UNIVERSITY OF EAST LONDON

CODE OF PRACTICE FOR FIELDWORK

This policy is a sub-policy of the main University Health and Safety Policy Statement.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

All staff and students are required by the University to read this document and to follow its guidelines on safe working procedures before embarking on any fieldwork. Fieldwork is not by definition a hazardous activity. It is, however, an extremely varied activity and a definitive list of every conceivable hazard and appropriate precaution would be impossible. This Code of Practice is intended as a general indication of the range of health and safety considerations relevant to fieldwork which those responsible for planning fieldwork should take into account as they make their preparations.

2.0 DEFINITION OF FIELD WORK

Fieldwork may be defined in relation to this Code as "any practical work carried out by staff or students of the University for the purpose of teaching, learning or research in places which are outside the direct control of the University of East London but where the University remains responsible for the safety of its staff and students.

This definition includes activities as diverse as excavating, sailing, skiing, social surveys, interviews, surveys or sample collection, geological expeditions etc. (See Appendix 1 for further examples of activities). It excludes activities such as work placements where an external employer has accepted responsibility for the safety of the University's students on the employer's premises and where it has been established that health and safety conditions are adequate.

3.0 LEGAL CONSIDERATIONS

3.1. All staff and students of the University have obligations under the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 and under the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1992 to take ***reasonable*** care of their own health and safety and that of others who may be affected by their acts or omissions. They must comply with the University's Health and Safety Policy and procedures.

Under common law the University owes a "duty to care" to employees and the students they supervise. This duty of care is expressed as a duty of line management and therefore this duty falls primarily on Heads of Departments.

It is the responsibility of Heads of Department to ensure that fieldwork is embarked on, only after proper planning; that a "suitable and sufficient" assessment of risks is made; and that a safe system of work has been established for all staff and students involved in the fieldwork.

NB The Head of Department may choose to delegate managerial responsibility to a "named leader" or organiser for the activity in question. The named leader may also require the support of one or more "named supervisors", fieldwork leaders who must

be thoroughly conversant with this Code. However, the Head of Department remains accountable to the University for the safety of the participants and must ensure that the named leader is competent to lead, has sufficient awareness of his or her legal obligations towards those participants, and is thoroughly conversant with this Code. Organisers or leaders are responsible to the Head of Department. Fieldworkers, leaders/organisers may delegate safety responsibility to supervisors but retain overall accountability. Fieldworkers must read, understand and observe instructions. They must not knowingly expose themselves to danger.

3.2. INSURANCE

All fieldwork must have adequate insurance cover. Heads of Department must ensure that the University has arranged appropriate insurance to cover all parties and eventualities before the trip commences. Advice should be given to individuals to take out additional personal insurance whenever necessary. A summary of the insurance cover provided by the University is in Appendix 8.

4.0. PLANNING & RISK ASSESSMENT

Before ***any and every*** activity is undertaken a thorough assessment of risks involved must be undertaken by the Head of Department or named leader. The more dangerous the activity the greater the depth of the required assessment. Where lone working is considered and the risks are found to be high the lone work should not be permitted. Where there is doubt or concern expert guidance should be sought (See also 4.1.2).

4.1. CHECKLIST FOR PLANNING AND EVALUATING RISK FACTORS

4.1.1 Planning Field Work

The same standard of care should be exercised for visits at home or abroad.

Consideration must be given to the following:

- Identification of the Head of Department with overall responsibility, and of the named leader and supervisor(s).
- The purpose of the visit and its relationship to the programme of study.
- The age, maturity and anticipated conduct of the "party".
- The number of students (Maximum/Minimum).
- The staff:student ratio.
- The nature of the activities.
- The skills/competencies required of the accompanying staff members.
- Any additional skills required of the named leader and named supervisors.
- What preparation is required of the students e.g. training, vaccinations.
- Is an exploratory visit required to ascertain the suitability of the venue and to draw up a basic datasheet (local medical services; mountain rescue; police etc.) (if not possible has a letter been sent seeking answers to issues raised)?

- What equipment is required e.g. communication, protective equipment, travel documents?
- Inform appropriate authorities e.g. police/mountain rescue.
- Catering and access.

4.1.2 Checklist For Risk Evaluation

Before undertaking any activity, Heads of Departments must ensure that a suitable risk assessment has been carried out.

The aim is to contain risks to acceptable levels by giving consideration to:

(a) **Organisation**

- The type of activity.
- Identification of organisational, lead and supervisory responsibility.
- Competencies of named leaders with regard to the proposed activity.
- Group size and membership.
- Weather/seasonal conditions and timing.
- Communication.
- Transport and accommodation.
- Security and quality of equipment.
- Communication - both routine and emergency.
- Ratio of competent staff to students.
- Security of the party.
- Independent activities (and their justification) i.e. lone working.

(b) **Emergency Measures**

- Availability and provisions for accidents and emergencies.
- First Aid requirements.
- Accident reporting procedures.
- Medication requirements.
- Fitness of students (physical and mental well being of all party members).
- Medical Questionnaires and exclusions for medically unfit students.
- Disabled students/staff.

(c) **Physical**

- Nature of environment & local conditions.
- Overhead power lines.
- Climate (adverse weather).

- Tide, heights, river states.
- Traffic/roads.
- Handling animals and specimens etc.
- Encounters with wild or dangerous animals.

(d) **Dangerous Substances**

- Chemicals (pesticides, dusts).
- Biological hazards (venomous animals, plants).
- Explosives.
- Microbiological - pathogenic micro-organisms (tetanus, leptospirosis).
- Environmental - dusts, pollution, waste.

(e) **Legal**

- Insurance cover.
- Liability.
- The Law of Trespass.
- Provision of or requirements for personal protective equipment.
- Relevant UK Laws.
- Relevant University Safety Policy and Department Code of Safe Working.
- Provide students/party members with information on the nature of activity and associated hazards.
- Heads of Department authorisation after Risk Assessment is completed.
- Communication lines and base line/home contacts and telephone numbers.
- Itinerary and return times - daily timetables.
- Safe system of work.
- Plans and briefing sessions and notices.

5.0 AUTHORISATION AND BRIEFING

On completion of the risk assessment it should be possible to anticipate any likely risks and thereby remove or reduce them to an acceptable level. A safe system of work should be devised, discussed and agreed by the Head of Department and with the University Health and Safety Advisor. All those involved in the project should attend briefing sessions to ensure that everyone understands the purpose of the field trip, the content of the programme, the itinerary and return times, communication, location, code of conduct, command structure, special safety measures (copies provided), protective clothing and emergency procedures. All students (and staff) concerned must be required on the authority of the Head of Department to attend these preparatory briefings.

In accordance with the responsibility placed on students to take all reasonable steps to safeguard their own health and safety, any student failing to attend these briefings will be excluded from attending the fieldcourse.

6.0 ACCIDENT REPORTING

All accidents however trivial occurring during the fieldwork activities must be reported and a written report should be sent to the Health and Safety Advisor using the University accident report form. It is the leaders responsibility to ensure records are kept.

The Department must be aware in advance of the activities of fieldwork groups, their plan of work and proposed itinerary and any updates where necessary.

Expedition leaders must be aware of the legal duty to notify the Health and Safety Executive immediately if there is a death, a specified injury or a specified dangerous occurrence at "work" (See Guidance Note 4) or within 7 days in the case of injuries resulting in incapacity for work for more than three days. Where possible, reports should be made via the Health and Safety Advisor (or Head of Department).

6.1. First Aid Coverage

Leaders of student fieldwork groups should hold as a minimum standard an HSE approved First Aid at Work Certificate.

A first aid kit must be taken on each field trip and should be appropriate and adequate for the nature of activity and the expertise of the leader (Appendix 6).

6.2. Illness in the Field

Expeditions should be aware of the location of the nearest healthcare facilities. As part of the expedition planning, there should be adequate medical insurance and for European Community visits fieldworkers should carry a certificate of health insurance (Form E111 - available from the Post Office).

For visits further afield it is recommended that expeditions carry a number of sterile packs. Further advice can be obtained from the Health Centre.

7.0 SUPERVISION AND TRAINING

It is important that during fieldwork there is a clear command structure. When command is transferred all members of the party must be kept fully informed. The named leader and/or named project manager is responsible for ensuring that all safety precautions are observed during the duration of the trip and this may require positive logging.

Organisers/leaders are responsible to Heads of Departments for ensuring that adequate safety arrangements exist and are followed by participants. Home base and departments must be kept aware of the activities of the fieldwork group, itinerary and plans. Remote or hazardous work must be notified to a suitable organisation (the police, mountain rescue etc).

Levels of supervision will vary according to the field trips proposed. The responsibility lies with the named leader to ensure that the level of supervision is adequate for a given situation. Three levels of supervision are recognised.

7.1. Fully Supervised Courses

- Normally of short duration, low hazard environment day courses - e.g. sample collection.
- Participating students may be inexperienced and must not normally be allowed to work independently - safety instructions must be part of the excursion.
- Ration must be no more than 10 students per experienced staff member.
- Maximum party sizes must be set.

7.2. Field Expeditions

- Generally prolonged trips to remote and potentially hazardous environments.
- Participants will normally have received instructions or are experienced in work techniques and safety procedures.
- Leader must be skilled in survival communication and navigational techniques and be familiar with precautions required in hazardous terrain's or with dangerous animals, substances or disease.
- The authority and responsibility of the leader must be clearly defined.
- Adequate deputising arrangements should be made.

7.3. Lone Working

- Working alone is strongly discouraged. However it is recognised that there are rare occasions when it is not reasonably practicable to avoid it.
- A thorough assessment and justification must be made before sanctioning lone working.
- A safe system of work should be devised to reduce the risks from foreseeable hazards to an acceptable level.
- The student/worker should be involved in the risk assessment.
- The supervisor must be made aware of the proposed itinerary and estimated time of return.
- Departments must give clear guidelines on the scope of activities which may be undertaken alone, where they may take place, supervisory arrangements and the training and experience required on the part of the student/staff.
- An effective means of communication is essential.
- If the risk assessment has highlighted serious danger of personal injury the leader should not permit lone working.

8.0 Training

It is important that fieldwork leaders are adequately trained and heave the necessary skills particularly for some activities. All staff engaged in fieldwork to remote locations must have training in first aid, survival and rescue techniques. In the case of prolonged remote fieldwork there maybe a case for training all expedition members in first aid. All participants of activities on or near water should be able to swim at least 50 metres.

Training of leaders is very important and for some activities formal qualifications may have to be sought in excess to those relating to the work process (e.g. from relevant professional bodies).

Participants must receive adequate information and instructions from a competent person on the likely hazards associated with the activity including the need for good personal hygiene and the safe use of insect repellents.

Appendix 1

SUMMARY OF FIELD WORK ACTIVITIES

The following are examples of activities covered by these guidelines;

Archaeological

Botanical

Building site visits

Canoeing

Climbing*

Construction

Ecological

Environmental

European field courses

Geological and geographical activities

Horse-riding*

Industrial visits

International study tour

Road transport research

Sailing

Skiing*

Sociological and photographical studies

Specimen collection

Surveying

Visits to exhibitions

Windsurfing

Work placements (subject to section 2.0)

* Excluded from the University's Personal Accident/Travel insurance.

Appendix 2

SAFE WORK PRACTICES FOR FIELD TRIPS

RISK EVALUATION

Regardless of the activity a risk assessment must be carried out and management approval (Head of Department) must be given in writing. Arrangements for supervision in the risk assessment must clearly identify (i) the size of the party (numbers) (ii) the name of the leader and command structure including any named supervisors, (iii) the ratio of students to supervisors and actual periods of supervision (rotas etc).

A procedure for communication, reporting, reviewing and updating the expedition party must be in place.

All students and staff must clearly understand that they have a responsibility to ensure that they follow the agreed safe system of work. They should be made aware of disciplinary measures and reasons for possible exclusions (e.g. on health grounds, inadequate training).

A detailed programme of each day's activity should be given to all participants identifying the nature of activity, equipment required, departure and arrival times, reporting procedures, emergency arrangements and the chain of command. A copy of the programmes associated with the activity should be lodged with the Head of Department.

All programmes and systems should be reviewed on a regular basis to ensure the system in place is adequate to meet all eventualities.

All leaders/supervisors should be adequately qualified/experienced in respect of activities to be undertaken. In certain activities there are recognised qualifications and national awards (See Appendix 7).

It is important that no pressure is brought to bear on any persons to attempt activities which are beyond their own experience or capabilities.

All organisers should ensure there is adequate first aid cover. They should be aware of the location of local medical centres for more serious injuries. All students should be encouraged to carry a personal first aid kit.

It is important equipment is checked and maintained and carries a dated written certificate.

The handling and transportation of dangerous substances is covered by reference to the appropriate section of the Road Traffic Act, COSHH Regulations or other specific legislation.

There must be a recognised reporting procedure for accident and emergencies. It is important that the University is informed of any major incidents.

Appendix 3

EXPEDITIONS ON FOOT

- Allow adequate time when planning itineraries.
- Leaders must exercise considerable vigilance especially in hostile environments or when dealing with inexperienced members.
- Keep a watch out for stragglers and take adequate breaks.
- Students should not be permitted to carry out fieldwork alone.
- Enter private property only with prior permission of landowner, tenant or warden.
- Do not obstruct the public highway or private footpaths.
- Follow the country code especially with regard for sensitive animals.
- Carry all the appropriate equipment, safety and survival kit in your back pack to leave hands free to assist the safe negotiation of rugged terrain.
- Participants must be adequately trained in use of equipment e.g. climbing gear, skis and allow time for adequate rest periods.
- All samples, specimens, equipment should be stored and transported safely and kept away from food and clothing.
- There must be a system of reporting accidents and ill health.
- Contingency plans must be in place for emergencies due to accidents or climate.
- Check local weather conditions, relevant local table before each day's fieldwork.
- Remember that the maximum speed of your group is the speed of its slowest members - do not overestimate the amount of fieldwork or the distance you can cover.
- Be aware of some of the common physical problems especially hypothermia (encountered even in summer in upland areas).
- Seek appropriate transport which is well maintained and provides seat restraints.
- Use only recognised, licensed, insured and competent drivers.
- Additional training for drivers maybe necessary and insurance cover.
- Provision of maps, compasses, tide tables etc.
- Be alert to threat of theft, vandalism and violent crime.
- An adequate supply of portable water must be obtained.
- When walking on roads at night use high visibility clothing.

Appendix 4

GUIDELINES ON APPROPRIATE PROTECTIVE CLOTHING AND EQUIPMENT

Protective Clothing

Adequate and appropriate clothing must be worn by all participants. It must be checked on a regular basis and worn correctly. Equipment and PPE must comply with EC legislation (CE Mark). Regardless of the season each student must be equipped with the following:

- One complete set of high visibility waterproof and windproof outer clothing (including over trousers).
- Multiple layers of thin loose fitting inner clothing made from natural fibres.
- Walking boots (broken in) made of leather or Gortex with good grips (specialised stiff mountaineering boots are unsuitable).
- A rucksack or backpack adequate to carry essential items and last for a days field work.
- A set of bad weather clothing.
- Plastic or metal water bottle
- Emergency high energy food or packed lunch.
- Notebook, pens, pencils.
- Maps, instructions and compass.
- Emergency whistle.
- Torch.
- Identity card and medical ID where required.

Equipment

Equipment must be fit for its intended purpose and appropriate UK and EC standards must be complied with. For example safety helmets must be worn where there is danger of falling debris such as rocks, ice or other natural objects, or life jackets to be worn by all participating in canoe or boat work where there is a risk of drowning.

- Safety Helmets.
- Eye/face protection (for tools, chemicals etc).
- Ear defenders (machinery etc).
- Gloves (sharp objects, chemicals or cold conditions).
- Respiratory protection (dust, toxic vapours etc).
- High visibility clothing.
- Wet suits.
- Life jackets.
- Gloves and foot protection.

Equipment must be checked and tested before use, schemes of maintenance and examination must be drawn up and inspections by competent persons must be carried out at appropriate predetermined intervals during use.

Procedures for withdrawal of damaged equipment and repair must be in place and records of such repair and maintenance kept.

Current legal requirements on use and maintenance of electrical equipment must be followed.

Intrinsically safe (sport proof/water proof) equipment must be used in hostile conditions.

Equipment must be operated safely by competent trained persons.

After use protective clothing and equipment must be decontaminated/cleaned and carefully stored or disposed of as appropriate.

Appendix 5

UNIVERSITY OF EAST LONDON FIELD COURSES

CONFIDENTIAL MEDICAL QUESTIONNAIRE FOR USE OF STUDENTS AND STAFF PARTICIPATING IN OFF-SITE ACTIVITIES		
Name	Date of Birth	
Current Home Address	☎	
Course Name	Course Year	
Name and address of next of kin (to be contacted only in an emergency)	☎	
Name and address of your doctor	☎	
Your NHS No. (if known)		
Are you suffering from any of the following?		
Asthma or bronchitis	YES	NO
Heart condition		
Fits, fainting or blackouts		
Severe headaches		
Diabetes		
Allergies to any known drugs		
Any other allergies, e.g. material, food		
Other illness or disability		
Travel sickness		
Back, knee or other joint problems		
Any injury, break		
If the answer to any of these questions is YES, please give details here		
Have you received vaccination against Tetanus in the last five years	YES	NO
Are you receiving medical or surgical treatment of any kind from either your Doctor or a Hospital		
Have you been given specific medical advice to follow in emergencies		
Are you taking any medication		
If the answer to any of the last three questions is YES, please give details here (including dosage of any medicines/tablets)		
I understand that medical advice may be needed before my participation in fieldwork is approved, if I am suffering from any condition which may call such participation into question. I recognise that the University can accept no responsibility for seeking such advice if I have withheld relevant information. Signed Date		

Appendix 6

GUIDELINES TO FIRST AID BOXES AND KITS

IT IS EVERY EMPLOYERS DUTY TO PROVIDE FIRST AID

The Health and Safety (First Aid) Regulations 1981 states that it is the duty of every employer to make provision for first aid. It is recommended that companies of more than 50 employees should seriously consider the provision of more than one kit.

FIRST AID BOXES/APPROVED CODE OF PRACTICE ISSUED 2.7.90.			
	1-10 Persons	11-50 Persons	Travellers Kit
First Aid Guidance Leaflet	1	1	1
Adhesive Plasters (can be BLUE for Food Handling Establishments)	20	40	6
Eye pads with Bandage	2	4	-
Triangular Bandage	6	6	2
Medium Dressings	6	8	2
Large Dressings	2	4	1
Extra Large Dressings	3	4	-
Safety Pins	6	12	2
Supplementary items also recommended - not to be kept in first aid box			
Alcohol free cleansing wipes for cleansing wounds	6	10	2
At least two 500ml sterile eye irrigation where water is not available	2	2	-
Blunt edge scissors to cut cloth away	1	1	-
Spillage protection pack for first aiders which contains gloves, apron and clinical waste bag for soiled dressings	1	1	-

Appendix 7

TRAINING AWARDS AND ORGANISATIONS

Basic expedition leadership: The Basic Expedition Training Award of the Central Council for Physical Recreation.

Caving: British caving Association Instructors Training Scheme.

Canoeing: British Canoeing Union Senior Instructor/Coach Award.

Diving: (a) British Sub-Aqua Club Instructors Certificate (acceptable to the HSE).

(b) HSE Diving Certification qualifications (all grades depending on activity); students can qualify if desirable for course work activities.

First-aid: An approved course of instruction by a recognised body. A mountain first aid course may be more useful in some cases.

Life Saving: Medallion of the Royal Life Saving Society (minimum of bronze medal).

Mounting Walking: Possession of the Mountain Leader Training Board Assessment (and log book so endorsed).

Sailing: Instructor's or Sailing Master's Certificate of the Royal Yachting Association or National School Sailing Association (with tidal endorsements if necessary).

Skiing: National Ski Federation of Great Britain, Ski Party Organiser's Certificate.

Swimming: Bronze, Silver or Gold Survival award of the Amateur Swimming Association.

Wireless Operation: Radio Telephony (Restricted) Certificate.

Further Information and Guidance

Expedition Advisory Centre, 1 Kensington Acre, SW7 2AR

Safety in Biological Fieldwork - Guidance Notes for Good Practice
Queensberry Place, SW7 2DZ

Guidance Note Safety in Fieldwork: Natural Environmental Research Council

Safety in Archaeological Fieldwork: Council for British Archaeology

Appendix 8

INSURANCE COVER RELEVANT TO FIELDWORK

i) Public Liability Cover

Indemnifies the University, and at the request of the University the individual student, against legal liability to third parties in respect of accidental injury or illness caused to them or damage caused to their property.

With regard to fieldwork, assessing liability in the event of a claim can often rely upon which party is responsible for supervising the students whilst off University premises. Whilst the Code of Practice is extensive in the requirements it makes of UEL staff organising any trips, account should be taken of the safety procedures employed by a host organisation. For example, if students were visiting a quarry it is the quarry's responsibility to ensure for example that all protective clothing is worn and students are confined to safe areas.

Some companies or organisations accepting students as visitors to their premises may ask the University or the student to sign some kind of indemnity. These should be treated warily as some can be unfavourably disposed towards the University. On no account should the University agree to indemnify a host against any claims arising out of the host's negligence, whether this be injury to the student or anyone else.

ii) Personal Accident Cover

Pays an automatic benefit to a student in the event of accidental injury resulting in death or permanent disablement whilst on an official University trip anywhere in the world. Liability does <u>not</u> have to be proven for payment to be made as it does under a Public Liability claim. The Benefit payable is a flat £20,000.

There are certain exclusions under this Cover:

a) Trips in the UK not involving an overnight stay or an internal flight.

b) Hazardous activities, which are defined as:

   i) Climbing using ropes or guides
   ii) Pot Holing/Caving
   iii) Flying other than as a passenger*
   iv) Racing on horseback or wheels
   v) Aqualung Diving
   vi) Winter Sports

* This would encompass activities such as parachuting, hang-gliding, gliding, ballooning etc.

c) Suicide

d) Illness or disease or any gradually operating cause

iii) Travel Cover

Provides benefits for students anywhere in the world in respect of

a) Medical Expenses
b) Personal Baggage
c) Personal Money
d) Personal Liability
e) Cancellation, Curtailment and Change of Itinerary

For cover to apply to trips to UK an overnight stop or internal flight must be undertaken. Medical Expenses cover is excluded in the UK or the person's normal country of residence.

Finally, persons with pre-existing health conditions travelling for over 6 months must be declared as cover is not automatic for these persons under the Travel Policy.