Visits and expeditions by staff and students

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**Scope**
Contains the health and safety requirements to be considered when planning University visits and expeditions both in the UK and abroad. Includes guidance for both accompanied and unaccompanied visits and expeditions. This standard does not cover work placements, see MS – 19 for further information.

**Law**
Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974 (HASAWA)
Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999

**Related H&S standards**
- MS – 01 Accident and Incident Reporting and Investigation
- MS – 12 Risk Assessment
- MS – 19 Work Placement (UAL student working elsewhere)
- EP – 01 First Aid

**Training / information / instruction required**
University risk assessment training or refresher training within the last 36 months for anyone carrying out risk assessment.

**Additional sources of information**
Guidance on Safety Fieldwork, USHA 2005
Visits

Introduction

1. By their very nature, educational or research visits and expeditions may well present unusual risks and it is essential that all visits and expeditions are planned and risk assessed to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the safety of all those taking part.

2. Appropriate control measures, identified by the risk assessment and including adequate supervision, must be implemented before a visit to go ahead.

3. This H&S Standard sets out guidelines when planning visits for the purpose of education, teaching or researching in places that are not under the University’s control but where the University is responsible for the safety of its staff, students and others exposed to their activities.

Requirements

4. For all visits the person organising the event is responsible for the group and must ensure that a suitable and sufficient risk assessment is carried out as part of the planning process.

5. The aim of the risk assessment is to identify all the potential hazards involved with the visit, assess the hazards and risks identifying ways to reduce the risk to an acceptable level (see MS – 12 Risk Assessment).

6. No visit should take place until the Dean has agreed that the assessment is suitable and sufficient and adequate controls have been implemented.

7. Trivial risks associated with everyday life may be ignored.

Planning, risk assessing and managing visits

8. The person organising the visit is responsible for ensuring adequate planning has taken place, including an assessment of the risks, to ensure appropriate levels of staffing, supervision and other identified control measures are in place.

9. As with any activity organised by the University there must be a written risk assessment. Areas that should be considered include the following (this is not an exhaustive list)

   ● Universal risks e.g. general travel related risks, personal safety etc.;
   ● Specific risks that apply to the planned activities or location.
• Specific risks applying to members of the group for example mobility or medical considerations.
• Leadership roles and responsibilities
• Appropriate levels of supervision and the skills/competence required by those supervising the trip.
• Provision of first aid assistance.
• Emergency procedures and contingency plans.
• Communication between the group and with the University.

10. When on visits staff are at work and are therefore bound by the control measures identified in the risk assessment. Students are similarly required to comply with these control measures as they are bound by the Student Code of Conduct.

Aspects to consider in risk assessment

11. The following sections provide guidance on aspects of a visit that should be considered when completing the risk assessment. This is not an exhaustive list, there may be additional risks encountered in visits that should also be considered.

12. Access
• Do any members of the visiting party have accessibility requirements and can these be accommodated by the venue, accommodation and modes of transport. If accessibility requirements cannot be met then additional arrangements will have to be made.
• In extreme circumstances, if the minimum requirements for accessibility cannot be achieved, i.e. adequate arrangements for evacuation, it may be necessary to prevent a person from going on the visit. This would be an extreme outcome.

13. Supervision
• The level of supervision should be based on the make-up of the group and the activities being undertaken. There is no definitive guidance for staff: student ratios on visits in higher education and will depend on several factors including: the age and experience of the group; area being visited; whether the original group will be splitting into sub-groups and how many there will be.
• Only on very short local visits is it likely that one member of staff supervising would be appropriate.
• The number of staff accompanying a visit may not be the same as the level of supervision required. Any member of staff who is driving the group cannot also
be counted as a supervisor, unless the trip is over several days and driving duties are limited, or shared;

- Staff are at work when supervising and cannot be expected to be ‘on duty’ throughout the trip if longer than a normal working day.

14. Health and welfare

- Consider if immunisation is necessary. Follow this link for more information. The decision to get vaccinated is a personal decision and cannot be enforced, however deciding not to be vaccinated when recommended is likely to invalidate health insurance and may restrict travel.

- If any members of the group have particular welfare requirements they should be made known and every effort made to ensure they can be accommodated. For example accessible toilets or particular dietary requirements.

- All visit participants should be asked to declare whether they suffer from any disability or medical condition that could compromise their health or safety, or that of others. When on visits, those with pre-existing medical conditions should provide written details of their condition, treatment and medical contacts. This information will be remain confidential, only available to the group leader and held with the contact information at the University (information held at the University will only be accessed in an emergency, if the group leader is unavailable). Some countries have restrictions on the type and amount of medicines that can be taken. This can be checked on the FCO website

- Every effort should be made to ensure those with a disability or medical condition can participate on visits, but sometimes it may not be possible to accommodate people’s needs. Further advice should be sought from the University’s Occupational Health Service or Student Services.

15. Overseas visits

- The legal position is more difficult, as the Health and Safety at Work Act applies within the UK or its territorial waters. However, case law indicates that UK employees who are sent abroad to work continue to be protected by UK civil law. Safety arrangements abroad may be subject to additional local legislation.

- The general principles of planning, risk assessment, provision of information and training, health protection and insurance apply to all visits, whether carried out by staff or students in the UK or abroad. The risk assessment must take account of the differences in the country being visited.
• The **FCO website** is a good source of information about countries that are considered unsafe to visit, and the restrictions on travel to dangerous areas. This information should be followed without exception.

• The FCO also strongly recommends photocopies of your passport and other important documents are taken, kept separate from the originals when you travel and/or that you store them online using a secure data storage site.

• If the University plans to work with a host institution whilst on the visit then compliance with their safety policies and standards should be the norm provided they are equal to or of a higher standard than those imposed by the University.

16. Information and training

• Staff and students must be made aware of the nature of the work on the visit, the hazards that the visit presents and control measures that they must follow for a successful visit.

• Supervisors must be adequately trained in the tasks they will be performing and the visit organiser must be satisfied that staff responsible for the welfare of students are competent.

17. Unsupervised visits

• It is not always necessary or desirable to supervise visits that are organised by the University. If there is no supervision it isn’t possible to ensure that the group, or individual comply with all the controls identified in the risk assessment. However the visit should be risk assessed in the same way as a supervised visit and all the relevant control measures agreed before hand.

• When carrying out work in the name of the University, students are bound by the requirements of the student code of conduct and the disciplinary code.

18. Leisure time

• Accidents are more likely to occur during leisure time. All members of a group should be made aware that any dangerous, unsociable or offensive behaviour will reflect badly on the University and may also compromise travel insurance. Group leaders must ensure any warnings about bad behaviour or dangerous activities, including excessive drinking or taking of illegal drugs are given and recorded.
• It is important that all group members are provided with advice regarding tolerance of drinking/drug taking in the country being visited; they vary widely, as do the potential penalties.

• Injury, ill health or damage to property caused or sustained whilst under the influence of illegal drugs or alcohol is unlikely to be covered by insurance.

19. Driving

• If you drive on behalf of the University, you and the vehicle you drive must be insured for the purpose. Vehicles must be fit for purpose. If a private car is being used it must be safe and suitable for the number of people. If a vehicle is being hired then it must be hired from a reputable company. Contact Shamim Ali to discuss insurance details.

• Drivers cannot be counted as otherwise supervising the visit. If driving a group to a destination that will then require group supervision there should be sufficient staff to provide supervision not including the driver. The only exception to this is if the trip is over more than one day and the driving duties are minimal, or shared and limited for each person.

• If the visit includes driving abroad on behalf of the University then the advice on the FCO website, which changes from time to time, must be followed.

20. Contingency planning

• The risk assessment should determine the appropriate level of first aid cover (EP - 01 First Aid). For trips lasting more than a day, and/or visiting places that will not have first aid provision, there should be at least one supervisor who has an HSE-approved First Aid Certificate and a first aid kit adequate for the environment.

• All accidents, incidents or work-related illnesses must be reported as soon as possible; (MS – 01 Accident and Incident Reporting and Investigation). In the event of a serious accident whilst aboard, the Local Safety Adviser should be contacted at the earliest opportunity.

• Ensure group members have adequate medical insurance. Any members of the group who are UK nationals or have permanent residency within the UK should carry a current European Health Insurance Card (formerly the E111) when travelling within the EU.
- Contact details should be kept with a named person at the University and be available at all times during the visit.

- For overseas trips it is recommended that all members register their details on LOCATE a service run by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) that will be used to provide help in an emergency.