Schools and the Divisions of Study, will assist the student to assess hazards, risks and risk control measures for specific fieldwork activities, but the primary responsibility to ensure safe working practices of research students lies with the student.

The University expects that students must not accept any unsafe working practices, and must report concerns to the supervisor and the University Occupational Health and Safety Officer at the earliest opportunity.

*I have read, understand and agree to comply with this policy*

**Signed:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Dated:** \_\_\_\_\_

## 4. PROCEDURES

### Approval of fieldwork

Notification for intended fieldwork is given as part of the Programme of Study which is submitted by all research candidates. Details of fieldwork and any hazardous or dangerous activities must be disclosed in the submission of the Programme of Study and the Annual Progress Report. Any fieldwork which becomes part of the research programme subsequent to the original Programme of Study must be reported in the Annual Progress Report.

### Travel Insurance

All enrolled postgraduate research students are covered by the University's travel insurance policy. The worldwide travel insurance policy is similar to the policy that covers staff, and the benefits and conditions are available from HDR Services, Office of Financial Services or at the following website:

<http://www.murdoch.edu.au/finance/admin/polproc/manual/insurance/900.html>

Insurance provisions for vehicles and equipment should also be determined. Fieldwork participants should be well informed of the extent of insurance provision prior to commencing fieldwork.

### University Occupational Health and Safety Policies and Guidelines

The University Policies and Guidelines that relate to Occupational Health and Safety must be reviewed by supervisors and students when planning and conducting a field trip. Further information can be sought from:

<http://wwwadmin.murdoch.edu.au/hr/risk/osh/>

### Accident/Incident Reporting

The University has a well established policy on the reporting of accidents and incidents. Further information on appropriate action can be sought from the Occupational Health and Safety Website at:

<http://wwwadmin.murdoch.edu.au/hr/risk/osh/>

### Sexual Harassment

The University has a policy on the reporting of accidents and incidents Sexual harassment is any uninvited and unwelcome sexual behaviour or advances of a sexual nature and unwelcome requests for sexual favours that make a person feel offended, humiliated or intimidated and it is reasonable under the circumstances that a person would feel that way.

The University has appointed Equity Information Officers and Equity Conciliators to inform and support members of the University community who feel that they have been harassed or discriminated against. Equity Information Officers are the first point of call and act like a clearing-house for all complaints. Further information can be sought from:

<http://wwwadmin.murdoch.edu.au/equity>

*I have read, understand and agree to comply with this policy*

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Dated: \_\_\_\_\_

## Remote Area Fieldwork

### *Definition:*

*This is defined both in terms of distance and inaccessibility, therefore it may include:*

1. Working more than 5 km from a facility with phone or radio communication facility (even if personal communication equipment is available);  
OR
2. In areas of little traffic or where hills, dense forest or other topographic features make it difficult to obtain help using the communication system available;  
OR
3. If medical or other emergency support is more than 1 hour away if a vehicle is not available.

It should be noted that work on or under the surface of rivers, inland waterways, estuaries and oceanic work sites, and work in drains, tunnels and caves are all considered to be remote fieldwork sites.

### Remote Area Fieldwork Responsibilities

1. All research students must agree not to undertake remote area fieldwork without approval from their Supervisor and School Dean prior to departure. The student through the supervisor to the School Dean must submit a list of all persons involved and a detailed itinerary.
2. All research students must agree not to work alone on fieldwork in a remote area without regular contact with the approved staff contact person. It is highly recommended that at least two people are involved in work in remote areas.
3. All research students (in groups or as individuals must provide a written itinerary and a map indicating the working area with their Supervisor and School Dean, prior to departure.
4. All research students must agree to make contact on a regular pre-arranged basis with the approved contact person.
5. All research students must agree to ensure that all vehicles travelling in remote areas carry appropriate spare parts, first aid and communication equipment commensurate with the remoteness of and facilities within, the area of research.
6. All research students must agree to adhere to all Divisional and University policies (eg boat handling or vehicle policies) and procedures relating to fieldwork in the planning and implementation of fieldwork trips.
7. All research students must agree to complete suitable training for specialist equipment or extreme conditions, prior to commencement of fieldwork.
8. All research students must agreed that at least one member of every fieldwork party has a senior First Aid qualification, or appropriate first aid instruction.

*I have read, understand and agree to comply with this policy*

**Signed:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Dated:** \_\_\_\_\_

### **International Field Trips**

1. All research students must agree not to undertake an international field trip without approval from their Supervisor and School Dean prior to departure. A list of all persons involved and a detailed itinerary must be submitted through the supervisor to the School Dean.
2. All research students must agree to ensure that they have taken all necessary security precautions when international travel is undertaken. Further information regarding a specific country should be obtained from the Consular Office or the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade.
3. All research students must agree to adhere to medical advice regarding vaccination and other health risks. Travel medicine advice changes over time depending on disease trends and medical advances - it is therefore important to obtain current advice before any international field trip.

### **Medical Conditions Affecting Fieldwork Participation**

1. All research students must agree to take appropriate medical advice and disclose to their supervisor or School Dean any limitation imposed by their health which may affect their ability to participate safely in any fieldwork activity. This obligation applies both before and during any fieldwork activity. Any medical limitations of a research candidate will be treated in confidence.
2. All research students who participate in fieldwork at remote locations must be adequately fit for the tasks required.
3. All research students must agree to follow relevant medical advice concerning the avoidance of health risk and treatment of a medical condition during fieldwork.

### **Fieldwork Approval**

All research students must agree not to undertake fieldwork until the Fieldwork Approval Form has been submitted and approved by the School Dean.

The Fieldwork Approval form is available from Divisional Offices, the HDR Services and at the HDR Services Website:

<http://www.research.murdoch.edu.au/gradcentre/>

An approval form is required for each separate field excursion, unless otherwise advised in writing by the School Dean.

### **Queries**

Any queries regarding the fieldwork policy can be directed to:

HDR Services  
The Student Centre  
Level 2, Chancellery Building  
Murdoch University,  
90 South Street,  
Murdoch  
WA 6150

Telephone: 1300 687 3624

<http://www.research.murdoch.edu.au/gradcentre/>

*I have read, understand and agree to comply with this policy*

**Signed:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Dated:** \_\_\_\_\_



POSTGRADUATE RESEARCH STUDENT

**FIELDWORK APPROVAL FORM**

**STUDENT DETAILS**

Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Student No: \_\_\_\_\_

Division and School of Study: \_\_\_\_\_

Principal Supervisor: \_\_\_\_\_

**FIELDWORK DETAILS**

*(if insufficient room, please attach a separate page)*

Has your "Programme of Study" been approved by the University? YES  NO

List all Fieldwork participants:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

On a separate sheet please provide full itinerary and accommodation details:

*This should include dates, times, itinerary (map if appropriate), accommodation and transport arrangements.*

On a separate sheet please provide full details of hazards, your assessment of risks to you and your participants, and what you will do to address these risks to provide a safe working environment

Do you have any medical conditions which may affect your fieldwork participation?

YES  NO

If *yes*,

have you discussed this with your supervisor or School Dean? YES  NO

Does this fieldwork involve any potentially hazardous activities or situations? YES  NO

**Student Declaration:**

The information that I have provided in this application is accurate and complete.

I acknowledge that I have a responsibility to work safely in the field, taking reasonable care to protect my own health and safety and that of any other fieldwork participants.

I agree to comply with all procedures outlined in the Fieldwork Policy and any special conditions outlined below. I have read this policy and signed every page to indicate that I have read, understand and agree to comply with it

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

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**FOR DIVISIONAL USE:**

I support the applicant conducting the activities described in this application, subject to the applicant complying with any special conditions listed below

**Approval by Principal Supervisor:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

I approve the applicant conducting the activities described in this application, subject to the applicant complying with any special conditions listed below. The applicant has been notified and agrees to comply with the conditions listed below

**Approval by School Dean:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

Is this fieldwork activity subject to any special conditions? YES  NO

If Yes, please explain:

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**This form should be sent to the Executive Dean of the Division and held on file by the Divisional Office.**

## CHECKLIST FOR STUDENTS UNDERTAKING FIELDWORK

ITEM	Yes	No
<b>1.</b> A list of all persons involved and a detailed itinerary has been submitted by me through my supervisor to the School Dean.		
<b>2. Hazard and Risk Management</b>		
a) Have you identified and assessed the hazards?		
b) Have you assessed the risks and developed risk reduction strategies?		
c) Do you consider that the proposed activity is safe?		
<b>3. Policies</b>		
a) I have read, understand and agreed to adhere to the University Occupational Health and Safety Policies and Guidelines?		
b) I have read, understand and agreed to adhere to the University policy on the reporting of accidents and incidents?		
c) I have read, understand and agreed to adhere to the University Code of Ethics and Conduct.		
d) I have read, understand and agreed to adhere to all Divisional and University policies and procedures relating to fieldwork in the planning and implementation of my fieldwork trips.		
<b>4. Planning and training</b>		
a) I have provided a written itinerary and a map indicating the working area with my Supervisor and approved contact person, prior to departure.		
b) I have made arrangements to make contact on a regular pre-arranged basis with the approved contact person.		
c) I have ensured that all vehicles travelling in remote areas carry appropriate spare parts, first aid and communication equipment commensurate with the remoteness of, and facilities within, the area of research.		
d) I will have completed the training advised by my supervisor for specialist equipment or extreme conditions, prior to commencement of fieldwork.		
e) At least one member of every fieldwork party has a senior First Aid qualification, or appropriate first aid instruction.		
<b>5. International Field Trips (to be completed if the field trip is outside of Australia)</b>		
a) I have received approval from my Supervisor and School Dean.		
b) I have received appropriate advice and taken all necessary security precautions.		
c) I have received and implemented current medical advice regarding vaccination and other health risks.		
<b>6. Medical Conditions Affecting Fieldwork Participation</b>		
a) I have received appropriate medical advice and disclosed to my supervisor or School Dean any limitation imposed by my health that may affect my ability to participate safely in the fieldwork activity I will undertake.		
b) I agree that I am adequately fit for the tasks required to participate in the fieldwork outlined in this application.		
c) I have received and will follow relevant medical advice concerning the avoidance of health risk and treatment of any medical condition during this fieldwork.		
d) I am aware of my responsibility to work safely in the field, taking reasonable care to protect my own health and safety and that of any other fieldwork participants.		
e) I have read and understand all procedures outlined in the Fieldwork Policy and any special conditions required by the supervisor or School Dean as noted on any approval.		