

## INFORMATION SHEET

### Covid-19 Guidance for Fieldwork Leaders

This guidance has been developed for people who are carrying out **fieldwork in the UK**.

#### 1. Introduction

Field workers must comply with national and local coronavirus restrictions in place at the time of travel. COVID-19 legislation and guidance can change rapidly and differs within the UK.

The Welsh Government is using Alert Levels to gradually move out of lockdown. There are five Alert Levels: Alert level 4 (very high risk), Alert level 3 (high risk), Alert level 2 (moderate risk), Alert level 1 (low risk) and Alert level 0. Restrictions are gradually reduced as Wales moves down the Alert Levels. To find out the current Alert Level and the restrictions that must be complied with, go to the [Welsh Government website](#). For more detailed information about the coronavirus restrictions in Wales, see the [regulations](#). Where possible, fieldwork should take place in the local area.

When visiting premises or using transport off campus (e.g. accommodation/ coaches/ restaurants etc.) guidance that is appropriate to the Alert Level should be followed.

For coronavirus restrictions in other parts of the UK refer to [England](#), [Scotland](#) and [Northern Ireland](#).

The University will no longer issue permits for fieldwork in the UK. This position will be revisited if the Alert Level increases significantly.

Faculties must have arrangements in place to gather the following information for all fieldwork activities, including conference and site visits (at least 1 week prior to departure):

- Field Leader (member of staff)
- Description of the activity
- Location of activity
- Date (start date – end date)
- Maximum number of participants
- Confirmation that a risk assessment, including COVID-19 controls, has been carried out. This risk assessment must be available on request.

Field Leaders in the Faculty of Science and Engineering must notify the Faculty with this information using the “New Fieldwork Notification Form” available on the [Faculty website](#). This notification is automatic for “College of Science” module fieldwork.

For information about international travel during the coronavirus pandemic see the [H&S Staff Intranet](#) or [H&S PG MyUni](#) page.

## 2. Risk assessment – Coronavirus Controls

Fieldwork leaders should comply with the University's Field Safety Policy Arrangements (HSA-10136) – [H&S Staff Intranet](#) or [H&S PG MyUni](#) pages.

A risk assessment must be carried out for all fieldwork. This risk assessment must include reasonable measures to minimise exposure to, and the spread of, coronavirus. This risk assessment should be made available to all participants.

For site visits and conferences, a generic Site Visits COVID risk assessment is available online – [H&S Staff Intranet](#) or [H&S PG MyUni](#) pages; this document can be easily amended for your visit.

Whilst there is less risk of transmission outdoors than indoors, because it is well ventilated and people can socially distance more easily, there are other challenges associated with fieldwork e.g. travel, accommodation, reduced access to hand washing facilities, the use of shared equipment and activities that may require people to work in close proximity e.g. manual handling, boat work, etc.

A number of useful COVID-19 Information Sheets are available on [H&S Staff Intranet](#) or [H&S PG MyUni pages](#). Information sheets are available on a wide range of topics including: Covid-19 reporting and isolation arrangements, offsite activities, infection control, social distancing, surface wiping, hand washing and hand sanitising, travel and first aid.

The following information should guide you in your risk assessment:

### 1) People can catch COVID-19 from others who have the virus and are displaying symptoms.

**Control:** Staff and students must not attend fieldwork if you feel unwell.

The most common symptoms of COVID 19 include:

- a high temperature;
- a new continuous cough; or
- loss or change of taste or smell.

Other symptoms can be identified on the [NHS website](#). People who have symptoms of coronavirus must not attend fieldwork and must ensure that their Field Leader is informed. They should [self-isolate](#) and [get tested](#).

Staff and students must inform the University if they receive a positive COVID test result - See the University's Safe Operating Procedure Part One – Reporting Symptomatic Cases; [H&S Staff Intranet](#) or [H&S PG MyUni](#) page.

Staff are required to report to HR [coronavirus@swansea.ac.uk](mailto:coronavirus@swansea.ac.uk) and their line manager, if they test positive for COVID. Students are required to report confirmed cases to [MyUni Support](#).

**Control:** Self-isolation and close contacts.

Staff and students **must not** attend fieldwork if:

- you develop COVID-19 symptoms, no matter how mild (and you should book a test)
- you live with someone who has developed COVID-19 symptoms and they are awaiting the outcome of a PCR test
- you live with someone who has tested positive for COVID-19

- you have been contacted by the Test, Trace and Protect (TTP) and told you have had close contact with a person who has tested positive for COVID-19.

This includes all staff and students exempt from [self-isolation](#) by Welsh Government/ Test Trace and Protect. For further information refer to the Safe Operating Procedure Part 3 – Isolation and Close Contacts: [H&S Staff Intranet](#) or [H&S PG MyUni](#) page.

**Control:** Do not meet with or enter the premises of people who are self-isolating.

**Control:** Identify the actions to take if a participant becomes symptomatic whilst carrying out fieldwork, this should include:

- How to report symptoms to the field leader.
- How will you minimise contact with others?
- How to isolate the individual and ensure that they can return home safely? Request that a member of their household collect them.
- Consider what action will you take if the person is overseas within the UK (e.g. they require the use of a ferry and therefore are unable to travel home? This will also have financial implications if you need to isolate on an island e.g. the Isle of Wight).
- How to clean and disinfect the area and prevent the spread of COVID-19 to others (including the use of appropriate PPE and disposal of waste if necessary).
- Ensuring that the person with symptoms gets a COVID-19 test and uses Test, Trace and Protect (people who have been in close contact with a confirmed case of coronavirus will then be asked to self-isolate).

## 2) Some people with covid-19 infection do not have any symptoms, these asymptomatic people can also spread the virus.

a) The disease spreads from person to person. Small droplets and aerosols are spread coronavirus from the nose or mouth when a person with COVID-19 coughs, sneezes, or speaks.

**Control:** vaccination. Staff and students are strongly encouraged to [get vaccinated](#).

**Control:** lateral flow tests. Staff and students are encouraged to have regular COVID-19 tests (twice/ week). These are free of charge and readily available: [H&S Staff Intranet](#) or [H&S PG MyUni](#) pages.

- For fieldwork involving the use of coaches and/ or shared overnight accommodation, we recommend that staff and students should carry out a lateral flow test prior to participation (within 48 hours). Participants who have a negative lateral flow test are still required to follow all COVID-19 controls detailed within the risk assessment.

**Control:** to cover your nose and mouth with a tissue or your elbow (not your hands) when you cough or sneeze.

**Control:** maximise the use of outdoor spaces instead of indoor spaces. Meeting outdoors reduces the risk of airborne transmission.

**Control:** minimise the number of people you come into contact with. Consider how you can:

- Minimise the number of people who attend fieldwork.
- Minimise the number of people in each team; Use household teams/ partnering/ fixed teams where possible.
- In the L&T environment, when social distancing cannot be maintained, fixed contact groups should be used. This may be a single contact group of 30, or smaller contact groups of 6 with social distancing between groups. A record of these contact groups must be maintained.
- Whilst lone working can reduce the risk of COVID-19, whenever possible, your work should be organised to avoid lone working. It should only be considered when the risks are low and suitable controls are in place; Refer to the University's lone working policy - [H&S Staff Intranet](#) or [H&S PG MyUni](#) pages.

**Control:** Increase ventilation. Minimise the time spent in enclosed spaces e.g. indoors/ in vehicles. Always ventilate enclosed spaces where possible e.g. by opening windows and doors (do not hold open fire doors). Ensure mechanical ventilation systems provide fresh air and do not recirculate air from one space to another (e.g. in a vehicle).

**Control:** Maintain social distancing from others. 2 metres social distancing is especially important for people who are at higher risk of getting very sick. Consider in your risk assessment how you can maintain social distancing:

- During travel;
  - Travel in separate vehicles where possible (unless part of the same household). If you are using your own vehicle for business use, you must have business insurance.
  - Reduce the number of people in vehicles

If using a private hire vehicle, obtain a copy of their risk assessment. Capacity in hire vehicles will be determined by the vehicle hire company. In the L&T environments we recommend staff maintain 2m social distancing from contact groups where possible.

- In your accommodation;
- When preparing and eating food;
- During your activities.

**Control:** Where possible, minimise activities where social distancing cannot be maintained. Where this is not possible, mitigate by:

- Reduce travel time, staying local is preferred.
- Reducing the activity time.
- Ensuring that there is good ventilation (e.g. in vehicles).
- Working side by side, or back to back where possible, rather than facing each other.
- Wearing a face covering. See the Face Covering Information Sheet: [H&S Staff Intranet](#) or [H&S PG MyUni](#) page.

b) People can become infected by touching a person, a surface or an object that has been contaminated with the virus, then touching their eyes, nose or mouth.

**Control:** To wash your hands regularly and thoroughly with soap and water.

**Control:** Provide hand sanitiser containing at least 60% alcohol when access to handwashing facilities are unavailable. See Information Sheet: Hand Washing and Hand Sanitising: [H&S Staff Intranet](#) or [H&S PG MyUni](#) pages.

**Control:** Do not touch your eyes, mouth or nose with unwashed hands. Always use hand washing facilities or hand sanitiser before eating and drinking and when getting in and out of vehicles.

**Control:** reduce sharing of equipment

- Avoid/ minimise the number of people who share pieces of equipment.
- Use pick-up/ drop-off points so that items can be exchanged whilst maintaining social distancing.
- Clean and disinfect shared equipment/ surfaces and vehicles before and after use.
- Provide sanitising wipes.

## General fieldwork activities

### Travel

Obtain a copy of the travel company's risk assessment. Generic controls include:

- The maximum capacity of the vehicle must not be exceeded.
- A member of staff is to travel on the coach, supervising that covid controls are followed.
- In the L&T environment we recommend that staff should be socially distanced from contact groups.
- Hand sanitizer should be provided for use by passengers.
- Passengers must wear face coverings (unless you have a legitimate reason not to).
- Passengers are to board the coach and fill the rear of the coach first. Passengers should exit the vehicle from the front first.
- No food or drink is to be consumed on the coach.
- The vehicle should be shared by the same people each time. If a coach is provided for morning and afternoon cohorts, arrange for the coach company to clean/ sanitise the vehicle between uses. Allow time in your itinerary for this.
- Please contact [Jayne Cornelius](#) the Sustainable Travel Officer, for support with quotations, booking of coaches, risk assessments, maximum capacities etc.

#### Information sheets:

- Travelling on Public Transport and Private Hire Vehicles – [H&S Staff Intranet](#) or [H&S PG MyUni](#) pages.
- Use of Fleet Vehicles and Private Hire Vehicles for Business – [H&S Staff Intranet](#) or [H&S PG MyUni](#) pages.

### Accommodation

Individual self-contained accommodation is preferred. When selecting your accommodation, consider how you can maintain social distancing and avoid/ minimise the use of shared spaces (e.g. dormitories, kitchens, washing areas, toilets) in your **choice** of accommodation and when using your accommodation.

- For residential courses, ask the provider for their risk assessment.
- Reduce capacity in indoor spaces.
- Ensure indoor spaces are well ventilated.
- Provide cleaning and sanitising wipes/ spray.

- Regularly clean commonly touched items e.g. surfaces, door handles, light switches, bathrooms.
- Manage shared spaces, so that people can use them on their own e.g. kitchens, bathrooms.
- Cutlery and crockery should be cleaned with general purpose detergent and dried thoroughly before re-use.
- Face coverings are strongly recommended in communal areas when social distancing cannot be maintained.

### Emergencies

In an emergency, people do not have to stay 2 metres apart (social distancing) if it is not safe to do so.

### Control:

- Ensure first aiders have read and understood the COVID-19 [Guidance for First Aiders Information Sheet](#). This information sheet provides guidance on general precautions, personal protective equipment, actions to take if a person presents with COVID-19 symptoms and new CPR guidance for first aiders.
- Ensure that a first aid kit and COVID-19 grab bag is available.

## 3. Generic Risk Assessment for Learning and Teaching

Within the School of Biosciences, Geography and Physics a generic COVID risk assessment for Fieldwork, in Learning and Teaching, has been developed. The Field Leader is responsible for ensuring that it is amended to be appropriate for the fieldwork to be carried out.

## 4. Statutory Compliance

Ensure that vehicles and equipment used in fieldwork have been maintained/ restocked and have had any necessary compliance checks (they may have been stored away or may not have been used or checked for a long time):

- Vehicles;
- Lifting equipment, lifting accessories;
- Safety equipment e.g. Life jackets, fire extinguishers, first aid kits, oxygen sets, breathing apparatus, electrical appliances, etc.

## 4. Roles and Responsibilities

### 4.1. The Fieldwork Leader/ Applicant

The person making the application to travel must;

- Ensure a risk assessment is carried out for fieldwork activities, this must include COVID-19 controls.
- Provide the following information to your Faculty, at least **1 week** prior to travel
  - Field Leader (member of staff)

- Description of the activity
- Location of activity
- Date (start date – end date)
- Maximum number of participants
- Confirmation that a risk assessment, including COVID-19 controls, has been carried out. **This risk assessment must be available on request.**
- Share your risk assessment is shared with participants. Ensure COVID-19 controls are followed.
- Ensure that field workers comply with national and local COVID restrictions in place at the time of travel.
  - Field Leaders in the Faculty of Science and Engineering must notify the Faculty of fieldwork using the “New Fieldwork Notification Form” available on the [Faculty website](#).
- Maintain a register of all participants during the fieldwork activity, including allocated groups and close contacts. This information may be required by Test Trace and Protect in the event of a confirmed COVID case.

#### 4.2. Faculty/ PSU Review Panel

The Faculty/ PSU Review Panel must;

- Provide support and advice, as required, during the risk assessment process.
- Sample risk assessments for quality purposes, ensuring adequate COVID-19 controls are in place.

#### 4.3. Executive Dean/ PSU Director

The Dean of Faculty must;

- Ensure that appropriate arrangements exist within the Faculty to collect fieldwork information from Fieldwork Leaders.
- Ensure that a Faculty Review Panel is in place.