

GUIDANCE

Pre-departure Meetings and Participant Information

Participant Information Pack

For supervised off site activities such as field work/ international travel, a participant information pack should be produced. This will contain all the information the participant needs to know about the activity in a user-friendly format. The health and safety elements mentioned below are just one element of the information likely to be included with this pack. Off-site work can be intense and demanding, key to minimising these negative effects is effective briefing of the participants with suitable information. Participants need to be able to mentally prepare themselves, so they are not surprised about the travel and/or environment in which they find themselves when off site.

Issues covered in the information pack should include the following (non-exhaustive) list some of which is captured in the international travel and/or fieldwork risk assessments:

- Price or costs involved including expected personal expenditure.
- Participant Code of Conduct
- Leadership team composition and competency
- Travel plans, timings, and duration
- Emergency contact information and emergency evacuation procedure
- Insurance provision
- Working protocol
- International travel and/or field work risk assessment
- Kit lists including medical and vaccination requirements.
- Distance to medical facilities (including time)
- Assume the culture, including any security issues and host country legislation, which they may fall foul of.
- Skills required for particular activities including fitness requirements.
- Draft or final itinerary
- Arrangements for personal time and down time
- Accommodation and catering information
- Awareness of environmental conditions e.g., security, diseases, hot weather, dehydration, insects, and advice on dealing with these.
- Clear information on any element of the trip which presents a high level of residual risk and what the implications of this might be.
- Things they might not expect, not having home comforts, sharing, lack of privacy, what to do if they experience problems.

Pre-departure Meetings

This meeting(s) should be used to conduct the following functions:

- Introduce those with specific roles and responsibilities.

- Explain any inherent residual risks associated with the trip which have not been managed out.
- To advise participants on the assessed level of fitness required.
- Act as a deadline for completion of any requested health declarations or updated personal details forms.
- Allow expectations of participants, differences in standards of accommodation, eating arrangements, sleeping arrangements, cultural differences, and behavioural and security requirements to be re-enforced.
- Confirmation of travel arrangements.
- If travelling internationally country entry requirements and any requirements for returning to the UK (always consider if travelling will non-UK nationals).
- Give timely information on vaccination requirements.
- Provide detailed participant information packs with kit lists and general advice for the activity, this may include identification of hazardous specimens, general food safety advice for the country visited, etc.
- Ensure it is clear that the activity is educational/ work related rather than a holiday. If participants are planning to extend their stay, there should be a clear distinction between the time the travel/work finishes, and independent travel begins. A mixture of the two should not be permitted. Definitions of 'Down time' and 'Personal time' and an outline of how personal time will be arranged, and any additional insurances required.
- Explain the circumstances in which a participant may be asked to leave the fieldwork course if in the UK, and return home at their own cost, and the likely consequences of disciplinary action.