



## Fieldwork Policy and Procedures

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### Policy overview

- This policy is part of MC's overall risk management framework.
- MC will inform staff of this policy and the procedures at the time of their induction and students at the time of their orientation.

### Policy rationale

- MC has an obligation to ensure the health, safety and welfare of staff and students who undertake fieldwork activities for MC purposes.
- Fieldwork is generally conducted off-campus and outdoors and so can expose participants to health and/or safety hazards that are different to those encountered in normal on-campus duties and activities.
- This policy applies to the range of stages in the fieldwork process, including planning, preparation, travelling, fieldwork activity, returning and post-fieldwork follow up.

### Policy definition

- 'Fieldwork' is considered to be any off-campus activity for the purposes of teaching, research or other educational pursuit, including relevant community service, and is under the control of MC.
- Examples include the collection of information or practical and/or demonstration activities.
- Practicum supervision and workplace-based training are not considered fieldwork for the purposes of this policy, as the staff and students involved will be subject to the safety systems applying in those workplaces.
- Fieldwork may be undertaken by a single person or a group of people.

### **Responsibilities of the *Person in Control***

- In general fieldwork will be under the supervision of a staff member who is designated as the *Person in Control* who has responsibility and accountability for the particular fieldwork activity and for ensuring that adequate planning, risk assessment and management systems are implemented to ensure the health and safety of fieldworkers.
- Although one person will have overall control of the fieldwork, at times there may be several people in the field in control of particular activities.
- Prior to undertaking any fieldwork the *Person in Control* will carry out a risk assessment to identify and document hazards and associated risks.
- In preparation and planning for the fieldwork activity, the *Person in Control* will:
  - implement the necessary risk control procedures;
  - develop appropriate communication and emergency plans;
  - obtain adequate information from the prospective fieldworkers about their health status to ensure that suitable measures can be implemented in a medical emergency;
  - consider the appropriate travel, accommodation and supervision arrangements for fieldworkers, taking into account the experience and/or maturity of all participants
- The *Person in Control* may or may not participate in the actual fieldwork activity.
- Responsibilities and accountabilities may be delegated to other field supervisors undertaking fieldwork activities.
- If control is delegated, the exchange and extent of delegation must be documented.
- The *Person in Control* has a duty and responsibility to maintain standards of behaviour in the group throughout the duration of the fieldwork exercise in order to protect the right of others to work and study in an environment free from personal intimidation, unpleasantness and harassment of any kind.
- The *Person in Control* is to keep a constant check on all environmental factors, including weather.

### **Responsibilities of Fieldworkers**

- Each member of a fieldwork party has a responsibility to work safely, taking all reasonable, practicable steps to protect the health and safety of themselves and others.
- It is the responsibility of each member of the fieldwork party to bring to the attention of the *Person in Control* or any delegated supervisor, situations which may pose a risk to an individual's health and safety.
- Each person also has an obligation to minimise any impact on the environment.
- Prior to undertaking any fieldwork the Fieldworker will be required to sign a declaration agreeing to comply with the requirements of the *General Fieldwork Risk Assessment*.

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### Vehicles and Drivers

- Vehicles hired from outside companies will be subject to the provisions of those contracts.
- All drivers of vehicles on fieldwork activities, whether they are MC or privately-owned vehicles, are expected to comply with the Australian Road Rules and will be personally responsible for any traffic infringements incurred.

### Communication and Emergency Procedures

- As part of the planning process, a designated contact person at MC should be identified prior to departure.
- This person needs to be someone who is available by phone, in case of emergency, throughout the period of the fieldwork activity.
- Communication strategies and emergency procedures should be established before departure, including contact procedures for relevant local emergency agencies, e.g. Emergency Services.
- Suitable first aid requirements should be identified as part of the initial risk assessment, see *Fieldwork Planning Checklist*.

### Overseas Fieldwork

- Fieldworkers going overseas should consult a doctor with experience in travel medicine.

### Procedures

- Prior to the commencement of the fieldwork activity, the *Person in Control* will complete:
  - *Fieldwork Planning Checklist*;
  - *General Fieldwork Risk Assessment*; and
  - *Person in Control Declaration*
- and submit these forms, and any other required documentation, to the General Manager for approval.
- The General Manager will maintain records of the standard *General Fieldwork Risk Assessment* forms.
- All staff required to participate in fieldwork are to be given a copy of the relevant *General Fieldwork Risk Assessment*, and sign a declaration stating that they have read and understood the risk assessment and will comply with its requirements.
- Students are to be given a *Fieldwork Participation Declaration*, which they must sign stating that they will comply with its requirements and the instructions of the *Person in Control*.