

Nuffield Department of Surgical Sciences (NDS) guidelines and risk assessment for business travel and fieldwork during COVID-19

Introduction

In line with the phased resumption of University business through the return to on-site working initiative (RTOSW), the University's Silver Group has agreed that the resumption of University business conducted away from University premises can be similarly resumed in a safe and controlled manner.

The Universities position taken at the beginning of the COVID-19 crisis was that only fieldwork and travel directly linked to the fight against COVID-19 should be deemed to have sufficient academic merit for approval and that approval should be given by the Heads of Divisions. This position has now been relaxed in order to allow the resumption of active fieldwork. The safety of staff, students and others affected by the University's activities is paramount and all relevant guidance (including UK government and, in the case of overseas fieldwork, international government guidance) in relation to COVID-19 must be observed.

Approval process

For their own protection and wider public health interests the NDS is requesting that all students and members of staff wishing to travel for business or fieldwork purposes seek approval from the department before doing so. The approval process will be determined by the nature of the travel/fieldwork and the level of risk it implies (see table 1 below).

Please note: This applies to all students and members of staff. Any individuals who travel for business purposes or fieldwork without following the correct approval process may invalidate their travel insurance and/or ability to claim expenses related to that travel.

Table 1 – Risk based approval process

Category	Risk	Description	Approval
1a	Very low	Business or fieldwork travel within the UK to areas where official, current (Government) Covid-19 infection rate figures are deemed to be under control and there are no local lockdown measures or other restrictions in place.	N.B. More localised travel where individuals are traveling alone and using their own transport may not require a full risk assessment, these individuals should still notify HR and the NDS Safety committee before travelling.
1b	Low	Business or fieldwork travel within the UK to areas where official, current (Government) Covid-19 infection rate figures are deemed to be under control and there are no local lockdown measures or other restrictions in place but individuals may be partaking in work which is more complex in its activity and requires higher levels of assurance and risk mitigation with more complicated control measures OR they may be using public transport or travelling with others in private transport.	Individuals must notify HR and the NDS safety committee. A standard travel and fieldwork risk assessment (see Form 1, below) and a COVID-19 risk assessment UK (Form 2, below) must be completed and approved by the NDS safety committee.

Title:	Nuffield Department of Surgical Sciences guidelines and RA for business travel and fieldwork during C-19		
Version:	Draft for authorisation	Issue No.:	0.1
Applicable To:	All NDS students and staff	Page No:	Page 1 of 2

2	Medium	Business or fieldwork travel to countries outside of the UK where the FCO do not advise against travel to OR Business or fieldwork travel within the UK to areas where official, current (Government) Covid-19 infection rate figures are deemed to be increasing and/or local lockdown measures or other restrictions are in place.	Individuals must notify HR and the NDS safety committee. A standard travel and fieldwork risk assessment (Form 1) and a COVID-19 risk assessment UK or Overseas (Forms 2 or 3) must be completed and approved by the NDS safety committee and signed off by the HoD
3	High	Those who wish to travel from the UK and undertake fieldwork/travel overseas to areas where the FCO advise against all but essential or all travel to.	Risk assessments for travel to countries or regions where the FCO advises against all but essential travel or all travel, must be reviewed by the Safety Office and approved by the Head of Department.

Full details of this process are available on the University Safety Office's Coronavirus web pages at:

<https://safety.admin.ox.ac.uk/covid-19-response#collapse1916536>

The standard travel/fieldwork risk assessment form and COVID-19 specific Risk Assessment forms are all available on the Safety Office, Sharepoint pages (N.B. this will require a Single Sign On login and password).

Form 1:

Standard [travel and fieldwork risk assessment template](#).

Form 2:

COVID-19 risk assessment template for [UK](#)

Form 3:

COVID-19 risk assessment template for [Overseas](#) travel/fieldwork

Risk assessments for travel to countries or regions where the FCO advises against all but essential travel or all travel, must be reviewed by the Safety Office and approved by the Head of Department who must decide on whether or not to approve the travel based on whether the academic merits of the research justify the risks involved.

All other travel can be signed off by the NDS safety committee / Head of Department (HoD)(without referral to the Safety Office), in accordance with NDS approval procedures.

N.B. Travellers are advised to allow plenty of time for the approval of their travel including travel insurance applications which may be subject to additional referral processes. Please reference to the Insurance website for further information.

Title:	Nuffield Department of Surgical Sciences guidelines and RA for business travel and fieldwork during C-19		
Version:	Draft for authorisation	Issue No.:	0.1
Applicable To:	All NDS students and staff	Page No:	Page 2 of 2