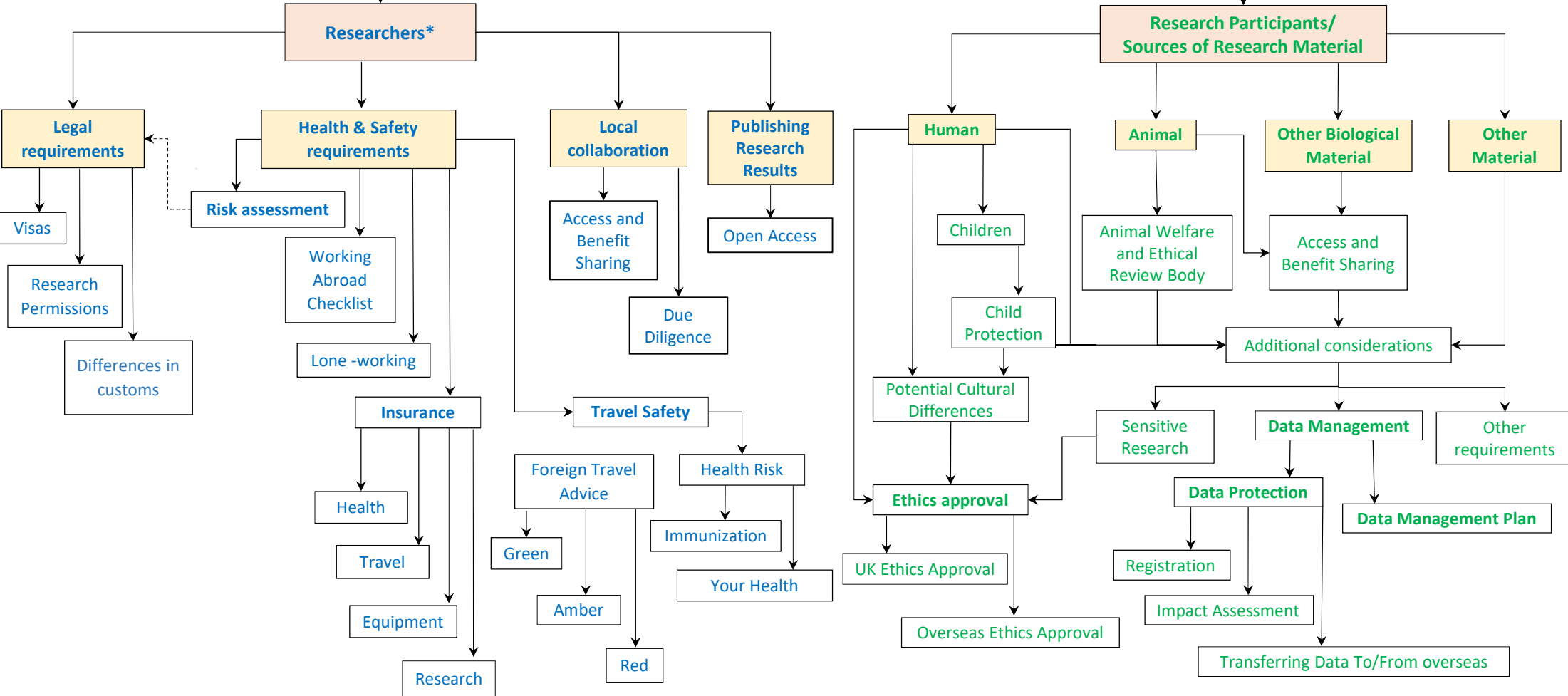# Overseas Research Guidance

–How to use it

1. The following roadmap sets out the processes involved in planning and conducting international research. The roadmap highlights the potential problems researchers might come across and where to find the relevant policies, requirements and appropriate advice within UCL.

2. This is not meant to be an all-exhaustive compendium; rather it serves to highlight most important processes and issues. For more information, please check specific local, faculty/departmental processes and requirements.

3. The guidance is divided into two parts:

- **"Researcher"** –things researchers need to consider for themselves when they intend to work abroad, including health and safety, UK travel advice, insurance etc. These would generally apply to most researchers going abroad.

- **"Research Participants/Sources of Material"** –things to consider when working with specific sources of data or materials; such as human participants, animals, biological materials, cultural artefacts, etc.
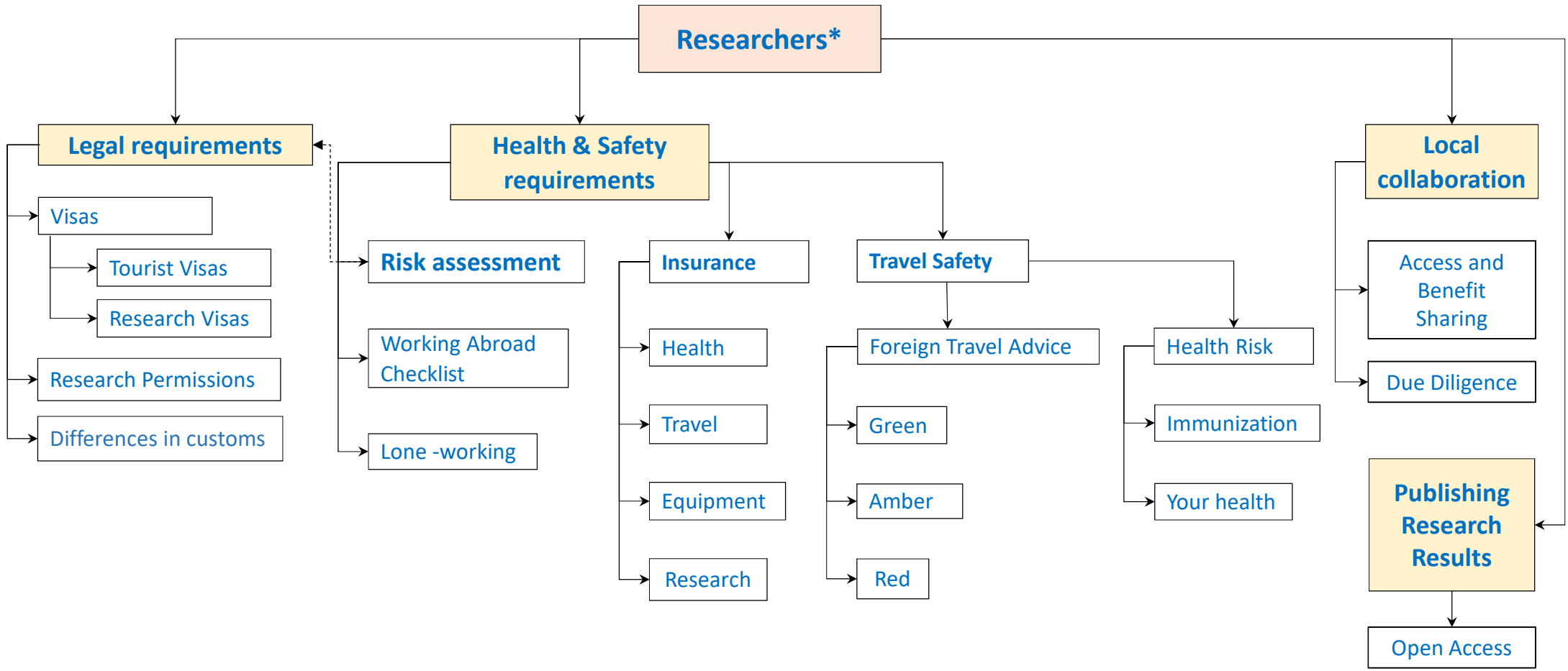
Researchers should follow the part of the diagram relevant to the specific project.

Overseas Research

Researchers*

Research Participants/ Sources of Research Material

Legal requirements
- Visas
- Research Permissions
- Differences in customs

Health & Safety requirements
- **Risk assessment**
- Working Abroad Checklist
- Lone-working
- **Insurance**
  - Health
  - Travel
  - Equipment
  - Research

Local collaboration
- Access and Benefit Sharing
- Due Diligence

Travel Safety
- Foreign Travel Advice
  - Green
  - Amber
  - Red
- Health Risk
  - Immunization
  - Your Health

Publishing Research Results
- Open Access

Human
- Children
  - Child Protection
- Potential Cultural Differences
- **Ethics approval**
  - UK Ethics Approval
  - Overseas Ethics Approval

Animal
- Animal Welfare and Ethical Review Body

Other Biological Material
- Access and Benefit Sharing

Other Material

Additional considerations
- Sensitive Research
- **Data Management**
  - **Data Protection**
    - Registration
    - Impact Assessment
    - Transferring Data To/From overseas
  - **Data Management Plan**
- Other requirements

*Note: Researchers who are nationals of other countries than the UK should follow the same processes and policies, even if they are doing the research in their native country. While researchers might be aware of the risks, they might be more willing to accept them or have a false sense of safety.

Researchers*

Legal requirements
- Visas
  - Tourist Visas
  - Research Visas
- Research Permissions
- Differences in customs

Health & Safety requirements

Risk assessment
- Working Abroad Checklist
- Lone -working

Insurance
- Health
- Travel
- Equipment
- Research

Travel Safety

Foreign Travel Advice
- Green
- Amber
- Red

Health Risk
- Immunization
- Your health

Local collaboration
- Access and Benefit Sharing
- Due Diligence

Publishing Research Results
- Open Access

Researchers

- Who are you? How are you going to be perceived by the overseas community?
- Can your background, gender, beliefs, or status affect the research or research participants? E.g. Are you member of the LGBT community going to work in a country where it could be considered highly sensitive and/or illegal?
- Is there any risk of harm to you due to the research methods being used or topic being researched?
- Do you have a support plan for yourself here in the UK, and locally, to deal with any difficult situations?
- For guidance on safety when working in unfamiliar environments see Code of Practice for the Safety of Social Researchers.
- Does your research fall under the sensitive research criteria? Please see UCL definition of Sensitive Research.
- For research in resource-poor overseas settings please see the **Global Code of Conduct.**

Legal requirements

All countries have their own legislation* which you must comply with.
Please note that while abroad you still need to comply with UCL policies and if you are a British citizen, UK law, e.g. Bribery Act 2010.

For specific information on local requirements **contact consular services** of the relevant country.

Visas
Do you need a travel visa?
- **Tourist Visa**
- **Research Visa**

Is a research visa required in the country to conduct research? This is **different** from a tourist visa.

Research Permissions
- **Research Clearance**
Do you need research clearance from the government or local organization? This **is not** the same as local ethics approval. This might be required even if the researcher is a national of that country. Many countries **mandate*** this, e.g. Tanzania.
- **Permit for field studies**
Field studies should be conducted in accordance with local legislation and may require specific licences or permissions, e.g. excavation permit
- **Export/import licence**
Often licenses are required for import or export of military, dual-use goods and technology, artworks, plants and animals, medicines and chemicals.

Different customs
Be aware of local customs, traditions and practices as your behavior may be seen as improper, hostile or even illegal, e.g. requirement for carrying personal identification, dress code, alcohol consumption, smoking, jaywalking, etc.

Health & Safety requirements

UCL Safety Services provide specific advice about working off-site.
Please follow their guidance on planning the itinerary and risk assessment.

Risk assessment
Have you thought about potential risks to you and your participants and how they will be managed? Has your risk assessment been approved? –see here and RiskNET tools. **Risk assessment is a legal requirement for all research**.

Working Abroad Checklist
Please complete the Working Abroad Checklist prepared by UCL Safety Services.

Lone-working
If a member of the research team (including staff, students, visitors and contractors) will be working alone at any time during the research, such as visiting a participant's home or other forms of lone data collection or working within laboratories, please follow the additional guidelines here.

*Note: There may be serious penalties for breaking a law, including deportation or imprisonment.

Insurance
UCL has a Business Travel Insurance policy for staff and students who are normally resident in the UK. No individual trip should exceed 12 months. You may not be covered if going to your home country.

Health
Do you have individual medical insurance? If your trip is longer than 12 months you may need additional insurance.

Travel
Do you have travel insurance? Has a travel insurance cover note been issued by UCL Insurance Services?

Equipment
Are you bringing any equipment that might need to be covered? –see UCL Insurance Services.

Research
Some types of studies require research insurance, e.g. some interventional and clinical studies. For more information see here.

Travel Safety

Foreign Travel Advice
Check the British Foreign Commonwealth Office website for travel advice, both before and during your stay. See advice for the **specific area of the country** you are planning to travel to as there might be different local levels of risk. For guidance and advice see also UCL Global Engagement Office.
Travel safety will considered if you are applying for ethics approval.

Green
Check the Foreign Travel Advice before traveling for potential risks. Check the neighboring areas, e.g. will you travel through a red area to get to the green area?

Amber
Advice against all but essential travel. Carefully consider the risks. Research projects based in the areas marked as amber will likely not get approved for research done by undergraduate and masters students.

Red
Advice against all travel.
Please note that research in such areas is considered highly risky and will only be approved on a case-by-case basis.
It is likely that applications only from very experienced researchers will be approved.

Health Risks
Please check TravelHeathPro for information on potential health risks, including current outbreaks, food and water hygiene information.

Immunization
Immunizations may be required in advance of the trip. Some immunizations must be administered weeks in advance to be effective. The Occupational Health Service (OHS) is able to advise staff on all aspects of work related travel health

Your Health
Consider what health care is available and how to access it. Do you have a pre-existing health condition? How will this be managed? Medical supplies may be subject to different medical legislations* or supply constraints, e.g. codeine containing drugs are banned in some countries.

Local Collaboration

Local collaborators/partners help bridge the cultural differences. Do you have local collaborators or do you need to find a local contact? For guidance and advice see UCL Global Engagement Office. It is important to establish balanced and fair benefit sharing with local communities/ researchers -see below for more information.
For reviewing, advising on, drafting and negotiating research related agreements for and on behalf of UCL contact Research Services.

Access and Benefit Sharing
Access by researchers to any biological or agricultural resources, human biological materials, traditional knowledge, should be subject to the free and prior informed consent of the owners or custodians. See Global Code of Conduct.
If you want to access such resources you need to comply with relevant Access and Benefit Sharing (ABS) regulations, e.g. Nagoya Protocol; the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture.

Due Diligence
In response to funder requirements, UCL has produced operational guidance to undertake due diligence checks on partners in low and middle income countries when applying for funding with an Official Development Assistance component. For more information see here and here (login required).
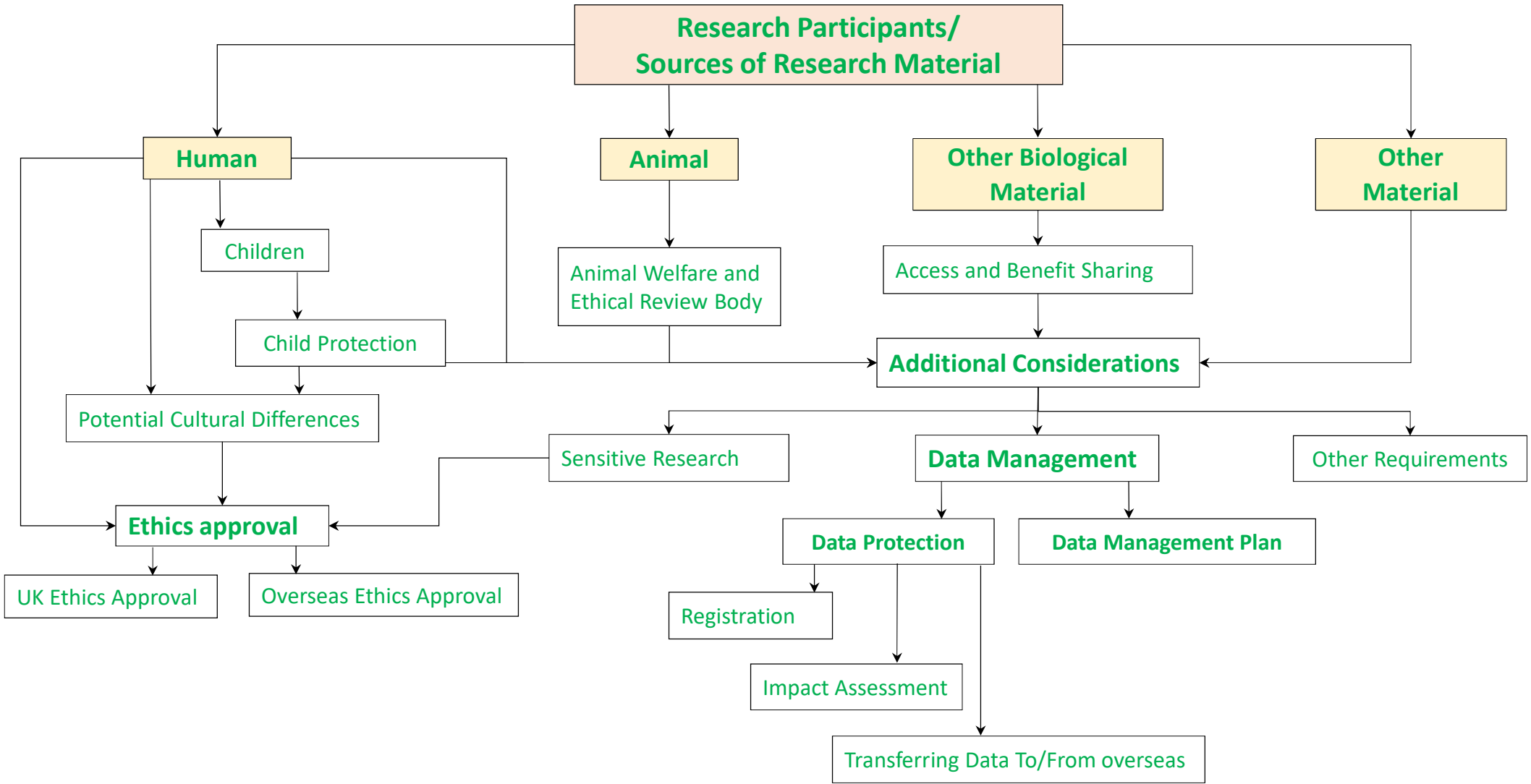
Publishing Research Results

Are there any risk involved in publishing the results of the research? Consider if:
- The authors/ participants could be at risk of a backlash or personal attack from individuals or groups, such as activists or 'hate' groups., e.g. controversial topics.
- The results of research could be taken and used by others with the intent of causing harm, e.g. biomedical research being used to create biological weapons, technology used to restrict civil/ human rights or censorship. This is often referred to as dual use - see misuse of research/dual use guidelines.

Open Access
Are you planning to publish your result Open Access? For more information see here.

Research Participants/Sources of Research Material

Human

This includes studies with **human participants and the collection and/or study of data derived from human participants**: human tissue and bodily fluids, and human data and records (such as, but not restricted to medical, genetic, financial, personnel, criminal or administrative records and test results including scholastic achievements).

Potential Cultural Differences

- Are there any local cultural sensitivities that could affect the research, e.g. participant recruitment?
- What is important for the local participants?
- Do you have local support plan for the participants?
- Could your cultural norms affect the participants?

Children

Check what are the national legal regulations and ethical standards, including legal age of consent, or whether parental/guardian consent will be required e.g. UN Convention on the Rights of the Child defines a child as everyone under 18.
For specific UCL ethics guidance see here and here.
For specific guidance on data protection see here.

Child Protection/Safeguarding

- Please see UCL Safeguarding policy.
- Are there any potential differences in childcare and childrearing?
- What are the local legal requirements and policies? How are they enforced? Can this limit the confidentiality?
- Consider if your actions are likely to do any harm.
- For more information see UNICEF guidance.

Animal

Consider if there are different local legal requirements and permissions necessary to work with or access the animals, e.g. work with endangered species.

AWERB

You must notify your local Animal Welfare and Ethical Review Body (AWERB) in the UK, before you begin your research as you might require formal approval.
This is relevant for all types of research including:
- Import of animal tissues (e.g., blood samples and antibodies)
- Export of live animals
- Collaborative studies, any aspect of which uses animals in a laboratory outside the UK.

For more information see UCL Biological Services.

Other Biological Material

Consider local legal requirements and permissions necessary to work with or access the materials: plants (work with endangered species?), microorganisms, etc.

Access and Benefit Sharing

Each country has rights over the genetic resources that exist within their country. If you want to access such resources you need to comply with relevant Access and Benefit Sharing regulations, e.g. Nagoya Protocol; the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture.

Other Material

Consider local legal requirements and permissions necessary to work with or access the materials – e.g. cultural artefacts, non-renewable resources such as minerals.
See UCL policy on cultural property.
Do you need an excavation permit?

Ethics approval

UCL policy states that all research with human participants or using human data is expected to have ethical approvals conforming to UK's **AND** the study country(ies) regulations. See more information here.

UK Ethics Approval

UCL Research Ethic Committee (UCL REC), or UCL Institute of Education Research Ethics Committee (IOE REC) if based within the IOE. Please check specific faculty/departmental processes and requirements.

Note for Clinical Research: For non-patient and patient studies conducted overseas **and on NHS patients in the UK** the following triple-review is required:
- Health Research Authority review for the NHS patient element.
- UCL REC, or IOE REC for the overseas element.
- Local ethics approval in the study country(ies) in accordance with local requirements.

Overseas Ethics Approval

Adhere to local ethical and legal requirements. This would generally mean obtaining approval from a local ethics committee or, if one does not exist, approval from the institution, hospital or facility where the researcher will be conducting the research. Some information can be found here: International Compilation of Human Research Standards
Please note that some countries require additional 'Research Clearance', this is not the same as ethics approval. See flowchart under 'Legal Requirements'.

Sensitive Research

Does your research fall under the sensitive research criteria, see here? Research that is classed as 'sensitive' carries with it particular risks that need to be managed, with particular consideration being given to the potential consequences of these risks. This includes risks and consequences for: individual researchers; research participants; individuals, groups, communities connected either with the research participants or the research topic/focus; the reputation of UCL and its researchers.

Additional considerations

Data Management

Have you checked data management requirements? Data management in research covers a wide area from the secure collection of data to the safe storage, stewardship and disposal of data, see Research Data Management webpages.

Data Protection

Will you collect any personal data? For personal data collected and stored outside of the UK, ensure that you comply with local privacy legislation (e.g. USA, Malaysia) and provide the same or equivalent safeguards as in the UK. Appropriate data safeguards include:
- Using anonymised data where possible
- Applying security measures, e.g. encryption, access controls and locks
- Minimising the data e.g. pseudonymisation
- Not causing substantial damage or distress
- Ensuring that the purpose of the study does not directly affect individuals
- Having research ethics approval in place
For more details and guidance note on applying these appropriate safeguards please see UCL Data Protection.

Registration

If you are going to collect personal data, register your study. See UCL Legal Services website, 'Research Registration Form'.

Impact Assessment

Check if you need to fill in the Data Protection Impact Assessment, see here.

Transferring Data To/From Overseas

Will you be sharing personal data with colleagues outside of the UK or vice versa? For transfers to other countries, safeguards must be put in place, e.g. use of the Model Clauses. Follow this guidance for more detail.

Other requirements

Do you need material transfer agreement?
Do you need specific export/import permissions or licenses?
Do you need to register your research, e.g. clinical trial registry?
Check if there are any specific faculty/ departmental requirements, e.g. policy regarding the illicit trade in antiquities.
For UCL collection management, see here.

Data Management Plan

Do you have a Data Management Plan?

Note: Data transfer also involves transient or unintentional transfers; where data is transferred to another recipient who is not the intended recipient. This happens when a website or web application being used (either to store or collect data) is based outside the UK –check terms and conditions.

List of links included in the flowcharts

General UCL resources
Research Integrity website http://www.ucl.ac.uk/research/integrity
UCL definition of Sensitive Research http://www.ucl.ac.uk/research/integrity/sensitive-research
The Nagoya Protocol http://www.ucl.ac.uk/research/integrity/the-nagoya-protocol
UCL Cultural Property Policy https://www.ucl.ac.uk/archaeology/research/ethics/ucl-cultural-property-policy-guidelines
Policy regarding the illicit trade in antiquities http://www.ucl.ac.uk/archaeology/research/ethics/policy_antiquities
Museums & Collections home page https://www.ucl.ac.uk/culture/collection-management
Material and Transfer Agreements https://www.uclb.com/for-researchers/material-transfer-agreements/
UCL's Global Engagement Office https://www.ucl.ac.uk/global/contact-us
Due Diligence https://www.ucl.ac.uk/school-life-medical-sciences/about-slms/office-vice-provost-health/research-coordination-office/what-we-do/supporting-9
UCL Due Diligence Policy https://www.ucl.ac.uk/school-life-medical-sciences/about-slms/office-vice-provost-health/research-coordination-office/what-we-do/supporting-18
Open Access https://www.ucl.ac.uk/library/open-access
Research Services https://www.ucl.ac.uk/research-services/

Ethics information
UCL Research Ethics Committee https://ethics.grad.ucl.ac.uk/
UCL Institute of Education Research Ethics Committee https://www.ucl.ac.uk/ioe/research/research-ethics
Research Conducted Overseas https://ethics.grad.ucl.ac.uk/research-conducted-overseas.php
International Compilation of Human Research Standards https://www.hhs.gov/ohrp/international/compilation-human-research-standards/index.html

Data Management & Protection
Research Data Management webpages http://www.ucl.ac.uk/library/research-support/research-data
Data Management Plan http://www.ucl.ac.uk/library/research-support/research-data/policies/writing_DMPlan
UCL Data Protection https://www.ucl.ac.uk/legal-services/ucl-general-data-protection-regulation-gdpr/guidance-notices-ucl-staff/guidance-researchers
Data protection Registration https://www.ucl.ac.uk/legal-services/research
Data Protection Impact Assessment https://www.ucl.ac.uk/legal-services/research/data-protection-impact-assessment
Data Protection & Management at Research Integrity http://www.ucl.ac.uk/research/integrity/policies-and-guidelines/data-management-protection
Transferring Data outside of EU guidance https://www.ucl.ac.uk/legal-services/ucl-general-data-protection-regulation-gdpr/guidance-notices-ucl-staff/transfers-personal-data
Model contracts https://ec.europa.eu/info/law/law-topic/data-protection/data-transfers-outside-eu/model-contracts-transfer-personal-data-third-countries_en

Working with children
Research With Children And Young People https://ethics.grad.ucl.ac.uk/res_with_children.php
UCL Research Ethics Committee Guidance Note 1: Research Involving Children https://ethics.grad.ucl.ac.uk/forms/guidance1.pdf
UCL Safeguarding Children and Adults at Risk Policy and Procedure https://www.ucl.ac.uk/human-resources/safeguarding-children-and-adults-risk-policy-and-procedure-staff-and-students#Safeguarding%20Students%20Under%2018-%20Preventative%20Action
Research with Children: Guidance on Data Protection Issues https://www.ucl.ac.uk/legal-services/ucl-general-data-protection-regulation-gdpr/guidance-notices-ucl-staff/research-children-guidance
UNICEF Guidance on Ethical Research Involving Children (ERIC) https://childethics.com/

Working with animals
UCL Biological Services http://www.ucl.ac.uk/biological-services/

Health and Safety resources
UCL Safety Services https://www.ucl.ac.uk/safety-services
Off-site Working https://www.ucl.ac.uk/safety-services/a-z/off-site-working
Working Abroad Checklist https://www.ucl.ac.uk/safety-services/sites/safety-services/files/abroad-checklist.pdf
Risk assessment guidance https://www.ucl.ac.uk/safety-services/a-z/risk-assessment
RiskNET tools https://www.ucl.ac.uk/safety-services/risknet
Lone Working https://www.ucl.ac.uk/safety-services/a-z/lone-working
UCL Insurance Services https://www.ucl.ac.uk/finance/expenses-insurance/travel-advice
Additional information on research insurance https://ethics.grad.ucl.ac.uk/uclinsurance.php
British Foreign Commonwealth Office https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice
TravelHeathPro https://travelhealthpro.org.uk/countries

Additional codes and guidance
Code of Practice for the Safety of Social Researchers https://the-sra.org.uk/common/Uploaded%20files/SRA-safety-code-of-practice.pdf
Global Code of Conduct for research in resource-poor overseas settings please see the http://www.globalcodeofconduct.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/Global-Code-of-Conduct-Brochure.pdf
Convention on Biological Diversity https://www.cbd.int/
The International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture http://www.fao.org/plant-treaty/en/
Import of goods from the UK https://www.gov.uk/import-goods-into-uk
Export of good from the UK https://www.gov.uk/export-goods