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.
*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
  - Health Risk
  - Immunization
  - Your health
  - Green
  - Amber
  - Red

Local collaboration
- Access and Benefit Sharing
- Due Diligence
- Open Access

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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 licences are required for import/export of military, dual-use goods and technology, artworks, plants and animals, medicines and chemicals.

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 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.

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 tool. Risk assessment is a legal requirement for all research.

Health

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

Medical insurance? Has an additional health insurance policy been agreed for the duration of your trip?
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?

**Child Protection/Safeguarding**
- 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.

**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.

**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.

**UCL 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.

**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’.

**Transferring Data To/From Overseas**
Will you be sharing personal data with colleagues to countries not in the EU or vice versa? These countries are considered to have adequate safeguards in place. For transfers to other countries, safeguards must be put in place, e.g. use of the Model Rules. Follow this guidance for more detail.

**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).

**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.

**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.

**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.

**Data Protection**
Will you collect any personal data? For personal data collected and stored outside of the EU, 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.

**Data Management Plan**
Do you have a Data Management Plan?

**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.

**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.

**Additional considerations**

**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.

**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/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.ucb.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-dms/officer-vice-provost-health/research-coordination-office/what-we-do/supporting-8
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/ethics
Research Conducted Overseas https://ethics.grad.ucl.ac.uk/research-conducted-overseas.php

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
Data protection Registration https://www.ucl.ac.uk/legal-services/research
Data Protection & Management at Research Integrity http://www.ucl.ac.uk/research/integrity/policies-and-guidelines/data-management-protection

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

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/g/2/off-site-working
Risk assessment guidance https://www.ucl.ac.uk/safety-services/a/3/risk-assessment
RiskNET tools https://www.ucl.ac.uk/safety-services/risknet
Lone Working https://www.ucl.ac.uk/safety-services/g/2/lone-working
UCL Insurance Services https://www.ucl.ac.uk/finance/expenses-insurances/travel-advice
British Foreign Commonwealth Office https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice
TravelHealthPro https://travelhealthpro.org.uk/countries

Additional codes and guidance
Convention on Biological Diversity https://www.cbd.int/