

## Field Work Risk Assessment, School of Geography & Sustainable Development, University of St Andrews

### Instructions

#### Purpose of the risk assessment process

Completing this risk assessment form will help you to (1) **identify the hazards and risks** associated with the planned activity (research or teaching in the lab or field), (2) **plan what you will do** to keep yourself and people around you safe and (3) allow your supervisor/line manager and the SGSD Health and Safety Co-ordinator to **assess whether or not your planned work can be authorised**.

The form includes the following terms (for definitions see <http://www.hse.gov.uk/risk/faq.htm#q1>):

- A **hazard** is anything that may cause harm, e.g. deep water, falling rocks, hostile persons. Its **severity** is how serious the harm could be: low (e.g. a sprain), to medium, to high (e.g. a life-changing injury)
- The **risk** is the chance, high (likely), medium (unlikely) or low (highly unlikely), of somebody being harmed by the hazard.
- **Control measures** are what you will do (and what equipment you will take) to mitigate the severity of the hazards and/or minimise the risk associated with each hazard. They should be reasonably practicable and proportionate to the risk.

#### Completing the form

The form lists a range of categories of hazard which might be relevant to your work. **For each category that applies, write down the specific nature of the hazards** (some examples are given). **For each hazard** (there might be more than one per category), **identify (as high, medium or low) a) the severity and b) the risk, then describe the control measures you will take**. Fill in the blue boxes (with “NA” if a certain box is Not Applicable) **electronically** so that you can extend them as necessary. Some information might fit in more than one box – choose where you think it fits best **and only write it once**.

#### University Travel registration and fieldwork risk assessment

All activities which include an overnight stay and/or a flight need to be registered here:

<https://www.st-andrews.ac.uk/study-abroad/travel/travelra/home.htm>

You should **also** upload this form (once completed and approved) on the travel registration website.

#### Useful information

- School documents: (1) Fieldwork Safety Code, (2) Local Health and Safety Policy on Moodle Virtual Office.
- St Andrews University Safety and Well-being website: <http://www.st-andrews.ac.uk/staff/policy/safety/>
- Meteorological Office, national meteorological services, tide tables, port authorities, BBC website

- If travelling overseas, check for updates about the situation in your destination country, and documents you will need to travel there, on the Foreign and Commonwealth Office website: <https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice>. Look up which vaccinations you might need well in advance of travelling, i.e. several months: <http://www.fitfortravel.nhs.uk/destinations.aspx>.

**Field Work Risk Assessment Form**  
**School of Geography and Sustainable Development, University of St Andrews**

Risk assessment carried out by	Samuel Eszenyi
Supervisor or line manager's name	Althea Davies
Level (e.g. UG, PG or academic research project, UG or PG field class)	UG Dissertation
Module title and code (where applicable)	
Type of activity (e.g. research or teaching, lab or field, conference)	Fieldwork
Activity/project title (e.g. research project title):	How Shade Affects Plant Physiology (Working title...)
Dates of activity	May 1 – June 1 2024
Country/region/city of activity	St Andrews, Scotland
Means of travel	Walking
Staff: Are your personal contact details up to date ( <a href="https://selfservice.st-andrews.ac.uk/dashboard">https://selfservice.st-andrews.ac.uk/dashboard</a> )? Students: Please provide your mobile phone number in case we need to contact you during field work.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO -> please update your details  Phone number:
Who is at risk? List people at risk from the hazards identified in your risk assessment (you, any	Me

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accompanying people such as field assistants, students, translators, interviewees etc.)	
Brief activity/project description (max 100 words):	
Field work involves <u>repeat visits doing</u> vegetative surveys in a meadow. Analysis involves using scissors to cut plant leaves in the <u>field</u> .	

Commented [AD2]: One visit, repeat visits?

Your planned activities	Hazard	Risk	Control measures	Residual risk
1. Environment/Location				
Where will your work take/travel place? What is the nature of the site(s)? E.g. rural/urban, UK/overseas, remote/populated area. Will you work close to potentially unsafe environment (e.g. near water, cliffs, peat bogs)? Will you work in the street or in people's private homes/offices?	What are the hazards associated with the environment in which the activity will take place?  If travelling abroad, check the Foreign Office website for current hazards in the country (-ies) you will visit but also the equivalent website for any other country of which you are a national.	How severe is the hazard? What is the risk (chance) of it happening? Provide "high", "medium" or "low" for a) the severity, and b) for the level of risk	What will you do to minimise the risks?  If you are of non-British nationality, include the URL of Foreign Office of your home country.	Once the control measures are in place, are the severity and the risk high, medium or low?
In a meadow in the St Andrews Botanic Garden	Rain / Cold	Very low	Bring a rain jacket / Layers	Low
	Contracting Lyme's disease from ticks	Low	Check often / after every day in the field, remove safely and consult a doctor if warning signs appear after a bite.	

Commented [AD3]: Minor risk of ticks - check regularly and remove safely, consult doctor if any warning signs appear after bite:  
<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/lyme-disease/>  
Public space so there's a chance of encountering members of the public - low risk of aggression, explain what you're doing politely if asked, be aware that children could run through study area and keep scissors on your person at all times so there's no chance of injury to others (could put this in box 5 if you prefer)

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	Public space – Risk of encounters with members of the public	low	Explain what I am doing politely if asked, keep anything sharp on my person at all times to mitigate the risk of someone else using them.	
2. Methods and equipment				
What methods or equipment are involved? E.g. Are chemical or biological agents involved, will you be sampling water, sediments, plants or animals, will you be interviewing people (alone or in groups), are you using equipment like a microscope, soil auger, camera, drone?	What are the hazards associated with the methods, processes and/or equipment you will use?	How severe is the hazard? What is the risk (chance) of it happening?	What will you do to minimise the risks?	Once the control measures are in place, are the severity and the risk high, medium or low?
Sampling plants using scissors and sample bags	Very few hazards, use of sharp objects. Risk of minor cuts	Low	Be cautious when using scissors	low
3. Daily work pattern				
What will be your pattern of work? E.g. times of day, breaks, lone or isolated working (to be avoided if at all possible), out of hours.	What are the hazards associated with your intended pattern of work?	How severe is the hazard? What is the risk (chance) of it happening?	What will you do to minimise the risks?	Once the control measures are in place, are the severity and the risk high, medium or low?
Morning to afternoon working in a managed and non-isolated area	Minor risk of fatigue	Low	have sufficient food/drink to hand to maintain energy levels, take regular breaks,	low

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Commented [AD4]: Risk of minor cuts

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Commented [AD5]: Minor risk of fatigue - have sufficient food / drink to hand to maintain energy levels, take regular breaks

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4. Health and personal safety not covered above, e.g. diseases, potential harm to your person (e.g. crime)				
Are there hazards to your health or personal safety associated with the location and nature of your work/the selected means of transportation? E.g. presence of water- and insect-borne diseases, weather conditions which might lead to heat stroke or hypothermia, potential for violence/crime, meeting people you do not know.	What are the hazards associated with these working conditions? Are the risks high, medium or low?	How severe is the hazard? What is the risk (chance) of it happening?	What will you do to minimise the risks? Who will you inform about where, when and how you are working – how will you remain in contact? Will you be accompanied? Do you have an exit strategy in place?	Once the control measures are in place, are the severity and the risk high, medium or low?
▼	▼	▼	▼	▼
5. Anything not covered above, e.g. hygiene, vaccinations, communication issues, limited medical facilities; include COVID-19 and measures to minimise the risk of infection				
NA				

Commented [AD6]: Wash hands before eating to avoid any risk of illness from handling plant material

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#### Further essential information

1) Do you (or any of the people with you) need specific training for the work you have planned? Is this available/being provided and by whom?

No
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2)

3) Have you any pre-existing conditions/illnesses (e.g. diabetes, allergies) (this form is confidential)

No

4) Will anyone other than your supervisor/line manager be involved in supervising your lab and/or field work?

No

**5) Emergency plan: include the location of the nearest medical services (the university emergency contacts have been entered for you)**

- (i) Working in remote locations: describe plan of action in case of injury, illness, deterioration in weather conditions, social/political instability etc.).
- (ii) Working in regions which are or might become affected by severe diseases: describe how you will monitor the situation and how you would leave the regions in case it is recommended to do so.
- (iii) Working with people: describe plan of action in case you perceive a threat to your person.
- (iv) Need to self-isolate after returning (e.g. due to travelling in a region/country affected by contagious disease, e.g. corona virus): describe where could stay during the isolation period.

Pipeland Medical center: [If unwell – will call for help from a staff, if severely unwell, will call 999.](#)

**Commented [AD7]:** Give details: how far? What would you do if injured or unwell? Call for help from staff/visitor, call 999 if severe.

University emergency contacts:

- SGSD main office (office hours): **01334 462894**
- Student Services (office hours): **01334 462720**; out of hours, contact via University numbers
- University: **+44 (0)1334 476161** (office hours, switchboard) or **+44 (0)1334 463985** (out of hours, weekends and university public holidays). Out of hours contact details for SGSD Head of School, Director of Teaching & School Safety Officer are available via these numbers

- 6) Have you obtained permission from managers/owners or regulatory authorities to access or sample the site? May be required if you are taking samples (e.g. environmental or biological), especially if the site has a conservation designation, but may also apply to surveys of people. Tick as appropriate and briefly explain your answer:

Yes: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No: <input type="checkbox"/>	N/A: <input type="checkbox"/>
Permissions information: I have obtained permission <a href="#">from Harry Watkins, Director of St Andrews Botanic Garden</a>		


### Declaration

I have assessed the hazards and risks associated with my planned activities as described these in the form above. I declare that the risks will be controlled by the measures listed. In addition:

- 1) If you have a disability or medical condition you must inform us of this. The school will also consult Student Services in advance of any class fieldtrip to ensure that staff are aware of any health concerns or disabilities.
- 2) I have checked that my next of kin/emergency contact details on My Saint are up-to-date as this person may be contacted in the event of illness, injury or other emergency.
- 3) As a student joining a class fieldtrip, I understand and accept staff executive powers, including reasonable staff right to contact next of kin or to evacuate a student when staff feel it is in the best interests of the student or the group.



4) I am aware of the dangers of lone activities and will inform staff before leaving a group, e.g. for extracurricular activities during a residential fieldtrip.

Student/Staff signature:		Date:	November 29, 2024
Supervisor signature (for students):	<u>Althea Davies</u>	Date:	<u>6 Dec 2024</u>
Approval:		Date:	

**Undergraduate & postgraduate students:** once read, approved and signed by your supervisor, send a copy (Word, not pdf) to the School Health and Safety Co-ordinator at [geohealth@st-andrews.ac.uk](mailto:geohealth@st-andrews.ac.uk), for review. It will be returned to you for editing if it is incomplete or inadequate so please leave sufficient time (at least two weeks) between submission and the start of your field or lab work.

**Staff:** send a copy to the School Health and Safety Co-ordinator in the first instance at [geohealth@st-andrews.ac.uk](mailto:geohealth@st-andrews.ac.uk), who will review, return, or sign off as appropriate; particularly high-risk activities may be passed on to the Head of School for sign-off. **For class fieldtrips**, staff should obtain approval and then upload the approved form to Moodle in advance of a trip for students to read and sign.

If you have any queries please **contact your supervisor first** (if you are a student) or the School Health and Safety Co-ordinator (if you are a member of staff): [geohealth@st-andrews.ac.uk](mailto:geohealth@st-andrews.ac.uk).

Updated October 2024, KR