8.8 UTS Fieldwork Guidelines

1. Introduction

The University recognises that in a number of academic disciplines, fieldwork is an essential part of the core teaching, learning and research functions. The University supports the incorporation of fieldwork activities in its teaching, learning and research programs, and requires that the conduct of fieldwork is undertaken in a safe and responsible manner.

These Guidelines have been prepared to ensure that all fieldwork activities are properly planned, managed and coordinated in such a way as to meet the best interests of the University while protecting the safety of staff members, students and the wider community. The Guidelines complement the UTS Health and Safety Policy and should be read in conjunction with the Policy.

The purpose of these Guidelines is:

- to provide a framework which encourages high quality teaching and research through the pursuit of field activities whilst ensuring the health, safety and welfare of staff members and students
- to provide a clear understanding of the accountabilities, rights and responsibilities of staff members and students and to protect the interests of the University and its members, and
- to document the procedures which should be followed in order to ensure the health, safety and welfare of staff members and students and the protection of the environment.

2. Scope

These Guidelines apply to all staff members and students of UTS and, where the context permits, to all others engaged by UTS (whether as volunteers, consultants, contractors or otherwise) to provide services to UTS. See Definitions section for what classifies as fieldwork.

3. Definitions

For the purposes of these Guidelines, the following definitions apply:

**Fieldwork** means any work, study or research authorised by the University and carried out by staff members and students at sites (generally outdoors and including sites outside Australia) other than the regular campuses of the University and involving overnight stays or longer. It does not include activities such as distance education, student exchange programs, offshore teaching, conferences, visits to other universities or workplaces or work placements or practical classes involving visits to parks and sites during scheduled tutorials.

**Staff member** means an employee or an honorary appointee of the University, or staff of another university in the case of joint fieldwork.
**Student** means any person enrolled in any degree, diploma, course, subject or unit offered by the University whether on a full-time or part-time basis, or at an undergraduate and postgraduate level, or an award or non-award student.

**University** means the University of Technology, Sydney.

### 4. Relevant legislation

Current legislation, Australian Standards and policies, and Rules of the University set out responsibilities of staff members and students participating in fieldwork activities. These include, but are not limited to:

- [UTS Environment, Health and Safety Policy](https://www.uts.edu.au/about/our-strategy/utslife/health-and-safety), which commits the University to conformity with legislation about work health and safety
- [UTS Rules](https://www.uts.edu.au/about/policies-and-guidelines/rules) which are concerned with the student conduct, penalties for student misconduct and appeal procedures.

### 5. Responsibilities in fieldwork

The safety of the fieldwork party is the responsibility of all persons participating in fieldwork. A person who has been appointed Fieldwork Leader has a particular responsibility for ensuring that proper procedures are followed in the planning and execution of fieldwork, and for dealing with any incidents that affect the health, safety and welfare of all members of the fieldwork party in the field. For fieldwork activities without a staff member (for example, involving postgraduate or honours students), whilst a Fieldwork Leader may not have been formally appointed, it is incumbent upon all participants in the fieldwork to ensure that proper procedures are followed to ensure the health, safety and welfare of all members in the fieldwork party (see also Section 5.3 Academic supervisors).

#### 5.1 Head of school/departamental head/unit leader or director

The head of school/departamental head/unit leader or director is ultimately responsible for the implementation and observance of these Guidelines as they apply to the School's fieldwork activities and must give the final approval for all fieldwork activities on the appropriate Fieldwork Form (Appendix 1).

The head of school/departamental head/unit leader or director shall ensure that:

- a Fieldwork Leader is appointed for each fieldwork or activity which is a required component of an undergraduate subject
- a Fieldwork leader is appointed for each fieldwork or activity which is a required component of a research project
- all staff members involved in fieldwork are suitably qualified (for example, possess any necessary boat licence, first aid qualifications, etc) and that any specialist training required (for example, diving certificates, off-road driving skills) has been undertaken before commencement of any fieldwork activities
• a Fieldwork Form (Appendix 1) is completed by the Fieldwork Leader for all fieldwork activities
• a Fieldwork Risk Assessment Form (Appendix 2) is completed by the Fieldwork Leader for all fieldwork activities
• the Fieldwork Leader has obtained a signed Medical Information Form (Appendix 3) from each participant in fieldwork involving overnight absences.
• for fieldwork activities not involving staff members (for example, postgraduate or honours students), Appendices 1 to 4 inclusive are completed and authorised by the student’s supervisor.

Copies of all signed forms shall be retained in the relevant school/faculty office.

5.2 Fieldwork Leader

The Fieldwork Leader is responsible for the health, safety and welfare of all participating persons for the duration of the fieldwork activity and for ensuring that participants have received any necessary briefing, training or induction prior to the fieldwork. The Fieldwork Leader is responsible for ensuring that the following forms are completed for all fieldwork activities:

• a Fieldwork Form (Appendix 1) (approved by the head of school/departmental head/unit leader or director)
• a Fieldwork Risk Assessment Form (Appendix 2)
• a Medical Information Form (Appendix 3) (copies must also be taken to the fieldwork location for use in case of an emergency)
• a Deed of Release signed by a parent or caregiver for any student aged under 18 who is participating in the fieldwork activity
• a Student Code of Conduct for Fieldwork Form (Appendix 4) (completed by each student member participating in the fieldwork activity).

The Fieldwork Leader is also responsible for:

• notifying the appropriate emergency services in the event of an emergency situation during fieldwork activities. The Fieldwork Leader must notify the school, department or unit of the situation at the first practicable opportunity
• the care and correct use of all University assets and equipment taken on fieldwork.

To assist Fieldwork Leaders, a Fieldwork Procedures Checklist is provided in Appendix 5 that summarises the various steps to be completed before commencing fieldwork.

5.3 Academic supervisors

Academic supervisors are responsible for ensuring that postgraduate and honours students receive appropriate training and that they are not encouraged to undertake fieldwork in situations where they do not feel sufficiently confident of their safety. Supervisors are responsible for foreseeing and assessing potential risks and for ensuring that their students are adequately equipped and possess the necessary technical and practical skills.
5.4 Persons undertaking solo fieldwork activities

Persons undertaking solo fieldwork activities are also required to ensure that the trip has been properly planned and that the health and safety requirements have been properly addressed. Persons undertaking solo fieldwork must:

- complete all necessary documentation (ie Appendices 1 to 4)
- ensure that the fieldwork is approved by their supervisor and head of school/departmental head/unit leader or director beforehand, and
- ensure that all requirements as listed in Fieldwork Procedures Checklist (Appendix 5) have been met.

5.5 All participants

All participants in fieldwork activities are under the obligation to work and behave appropriately in the field, and to take care to protect their own health, safety and welfare and that of fellow fieldwork participants. All participants are subject to the jurisdiction of the Fieldwork Leader and nominated deputy for the entire duration of the fieldwork activity or and must follow all lawful instructions and advice of that leader. In particular they must strictly follow any instructions or directions that are necessary to ensure the safety, health and welfare of all or any members of the fieldwork party.

Students must read the Student Code of Conduct for Fieldwork Form (Appendix 4) and must sign the Acknowledgement and Declaration before participating in any fieldwork activity.

5.6 Fines and penalties

All participants are personally responsible for any fines or penalties incurred by them during fieldwork for prohibited activities including, but not limited to: parking fines, driving fines, boating infringements, and fishing without a licence.

6. Insurance

6.1 UTS staff and students

Staff members and students are insured while they are participating in UTS approved activities such as fieldwork. Staff members and students are not covered by UTS insurance when they depart from UTS approved activities, for example if they break the law. While participating in UTS approved activities which are part of field trips, (ie university business):

- staff members and students travelling within a 50km radius of the University and their place of residence are covered by the UTS personal accident and public liability policies
- staff members and students are covered by UTS travel insurance for all travel in excess of a 50km radius of UTS and the insured person's place of residence, and
- staff members are also covered by the University's workers' compensation policy for injuries and illnesses arising out of the course of their employment.
6.2 Non-UTS staff and students

Volunteers who participate in UTS fieldwork must seek the approval of the Fieldwork Leader in writing before the fieldwork commences. The written approval document should be retained at the faculty/school/unit for insurance purposes. Approved volunteers are covered by the UTS personal accident policy.

7. Accident/incident reporting

Incidents or accidents must be reported to the head of school/head of department/unit leader or director as soon as reasonably possible and not later than upon return to campus. Notification of incidents and accidents using the Hazard and Incident Reporting Online (HIRO) system must be completed by the Fieldwork Leader at this time.

8. Size and composition of a fieldwork party

The minimum size of a fieldwork party should be determined by risk assessment and under normal circumstances should be at least two. However, while it is preferable that staff members or students do not work alone in remote locations, this may be permitted by the head of school/departmental head/unit leader or director if he or she judges that it is reasonable in all the circumstances. For staff members, research degree students, honours students and postgraduate students, the necessary documentation (ie Appendices 1 to 4) must be completed. The fieldwork must be discussed with and authorised by their supervisor and approved by the head of school/departmental head/unit leader or director.

Fieldwork involving undergraduate students must have an acceptable student to staff member ratio depending on: the prior training and experience of the students; the nature of and risks involved in the fieldwork; and logistics (for example, transport). As a guide, a ratio of 15 students per staff member is suggested as a maximum.

9. Fieldwork activities

9.1 Diving

Diving is considered to be a high-risk activity that may be involved in fieldwork. It is regulated by Australian/New Zealand Standard 2299 Occupational Diving and NSW Work Health and Safety Regulation 2011. All diving work must be carried out under the supervision of experienced and qualified divers. All staff members, students and volunteers involved in diving as part of fieldwork must have specific approval to dive and must comply with the UTS Scuba Diving Operations Manual, including completing the specified risk assessments. No diving shall occur without appropriate supervision as detailed in the procedures, or in the absence of a buddy diver.

9.2 Boating

Fieldwork Leaders must check rules governing small vessel operation in NSW waters by consulting the NSW Maritime Boating Handbook available online at www.maritime.nsw.gov.au. For activities outside New South Wales, it is the responsibility of Fieldwork Leaders to ensure that boating field trips comply with the requirements of the
maritime legislation in that State, in particular in relation to licences and boat registration. Any regulations must be followed, including load and speed limits.

Police, National Parks and Wildlife Service rangers and certain other government department officers are authorised, where appropriate, to give on-the-spot fines for breaches of boating regulations.

Staff members, or qualified persons who are engaged for the purpose, are the only authorised drivers of watercraft used for fieldwork purposes. Students may only drive watercraft in an emergency, such as for urgent medical assistance when it is not reasonable or possible for a staff member or other qualified person to undertake this task.

### 9.3 Driving

Fieldwork may involve driving vehicles on sealed or dirt roads and bush tracks. Vehicles may be used for a variety of activities and may carry varying combinations of passengers, equipment and foodstuffs.

University-owned vehicles may only be driven by persons who are licensed, qualified, trained, authorised and insured to do so. All drivers of vehicles must have a current vehicle licence that covers the vehicle being used for the fieldwork.

Undergraduate students (other than Honours students) may only drive University-owned vehicles in an emergency, such as for urgent medical assistance, when it is not possible or reasonable for a staff member to undertake this task.

Students using their own private vehicles as transport to a fieldwork location should park the vehicle according to instructions given by staff members. The vehicle normally will not be used during the fieldwork without the permission of the Fieldwork Leaders, who have the right to restrict its use, or to give specific directions as to route, speed, and number of passengers.

#### 9.3.1 Recommended limits on driving

It is recommended that:

- drivers travelling alone should not exceed more than two hours of continuous driving without a break away from the vehicle of at least 10 minutes
- when driving is shared, drivers change over every two hours
- cumulative driving time for any one driver should not exceed 10 hours in a 24-hour period
- log books are used for any journey of more than four hours' continuous duration.

#### 9.3.2 Restrictions on use of University vehicles for fieldwork activities

Alcohol and drugs must not be consumed within eight hours of the commencement of the fieldwork by any person undertaking driving duties or within eight hours of driving during the
fieldwork. This includes medically prescribed drugs which may impair the operation of equipment, motor vehicles or boats.

A person who is physically or mentally impaired shall not undertake driving duties. The Fieldwork Leader shall ensure that trips are planned to allow for sufficient rest and recuperation. A person with a disability which requires the provision of a modified vehicle shall not operate a vehicle which is not appropriately modified.

9.3.3 Vehicle Licences

Vehicle users are required to hold and present a valid open and unrestricted New South Wales RTA Class C licence or Class LR licence if a light bus is to be driven, or a New South Wales RTA-approved equivalent.

10. Permits

All permits and/or licences that are necessary for particular activities (for example, entry to National Parks, aboriginal sites, fishing) must be obtained in advance of the fieldwork activity by the Fieldwork Leader.

11. First aid

A qualified first aid officer with current certification is mandatory on fieldwork locations in which it is reasonable to expect that it would take more than half an hour to get medical aid to an injured or ill person.

First aid equipment and facilities must be readily available for use by personnel in the field. The qualifications of the first aid officer, the type of kits and quantity of kits should be based on a risk assessment. The Fieldwork Leader (or first aid officer where there is one) must ensure that First Aid Kits are restocked as soon as practicable and/or at the completion of each fieldwork trip.

12. Communication

For all fieldwork activities, agreed communication protocols based on risk assessment must be set in place before departure.

- All persons undertaking fieldwork activities must be instructed or trained in the use of the communication equipment and signalling devices to be used on the trip.
- Regular call-in schedules should be agreed on prior to departure.
- A mobile telephone or satellite phone should be taken and used in areas where this type of communication is suitable.
- Emergency Position-Indicating Radio Beacon (EPIRB) should be taken into remote and isolated trips.
- Vehicles used for remote fieldwork should be fitted with global positioning systems and a two-way radio, or the fieldwork party must be equipped with another suitable two-way communication system.
13. Equipment

Equipment used for fieldwork must be carefully selected in relation to suitability for purpose. It must comply with all necessary legislative requirements and standards, and should be thoroughly checked and tested prior to use. Fieldwork participants using the equipment should have appropriate levels of training and competence in its use, and where necessary appropriate qualifications or certifications.

14. Breaches of these Guidelines

14.1 Staff members

Staff members are governed by the UTS Code of Conduct. While on an, all members of staff are under special obligation to consider and protect the health, safety and welfare of all members of the party and to protect the reputation of the University. Any breach of these Guidelines by staff members will be treated as a breach of that Code and will dealt with in accordance with the Code.

14.2 Students

14.2.1 Students are governed by the University Rules. While on an, students must behave at all times during the in a lawful and reasonable manner, taking proper care to ensure the health, safety and welfare of all members of the party and to protect the reputation of the University. In particular, students must comply with all lawful directives and instructions of the Fieldwork Leader and other members of UTS staff during the whole period of the. Any breach of such instructions or of these Guidelines by students is deemed non-academic misconduct and will be dealt with in accordance with University Rules.

14.2.2 In certain circumstances, misconduct by a student may result in the student being required to return home prior to completion of the fieldwork activity. Where a student is directed by the Fieldwork Leader or a staff member authorised by that Leader to return home prior to completion of the fieldwork activity due to misconduct, the student must follow that direction promptly and will be responsible for all costs incurred in returning home.

15. Related Policies/Guidelines

Code of Conduct

Health and Safety Policy

Rules of the University relating to Student Conduct

16. Related information

Work Health and Safety Act 2011 (NSW)

Work Health and Safety Regulation 2011 (NSW)
Maritime Services Act 1935 (NSW)

AS/NZS 2299.1:2007: Occupational diving operations - Standard operational practice

Appendixes

The following documents are available from the Safety and Wellbeing Forms webpage under the heading "Fieldwork" - [http://www.safetyandwellbeing.uts.edu.au/forms/index.html](http://www.safetyandwellbeing.uts.edu.au/forms/index.html)

Appendix 1: Fieldwork Form
Appendix 2: Fieldwork Risk Assessment Form
Appendix 3: Medical Information Form
Appendix 4: Student Code of Conduct for Fieldwork Form
Appendix 5: Fieldwork Procedures Checklist

Approvals

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Revision/Modification History

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