



Guidance for Developing a Human Research Fieldwork Safety Protocol

Development of Safety Protocol

- A safety protocol must be developed by the Chief Investigator and provided as a supporting document for review along with a human research ethics application in circumstances where a research project involves:
 - Student researcher conducting fieldwork,
 - Field work involving data collection or research procedures conducted outside of a UNSW facility, in a public place, workplace setting or within a private home is considered fieldwork.
- The provision of a safety protocol for student researchers is required in order to meet the requirements of [UNSW Research Code of Conduct](#), section 3, responsibility 2 and [National Statement](#) item 4.8.8.

Supervision

Explain the supervision arrangements that will ensure appropriate oversight of the student's safety while the fieldwork is conducted. Examples of the types of information to include in the supervision protocol include:

- The process to be used by the student researcher or supervisor to select the physical location and ensuring that it is safe.
- The agreed mode of transport and routes selected when travelling to and from fieldwork locations.
- The process that the student researcher will use to alert his/her supervisors of when and where he/she will be conducting fieldwork procedures in advance, specifying the nature of the procedures that will take place, the location that they will be travelling to, the times that procedures will occur (wherever possible, fieldwork procedures should be arranged during daylight hours).
- The process that the student researcher will follow to inform the supervisor or callback person when they have arrived at the fieldwork location, have moved from one location to the next and when they return safely to their home or accommodation.
- How and when the student researcher will inform the supervisors after the fieldwork procedures to debrief and discuss any concerns or issues that occurred during fieldwork.

Preparation of Data Collection Skills

An overview of how the supervisor will ensure that students demonstrate sound knowledge of the approved recruitment process, participant consent process and data collection method (e.g. survey, interview, etc.) that will be used. Examples include:

- The student researcher will thoroughly study and practice interviewing techniques.
- Practice or 'pilot' interviews will be conducted with supervisors before commencing the research, including how to respond to rejections, unpleasant reactions, and emotional or unsettling situations.

Physical Location

The process for selecting physical locations should outline the process that the student researcher will follow to familiarise themselves with the physical location of the data collection site by following general OH&S guidelines, being aware of safety hazards, entry and exit points, fire safety procedures etc. Appropriate permission should be obtained prior to

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conducting research at these sites. Examples include:

- During interviews the student will familiarise himself/herself with the physical layout of the interview space.
- The student will only conduct interviews in public places.
- Permission will be obtained from [appropriate authority] prior to conducting research at this site.
- Permission to undertake fieldwork overseas will be obtained from UNSW Insurance and the DVC(A).

Support Person or Local Contact Person

In situations where the fieldwork will occur overseas, where possible an in-country support person or local contact person should be identified to provide supervision and/or support for the student during fieldwork. Examples include:

- The time and location of the interviews will be communicated to a third party [contact details to be provided to supervisors]. The researcher will communicate with this third party prior to commencing the interview and after the interview is completed.
- A local in-country contact will be arranged to assist in the scheduling and conduct of the data collection. This person will also be available to receive complaints/concerns from participants.

Unexpected Adverse Situations

The student researcher should consider how adverse events or unexpected situations will be managed to ensure the safety of both themselves and the participant. Examples include:

- During interviews, the student researcher will carry a mobile phone at all times in case of emergency.
- Should anything untoward happen, or the researcher becomes uneasy for any reason, the interview will be terminated immediately, and the interviewer will leave. The student's supervisors will be contacted as soon as practically possible.
- The student will only conduct interviews during daylight hours.

Approval of supervision protocols

Provide an indication of how the student researcher and/or supervisor has checked with the nominated school safety officer or head of school to establish whether approval for the safety protocol is required.

Further guidance on the development of a safety protocol can be found in the UNSW HS406 fieldwork safety [guideline](#).