Research Students Working Off-site Policy

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Purpose

The research performed at Cranfield is inherently multi-disciplinary, often undertaken in collaboration with industry and with other academic institutions, both within the UK and Internationally. During periods of study, students may be required to spend periods of time undertaking research off-site, which might involve a placement at the site of a collaborating institution or industrial partner, undertaking experimental and/or computational research using facilities that are perhaps not available at Cranfield or undertaking fieldwork.

Careful planning and a clear understanding of the activities that will be undertaken during any off-site working is essential prior to commencement.

Placements

Placements can play an important role in developing an individual's skills and experience. For some research students, undertaking a placement is expected as part of their research degree programme and will be directly relevant to their research project. For others, a placement may provide the opportunity to gain additional skills and experience which fulfil the requirements of a sponsor, contributing to an individual's skills development.

A placement comprises a period spent at the site of a collaborating institution or industrial partner, embedded within the organisation undertaking experimental and/or computational research using facilities that are perhaps not available at Cranfield.

The **Student and Staff Placements Guidance** document (see related documents) provides guidance for the management of health and safety for students and staff placements based within the UK or overseas. It outlines the process and assessment of the placement provider to help ensure compliance with the University's expectations for the management of health and safety, and individuals' roles and responsibilities.

Fieldwork

Fieldwork is essential for some research projects and could involve either practical work or organised group activity, visits by individuals off campus, in the UK or overseas. Most fieldwork is carried out by individuals travelling and working alone and includes, for example: Practical work off campus e.g. geological or biological survey/collection work, archaeological digs, hydrological/edaphic/ecological/social survey and data collection, social science interviews with members of the public or individuals or groups.

The **Fieldwork guide to hazards** (see related documents) contains elements of guidance on Safety in Fieldwork and sets out the University's legal responsibilities toward staff, students and others that may be affected by the University's activities.

Scope

This policy applies to all research students at Cranfield University who will be spending a period undertaking research off-site through a placement or fieldwork.

Students who are employed by a company but are studying at Cranfield are not included in this arrangement. If a student is based with their employer as part of their course, this is not considered a placement.

Policy Statement

Careful planning and a clear understanding of roles and responsibilities are essential to ensure that the placement produces the anticipated benefits for the student, the University and the placement provider.

Before commencing any placement, the following should be undertaken:

1. Clearly define the aims of the placement, its anticipated duration and the work that will be undertaken.
2. Send the placement provider the Placement Letter of Expectation (**Appendix 1 of the Student and staff placement guide** (see related documents), which should be agreed prior to commencement of the placement.
3. Agree the detailed research plan that integrates with the overall project plan.
4. Complete a project risk assessment, considering mitigation plans.
5. Ensure the research data management plan is updated.
6. Agree the mode and frequency of supervision during the placement.
7. Agree on ownership of intellectual property and the approval process for the publication of research outcomes.
8. Agree the financial arrangements for the placement, both contractually between the University and the placement provider, and with the student, in terms of eligible expenses.
9. Discuss any workplace adjustments prior to commencement of the placement to ensure these can be met.
10. Consider any safety concerns for commuting to the placement/accommodation (if applicable).
11. Consider if the student should discuss with their GP any pre-existing medical conditions or disability which could be worsened by general or specific placement activities/location.
12. Consider access to computing facilities at the University that may be subject to licensing issues that, for example, limit usage to only computers with a Cranfield IP address.
13. Complete the **Student Placement Approval Form** (**Appendix 1**) and ensure that all approvals are in place as detailed on the form. A copy of the approved form should be sent to the SAS Research Team.

Overseas Placements/Fieldwork

Placements and fieldwork may be in a country where the security, general law and order and/or the health situation present actual or potential problems. The **Overseas Working Guidance** and **Overseas Working Procedure** (see related documents) provides further guidance on general security, medical advice, passport and travel documentation and staying safe while overseas.

Country-specific information must always be checked prior to departure. It is essential that pertinent issues should be addressed in the risk assessments, and they must be agreed as suitable and sufficient by the person approving the risk assessment. Students working abroad should be prepared to adapt to situations as they arise, and Cranfield University does not expect anyone to place themselves in danger at any time.

Key Roles and Responsibilities

Primary responsibility for the health and safety of the research students during placement sits with the placement provider.

The Supervisor is responsible for:

1. Discussing with the student any known potential health and safety risks prior to commencement of the placement.
2. Informing the placement provider of their responsibilities throughout the duration of the placement including:
    - Completing a health and safety induction for the student, ideally during the first week of the placement.
    - Providing the supervisor and student with a copy of the risk assessment for the planned activities prior to commencement of the placement highting any known potential health and safety risks.
    - Confirming any necessary workplace adjustments have been facilitated.
    - Providing training on any specialised equipment prior to use.
    - Making the student aware of any dangerous equipment/substances which are located in close proximity to the area they are working.
    - Informing the supervisor and student of any medical considerations and precautions prior to commencement of the placement e.g. requirement for vaccinations etc.
    - Providing a copy of the placement organisations insurance and liability details.
3. Contacting the student at the end of the first week of the placement to ensure that their induction has been completed and that there are no serious health and safety shortfalls in the placement. Perceived or actual shortfalls must be discussed with the placement provider.
4. Remaining in frequent contact with the student as agreed prior to the placement.
5. Ensuring academic progress is maintained.
6. Ensuring, through regular contact the health and safety of the individual and discuss any significant changes to the work activity are identified and suitably assessed.
7. Where significant changes do take place e.g. a complete change of activity, use of undeclared dangerous equipment, etc., the supervisor should request that the placement provider provides a revised risk assessment.

The student is responsible for:

1. Acting professionally at all times and ensuring their conduct follows the health and safety requirements of the placement provider.
2. Raising any health and safety concerns at the earliest opportunity with the placement provider and their Supervisor.

Monitoring Compliance

The Student Placement Approval Form (Appendix 1) must be completed and approved by all relevant parties prior to the commencement of any placement or fieldwork.

If a placement duration is longer than 12 months, the form must be reviewed annually.

SAS Support are responsible for checking forms have been fully completed and raising any concerns with the Senior Assistant Registrar.

Related documents

Student and Staff Placements
Overseas Working Procedure (including travel)
Keeping yourself safe when travelling overseas
Travel Insurance for students

Fieldwork guide to hazards – internal (staff)
Overseas Working Guidance – internal (staff)

Further guidance

Please contact Student and Academic Support Team: Research Student Information

Document control

Policy version number	Version 7
Policy owner	Prof. Leon Terry, PVC Education & Research
Policy Author(s)	Michelle Carter, Research Governance Manager, Academic Excellence
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Document Review

Version	Amendment	By	Date
V7	Added under key responsibilities supervisor section that the supervisor is responsible for informing the placement provider of their obligations. Monitoring and compliance section – student visa holders should contact Student Immigration to notify them of a change in study location.		

Appendix 1: Senate Handbook - Student Placement Approval Form

Student Details

Student's full name (forename, surname):	
Student number:	
Mobile no.:	
Email address:	
Faculty:	
Supervisors:	
Mode of study e.g. PhD/MSc by Research:	

Placement Details

Placement host name:	
Placement sponsor name (forename, surname):	
Placement sponsor contact no.:	
Placement sponsor email address:	
Placement address:	
Start date of placement:	
End date of placement:	
Brief description of work to be undertaken during placement. (If the placement is critical to the research degree, please also provide details of mitigation plans)	

Placement arrangements

Student's address while on placement:	
Student's contact no. while on placement if different to above:	
Frequency of supervision meetings during placement:	
Model of supervision meetings during placement (phone, MS Teams, face-to-face)	
Emergency contact during placement:	**Include address and telephone no.**
What facilities will be provided by the host organisation:	
Are any workplace adjustments required:	
Does the student have any learning support needs during placement? If so provide details:	

Does the student require any prior training? If so provide details.	
Have any medical considerations and precautions been considered (long standing medical conditions, requirement for vaccinations etc.):	
Details of financial agreement (provide the contract no. if appropriate):	
Details of agreement on expenses e.g. T&S, accommodation costs etc.	
Insurance and liability details of placement provider:	

Are the Following in Place?

(*denotes mandatory)

	Y/N
Completed placement Letter of Expectation*	
Approved H&S Risk Assessment*	
Project Risk Assessment*	
Learning Support Agreement (where applicable)	
Project Gantt Chart*	
Ethical Approval*	
Insurance*	
Permission to Travel	
Vaccinations (where applicable*)	

Signatures and Approval

	Name	Signature	Date
Student			
Principal Supervisor			
Associate Supervisor			
Director of Research			

Please submit a copy of the signed form to your SAS Research Team.

Note: if the placement is of duration longer than 12 months, this form must be reviewed annually.