

# Supervisors' responsibilities for students undertaking fieldwork

## Overview

### **Fieldwork**

The University has a legal duty of care to its students undertaking fieldwork. University Policies and Procedures are in place to set out how this duty of care is to be discharged. These procedures require that risks are assessed and proportionate measures and arrangements put in place to mitigate those risks to an acceptable level.

### **Responsibility**

Supervisors play a key role in this process in terms of a) ensuring risk assessments are carried out b) ensuring their students are properly prepared for their fieldwork, as well as c) bringing their own experience and knowledge to guide, advise, assess and check arrangements. All University employees have a legal duty to take reasonable care for the safety of those affected by their [the employees] acts or omissions. Employees, and students, are therefore expected to comply with the University's health and safety policies. A key requirement for field trips is careful planning to reduce the likelihood or impact of something going wrong. Supervisors must therefore be able to demonstrate this planning by ensuring assessments are in place, appropriately prepared, documented where necessary, reviewed and authorised.

#### **Specific duties of Supervisors are to:**

- **Be aware of relevant University Safety Policies and Departmental procedures.**
- **Consider the health and safety implications of any research proposal.**
- **Ensure their students have received training appropriate to their needs.**
- **Ensure that risk assessments have been made and the safety provisions relating to the work exist and have been discussed with those doing it.**
- **Ensure that suitable arrangements are in place for regular contact to provide support and checks on the student's welfare while they are away.**
- **Review arrangements with the student after the fieldwork to identify any problems and learn any lessons**

### **Relevant University Policies**

<http://www.admin.ox.ac.uk/safety/policy-statements/s2-11/>

<http://www.admin.ox.ac.uk/safety/policy-statements/s3-07/>

<http://www.admin.ox.ac.uk/safety/policy-statements/s5-07/>

Each department has its own arrangements and procedures to implement these policies

### **Training**

The **Safety Office** provide a range of training on fieldwork for both students and supervisors

<http://www.admin.ox.ac.uk/safety/safetytraining/safetytraining/>

The **Researcher Development** website also runs a training course on Personal Safety and Security in Research Activities and Work Overseas <http://researchtraining.socsci.ox.ac.uk/>