



Context and Purpose

The Fieldwork Safety and Wellbeing Procedure (the Procedure) outlines principles and practices for ensuring the safety and wellbeing of staff, students and volunteers who participate in University of South Australia (UniSA) teaching, research, and experiential [fieldwork](#). The intent of this Procedure is to provide guidance and direction to facilitate the appropriate planning at a local level on the safe conduct of the UniSA's fieldwork activities.

The management of fieldwork activities and associated [field trips](#), undertaken by UniSA Academic Units and Research Institutes will be developed in [UniSAfe](#) via the Field Trip module, and in accordance with this Procedure.

Fieldwork varies in nature and duration and refers to trips, excursions, tours, camps, or similar activities entailing (but not limited to):

- Visits to rural or remote areas
- Water, agricultural, surveying or construction activities
- Off campus Research activities (E.g., collecting geological samples or biological specimens)
- Collaborative activities in the field conducted by or with other institutions, and
- Offshore study tours.

Fieldwork does not apply to:

- Placements i.e. work experience programs or professional placements as part of a study program carried out at non-university facilities.
- Travelling to or from and attendance at conferences or other events (including offshore travel)
- Professional Experience Program
- Student exchange programs
- Offshore teaching at other institutions
- Working from home
- Brief trips off campus for administrative or shopping activities.

UniSA has a primary duty of care under the *Work Health and Safety (WHS) Act, 2012*, to ensure the safety and wellbeing of staff and other parties (students, volunteers, members of the community). WHS legislation requires a systematic approach to planning and organising fieldwork and identifying and mitigating the potential safety risks associated with this work. Organisers of such activities should ensure that the participating external host organisation have appropriate mechanisms for managing the safety and wellbeing of those involved.

Responsibility

Academic Units and Research Institutes are responsible for:

- Reviewing all fieldwork activities and the safety and wellbeing arrangements for fieldwork activities.

Fieldwork Coordinators are responsible for:

- Planning all fieldwork activities in accordance with this Procedure and related UniSA Procedures and any relevant industry standards.
- Ensuring effective risk management, supervision, and control for the intended fieldwork activity.
- Ensuring all participants are aware, prior to departure, of all relevant fieldwork information, including safety and wellbeing aspects being communicated and recorded in [UniSAfe's](#) Field Trip module.

Fieldwork Leaders are responsible for:

- Effectively managing the conduct of the fieldwork activity, including the responsibility for overall safety and wellbeing management of the participants.
- Ensuring all fieldwork incidents are reported in **UniSAfe's** Incident module (or nominating an appropriate delegate to do so) within 48 hours (or as soon as reasonably able to) and communicating with the Nominated Contact Person on any significant incident or concern.

Staff, students, and volunteers undertaking fieldwork are responsible for:

- Understanding the proposed fieldwork in accordance with the Field Trip Risk Assessment.
- Providing to the Fieldwork Leader current/relevant medical information via the **UniSAfe's** Field Trip module.
- Not placing themselves or others at risk of harm during fieldwork.
- Following any reasonable instructions provided.
- Reporting fieldwork incidents in **UniSAfe's** Incident module and to the Fieldwork Leader.

Nominated Contact Person is responsible for:

- Notifying the head of the Academic or Professional Unit if there is a significant incident or a party fails to return from the field according to the Fieldwork Risk Assessment.
- Initiating an emergency response if appropriate in accordance with the Field Trip Risk Assessment in **UniSAfe's** Field Trip module.

Procedure

1. Risk Management

UniSA fieldwork has a diversity of foreseeable hazards and some of these may expose participants to the risk of harm. Fieldwork as a risk category should be recorded in the applicable Unit's Hazard Register. UniSA's **Managing Workplace Health and Safety Risks** Procedure provides guidance on the approach to identifying foreseeable hazards and developing suitable controls to minimise risk to participants when a Field Trip is applied for in **UniSAfe's** Field Trip module.

Fieldwork activities require appropriate controls to ensure the safety and wellbeing of participants, so far as **reasonably practicable**. The following fieldwork is considered high risk (but not limited to):

- boating activities
- working at heights
- working on, in or near a body of water
- using high voltage equipment
- bushwalking
- operating heavy equipment
- handling hazardous substances
- mining or geological activities
- working at night
- being exposed to extreme climatic conditions
- camping
- contact with flora and fauna
- driving long distances or off-road
- working independently and/or remotely.

It is recommended that participants do not work alone in isolated areas. However, if unavoidable, a determination on the level of supervision required is to be identified as part of the Field Trip Risk Assessment in **UniSAfe**.

For further information refer to the Safety and Wellbeing intranet page **Fieldwork**.

2. Fieldwork Planning

All UniSA fieldwork must be applied for, risk assessed and approved via the **UniSafe** Field Trip module. The following steps must be completed prior to commencing the fieldwork/field trip:

- Approval to undertake fieldwork/field trip must be given, by the nominated person within each Unit, prior to a field trip commencing.
- The proposed fieldwork/field trip must be risk assessed to identify all reasonably foreseeable hazards and risks.
- The fieldwork/field trip information must be communicated to participants and the Nominated Contact Person.

The fieldwork planning process should adopt a risk management approach, in which the fieldwork activity, its location, and overall level of risk should directly influence the amount and detail of planning that is undertaken.

Staff, students, and volunteers involved in fieldwork activities should be provided with complete information to allow adequate preparation and participation in the planned activity. They are to be advised of applicable hazardous work activities and/or conditions and provided prior opportunity for consultation and comment.

3. Planning Considerations and Documentation

All Field Trip activities are to be applied for by using the **UniSafe** Field Trip module. Tables 1 and 2 provide guidance on things to consider when planning field work and field trips.

Table 1: Fieldwork Planning Considerations
Staffing and Participants
<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Are specialist skills and/or experience required by staff?▪ Are staff appropriately trained/experienced and/or competent for the activity?▪ Supervision ratios should be considered based upon skills and experience of participants. At times fieldwork may be conducted under indirect supervision. The ratio of participants to leaders may be adjusted to reflect the risks involved and to ensure that these risks are minimised.▪ Do participants meet the minimum skill, experience, and qualification requirements for the intended activities? If not, how, and when will pre-training occur?▪ Relevant vaccinations.▪ Policy on drugs and alcohol.▪ Personal needs list.
Logistics
<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Accommodation.▪ Catering arrangements (including any special dietary requirements).▪ Availability and suitability of water.▪ Clothing relevant to conditions.
Transport
<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Type and number of vehicles (suitability and condition, spare parts, and tools, need for trailers)▪ Legal requirements for vehicles, trailers, driver licences and logbooks▪ Detailed itineraries and maps▪ Four wheel or off-road driving in remote or rough terrain▪ Hazards associated with long distance driving and fatigue▪ Offshore travel arrangements
Equipment
<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Detailed equipment requirements.▪ Is any specialist equipment required? (Eg: vehicle recovery, boating, electrical, plant, camping, cooking, radios, firefighting).▪ Personal Protective Equipment (PPE).▪ Hazardous chemicals storage, transport, and usage, including current Safety Data Sheets.▪ Serviceability and integrity of any equipment and plant that will be used.

First Aid
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Appropriate first aid kits provided. ▪ Designated First Aid Officer.
Location Specific
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Weather forecasts and conditions and how this may impact on your planned activity. ▪ Licences, permits and advising relevant authorities (Eg: National Parks, landowners). ▪ Working offshore considerations (security, disease, political climate). ▪ Remote location considerations (supervisory ratio, access to medical support and emergency services, first aid, communication and contact systems, vehicle suitability, actions on accident, breakdown, or delay). ▪ Hygiene and ablution considerations. ▪ An Activity/Orientation Brief to participants on arrival in location.
Communication
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Distribute relevant information to participants in advance of the field trip. ▪ Identify an appropriate communication system and a frequency of contact (may require satellite phone or satellite signalling device in remote areas). ▪ A Nominated Contact Person (not on the trip) and their actions if required to provide assistance.
Emergency response plan
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ How will incidents such as medical, fire, or an evacuation be managed? ▪ How will emergency services and/or next of kin be notified in the event of a critical incident? ▪ Consider what action will occur if a group fails to check in after a set time/or scheduled contact.

4. First Aid

In accordance with the [First Aid in the Workplace](#) Procedure:

- An appropriate first aid kit must be provided for all field work and field trips. A standard first aid kit is recommended for field work/field trip activities. Additional consideration should be given to the specific types of hazards likely to cause injury and quantities to be carried. Additional items may be required where certain hazards have been identified (E.g. bites and sting treatment, EpiPens for allergic reactions, extra ice pack for sprains strains and/or heat related injuries).
- First aid trained staff must be provided for all field work and field trips. For fieldwork locations without ready access to medical and/or ambulance services, a ratio of one trained first aid officer to ten participants is recommended.

5. Communication

The method and frequency of communication is to be outlined in the [UniSafe](#) Field Trip module. Mobile phone coverage, satellite phones and other signalling devices may need to be considered.

Where possible, contact should be made at agreed intervals with the Nominated Contact Person. In some fieldwork locations, it may be more appropriate to set up an alternate communication arrangement with a reputable contact point (Eg: local police station, National Parks office, or station manager).

The key principle is that communication should occur on a regular basis and that there must be an emergency back-up plan in the event that contact is not made.

6. Non–UniSA Personnel

UniSA recognises that non-university staff are occasionally invited on, and participate in, fieldwork and field trips. The nominated person within each Unit authorised to approve fieldwork and field trips has the responsibility for authorising the involvement of non-university staff. The Fieldwork Coordinator must ensure that non-university personnel are made aware of their responsibilities and the hazards associated with the activity. The names of non-university participants involved in fieldwork must be included in the [UniSafe](#) Field Trip module.

7. Insurance and Incident Reporting

UniSA provides insurance for staff, students and volunteers whilst participating in approved fieldwork activities and field trips.

Any incident or injury to staff, students and/or volunteers must be reported in the **UniSAfe** Incident module. When in remote locations and/or out of service range **UniSAfe** can be accessed using the ROAM5 App where an incident can be recorded and will upload when back in service range. All reasonable efforts should be made to log an online report within the required 48 hours of the incident occurring. The Fieldwork Leader must endeavour to contact their Nominated Contact Person and provide details of any significant incident as soon as reasonably practicable.

A person who is disruptive or failing to comply with the UniSA Code of Conduct and/or adversely affecting the health and safety of participants during a fieldwork/field trip may be removed from the activity by the Fieldwork Leader and sent home at their own cost.

Definitions

Fieldwork	Any work, undergraduate coursework or research authorised by UniSA and carried out by staff, students and/or volunteers at sites (generally outdoors and including sites outside Australia) other than the regular UniSA campuses. Fieldwork does not include activities such as distance education, student mobility/student tours, offshore teaching, conferences, visits to other universities, workplaces, work placements or practical classes involving visits to metropolitan sites, assessed as low risk, during scheduled tutorials
Fieldwork Coordinator	The University staff member who plans and organises the fieldwork (eg a lead researcher, or Program Services Manager).
Fieldwork Leader	The person in the field with operational responsibility and direct control of all aspects of the defined fieldwork.
Nominated Contact Person	A local delegated UniSA staff member with access to UniSAfe , and who is contactable in an emergency and/or available for general support for each fieldtrip.
Reasonably Practicable	As defined in the <i>WHS Act 2012 (SA)</i> , reasonably practicable is whatever is, or was at a particular time, reasonably able to be done in relation to ensuring health or safety. This takes into account and weighs up all relevant matters including: <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ the likelihood of a hazard or risk occurring.▪ the degree of harm that might result from the hazard or risk.▪ what the person concerned knows, or ought reasonably to know, about the hazard or risk, and ways of eliminating or minimising the risk▪ the availability and suitability of ways to eliminate or minimise the risk▪ whether the cost is grossly disproportionate to the risk.

Further Assistance

Further advice on fieldwork is available on the [Safety and Wellbeing](#) intranet page or contacting the [Safety and Wellbeing Team](#).

Related Documentation and further information links:

- [Fieldwork Hazards and Risks Intranet](#)
- [Managing Workplace Health and Safety Risks Procedure](#)
- [First Aid in the Workplace Procedure](#)
- [Critical Incident Management Procedure](#)
- [Offshore Travel Guideline](#)
- [Driving Guideline](#)

Officer Responsible for Update and Review: Executive Director People, Talent and Culture

Approved by: Miranda McDonald (Executive Director People, Talent and Culture)

Commencement Date:

Next Review Date:

History: