

Policy on Preventing Harm (Safeguarding) in Research & Innovation Activities

1. Policy Statement

Queen's University is committed to creating safe research and innovation environments free from sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment, psychological abuse and physical violence. All individuals employed and/or engaged in the University's research and innovation activities must be treated with dignity and respect and the research activities undertaken to the highest standard of integrity.

The University recognises its ethical and legal responsibility to ensure the duty of care for those individuals i.e. staff, students, participants, external individuals conducting research and/or innovation activities on behalf of the University and communities impacted either directly or indirectly by these activities.

Queen's University commits to ensuring collaboration agreements and/or contracts reflect funder requirements with respect to preventing harm (safeguarding) in research and innovation activities.

For the purpose of this Policy, safeguarding or preventing harm in research/innovation is defined by UKCDR (UK Collaborative on Development Research) as:

"Preventing and addressing any sexual exploitation, abuse, or harassment of research participants, communities and research staff, plus any broader forms of violence, exploitation and abuse ... such as bullying psychological abuse and physical violence"

2. Scope

This policy applies to:

- (i) Staff, students and those individuals engaged by the University to conduct research and innovation activities.
- (ii) Research participants and any communities or individuals involved in the University's research and/or innovation activities.
- (iii) All research and innovation activities regardless of geographical location i.e. whether located in UK or internationally.

Queen's University recognise that these research and innovation activities may occur in nations and/or organisations with differing regulatory/legislative requirements than our own. On those occasions where conflict arises and the partner legislation must take precedence we ask that the PI/internal lead documents the rationale behind this requirement and discusses alternative options that could be employed to ensure safeguarding/preventing harm in research/innovation activities is considered.

Please note, Queen's staff and students are always expected to personally act to the highest standards in regards to safeguarding, however we recognise that we cannot force our own internal policies/procedures on our research and innovation partners which is why dialogue is encouraged amongst our partners around this issue.

It should be noted that this Policy on Preventing Harm in Research and Innovation is a vehicle which allows complaints/allegations and concerns to be directed to and dealt with by

the most appropriate existing University policy or procedure. It should be acknowledged that the University has a [Code of Behaviour](#) which sets out the expected behaviours for all those staff and students engaging with children and adults of risk for, or on behalf of, the University.

The University's Policy on [Safeguarding Children and Adults at Risk](#) details the requirements that must be followed when conducting research relating to children and/or adults at risk.

This Policy should also be read in conjunction with related University policies:

- [Policy on Safeguarding Children and Adults at Risk](#)
- [Code of Conduct and Integrity in Research](#)
- [Staff Code of Conduct](#)
- [Student Code of Regulations](#)
- [Whistleblowing Policy](#)
- [Policy and Guidance on Fieldwork](#)
- [Policy on the Ethical Approval of Research](#)
- [Regulations Governing an Allegation of Misconduct in Research](#)
- [Bullying and Harassment Complaints Procedure](#)
- [Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy](#)

3. Prevention

3.1. The University's Responsibilities

Queen's University will take all reasonable steps to prevent harm in their research and innovation activities. These responsibilities will include ensuring:

- The appropriate policy, and supporting activities are in place and made available to researchers to ensure prevention of harm in all research and/or innovation activities.
- Regular review of safeguarding policies, procedures and guidance to incorporate feedback and lessons learned. Period of review is detailed in Section 6 of policy.
- Clear definition of expectation regarding conduct of staff, student and/or any other individuals associated with research and innovation activities.
- Clear and well defined reporting and investigation mechanism for safeguarding concerns relating to research and innovation activities through the use of the most relevant investigatory/disciplinary procedure(s) to the concern raised.
- Due consideration is given to funders' requirements in terms of approach to investigations, onward reporting, and, where legally required the undertaking of relevant safeguarding checks e.g. AccessNI in line with Northern Ireland legislation.

3.2. Individual Responsibilities

Queen's University recognise that all staff, students and any associated personnel directly engaged in research and innovation activity have a role to play in preventing exploitation, abuse or harm from occurring by anticipating and mitigating risks associated with the activity, and by reporting concerns or incidents if they do occur.

Queen's University expect all staff, students and any associated personnel directly involved in research and innovation activity to:

- Treat each other, research and innovation participants, and members of the general public with dignity and respect. To act with the highest standards of integrity, honesty, and professionalism, and to embed good practice in every aspect of their work.
- Adhere to the highest standard of research ethics, in line with requirements set out by national and international regulatory bodies, professional and regulatory research guidance, and research ethics frameworks issued in appropriate areas.
- Recognise the inherent power imbalances that exist in research and innovation enterprises and take all reasonable steps to redress this within individual partnerships and collaborations.
- Engage in equitable partnerships throughout the design, delivery and execution of your research and innovation activities to avoid exploitative and extractive approaches.
- Ensure awareness of relevant QUB policies and procedures and know how to respond to and report concerns about exploitation, abuse and harm.
- Raise concerns that you have, and/or of those that are reported to you through the appropriate channels.

4. Enabling Reporting

Queen's University will investigate all reports of allegations that a member of staff or student has exploited, abused or harmed another member of staff, student, associated personnel, research/innovation participants or members of the general public. This investigation will be investigated within the parameters set out in the relevant University policy/procedure.

Queen's University will ensure that safe, appropriate, accessible means of reporting safeguarding concerns are made available to staff, students, associated personnel, research/innovation participants and where appropriate the communities we work with.

The University acknowledges that reporting mechanisms need to be flexible to adapt to cultural and contextual differences encountered within the global research and innovation arena.

Principal Investigators and partners will be encouraged to discuss and identify the most culturally and contextually appropriate local reporting mechanism for each individual project/activity at initiation phase and throughout duration of project/activity.

Reports regarding concerns associated with safeguarding in research and innovation activities should be brought to the attention of Head of School/Centre Director or nominated representative in the first instance who will then liaise with the Director of Research & Enterprise, or their nominee. Please note, should it be inappropriate to raise concern with Head of School/Centre Director in the first instance, concerns may be reported directly to the Director of Research & Enterprise, or their nominee.

5. Response

Queen's University will follow up safeguarding reports and concerns in accordance with the relevant policy and procedure, and/or legal and statutory obligations, including funder requirements.

Upon receipt of report, internal consultation will be undertaken with relevant departments/individuals including but not limited to Research Governance, People & Culture, DASA, Designated Safeguarding Officer (DSO), Head of School, Research Contracts etc to determine the appropriate internal policy/procedure by which this allegation should be investigated and external reporting requirements.

In the event of an immediate concern regarding potential ongoing harm, the University will ensure mitigating actions are implemented as soon as possible.

6. Monitoring and Review

The University recognises the importance of preventing harm in research and innovation activities and as such, this item is encapsulated within the institutional risk of Global Compliance & Integrity.

The prevention of harm in research and innovation activities will be added as a standing agenda item at each Research Governance, Ethics & Integrity Committee to allow oversight and visibility of this important matter.

This policy and associated process will be reviewed biennially, or more frequently in the event of legislative changes, which will allow for evaluation of effectiveness and review of feedback.

7. Policy Supporting Documents

The Appendices contain a number of supporting documents which provide further guidance and information in relation to compliance with this policy and must be read in conjunction with the main text of this document.

8. External References

Additional references relating to preventing harm in research and innovation activities are found below.

UKCDR – [Guidance on Safeguarding in International Development Research](#)

UKCDR – [Practical Application of UKCDR Safeguarding Guidance During COVID-19](#)

UKCDR – [Webinar “Preventing Harm in Research”](#)

UKRI – [Preventing Harm \(Safeguarding\) in Research and Innovation Policy](#)

NIHR – [NIHR Policy on Preventing Harm in Research](#)

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NIHR – [NIHR Safeguarding Guidance](#)

CHS Alliance – [Guidance for Investigations](#)

Bond – [Safeguarding Resources](#)

Appendices

Appendix 1: Preventing Harm (Safeguarding) In Research & Innovation Policy Flow Diagram

Appendix 2: Template Risk Assessment for Preventing (Safeguarding) in Research & Innovation

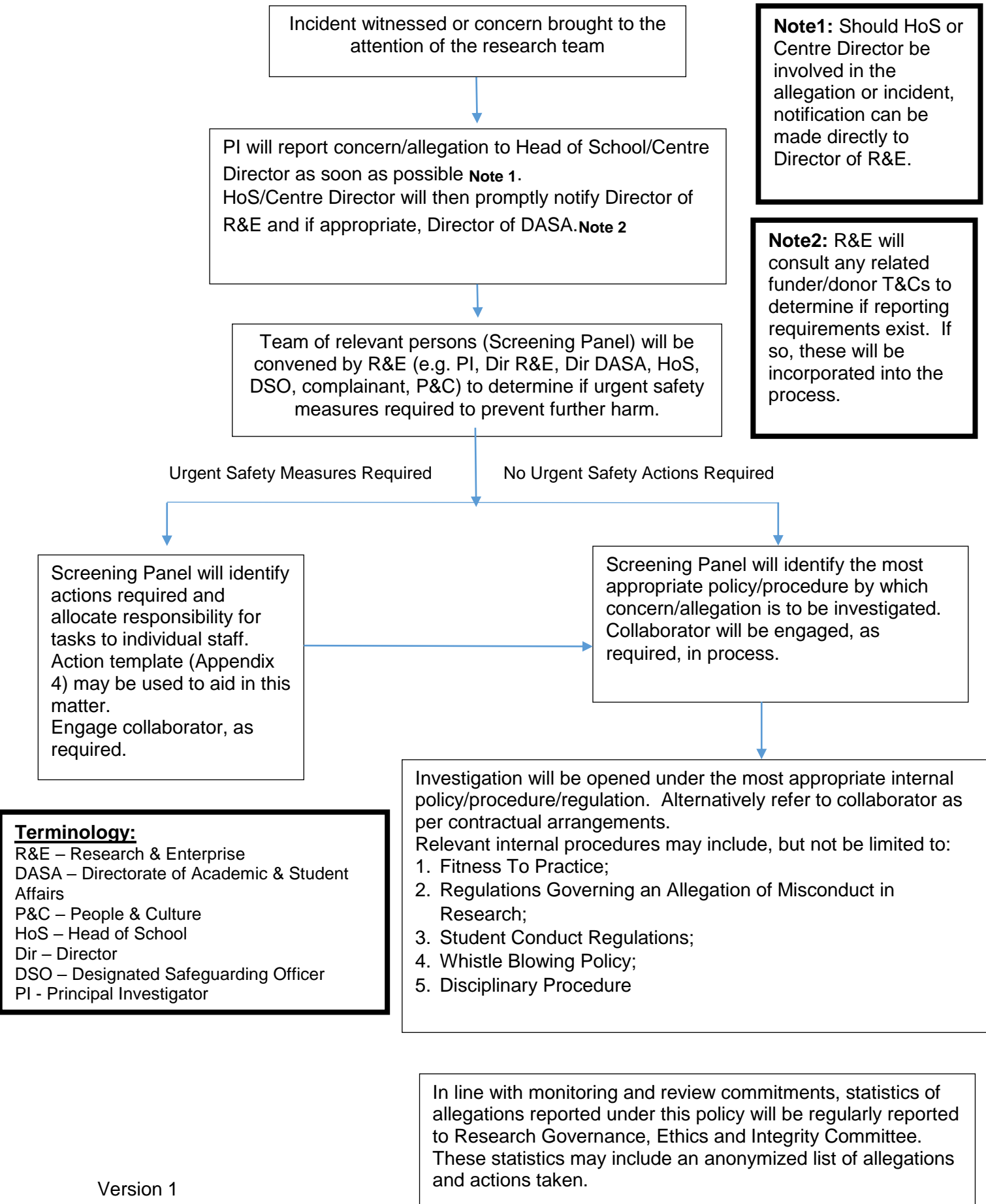
Appendix 3: Aid to Researchers in Relation to Preventing Harm (Safeguarding) in Research & Innovation

Appendix 4: Template Action Plan for Preventing Harm (Safeguarding) in Research & Innovation

Appendix 5: Duty of Care Guidance for Researchers (Staff/Student)*

*Please note, inclusion of Appendix 5 within this policy is an interim measure whilst a separate “Duty of Care” Guidance is prepared by the University.

Appendix 1: Preventing Harm (Safeguarding) In Research & Innovation Policy Flow Diagram



Appendix 2: Template Risk Assessment for Preventing (Safeguarding) in Research & Innovation

Risk Assessment – Preventing Harm (Safeguarding) In Research & Innovation



Risk identified	Likelihood (1-5)	Impact (1-5)	Gross risk (Likelihood x Impact)	Mitigation strategy	By whom?

Appendix 3: Aid to Researchers in Relation to Preventing Harm (Safeguarding) in Research & Innovation

Items for consideration:

- Agreements and discussions with partners regarding safeguarding expectations, risks, mitigations, processes etc are documented in writing to guarantee clarity and understanding regarding the prevention of harm in research and innovation activities. The project team may also consider incorporating it into formal partner/collaboration agreements or within specific project documentation.
- Ensure that both you and your partner(s) are aware of each other's organisations' safeguarding requirements including routes to report concerns regarding exploitation, abuse and harm. This requirement should extend to all researchers and contractors.
- Ensure that any agreed project/activity safeguarding expectations and/or code of conduct is disseminated to all relevant project team members including subcontractors. Please note, Queen's has a [Code of Behaviour](#) regarding interaction with children and adults at risk.
- Ensure that expectation regarding appropriate conduct/behaviour by staff/students/contractors etc during research and innovation activities is clearly communicated to research/innovation participants and where appropriate members of the general public. Consider the most appropriate medium for this communication e.g. posters, video, written word etc.
- Ensure that during consideration of specific project safeguarding reporting methods, the cultural and contextual appropriateness of the mechanism has been considered. Engage in conversation with your partners for advice regarding this. (CBCM – Community Based Complaints Mechanism)
- Does the work undertaken legally mandate the undertaking of criminal checks either here in the UK or locally, where the work is occurring? For information regarding legal requirements in the UK, please consult the [Safeguarding Children & Adults at Risk](#) policy for guidance. Engage with your partners/collaborators for assistance in identifying any international legislation in relation to safeguarding laws.
- Has due consideration been given to digital safeguarding? E.g. social media platforms, online interviews, personal data etc. Please note that the University has an [eSafety Guidance](#) available for consultation.

Further information on QUB policies in relation to this can be located within the University's Staff/Student [Social Media policies](#) and the [Policy on Photographing, Filming and Audio Recording Children and Adults at Risk](#).

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- Have you assigned Safeguarding Focal Points/Leads within your project/activity? This should take into account all partners and locations of activities.

Consider the safeguarding cycle during your project/activity:

- **Identification** – Identify, via risk assessment, all potential subjects and means of harm that may occur during activity
- **Prevention** – Via risk assessment, assign mitigating actions to decrease the likelihood of harm occurring.
- **Reporting and responding** – Ensure that you and your internal QUB project team are aware of the Queen’s “Preventing Harm (Safeguarding) in Research and Innovation” policy and the process of reporting and responding to harms. Ensure that you and your partners have considered reporting requirements within your particular research and innovation activities, including consideration of cultural and contextual differences.
- **Accountability** – It is important that we recognise and accept that we all have a responsibility with regards preventing harm in research and innovation activities.
- **Monitoring and learning** – Beyond the Institutional commitment to monitor safeguarding allegations within the research/innovation setting and ensure the incorporation of lessons learned within our process, it is critical that individual researchers regularly review safeguarding concerns within their own activities. Risk assessments should be reviewed regularly within your project allowing for the emergence of new risks to be identified and/or gross risks of identified risks to be re-calculated.

What is a Risk Assessment?

A risk assessment is a systemic process of evaluating the potential risks that may be involved in a project or activity.

Risk Assessment Terminology

Likelihood – The probability of an event occurring. The higher the likelihood/probability the higher the score.

Likelihood Ratings Score Guidance:

1 = Unlikely, 2 = Possible, 3 = Likely, 4 = Very Likely, 5 = Certain

Impact – The consequence or effects of a risk. The greater the impact of harm, the higher the score.

Impact Ratings Score Guidance:

1 = Minor, 2 = Moderate, 3 = Serious, 4 = Very Serious, 5 = Extreme

Gross Risk – The product of the impact score and likelihood score.

I.e. Likelihood Score x Impact Score = Gross Risk

Mitigation – The action of reducing the severity, seriousness, or likelihood of an event happening.

Tips for Conducting Risk Assessments

- Risk assessments must identify and record all risks of intended or unintended harm. Please note, consideration must be given to all those involved, including researchers themselves.
- Mitigating measures should be implemented for risks identified.
- Risk assessments should be a living document that is regularly reviewed and updated as needed by the project team.
- Risk assessments should be completed in collaboration with all partners, including those local partners, who can identify external risks and vulnerabilities which must be taken into consideration.

Below are a few questions which may aid in your risk assessment activity.

- 1) Does the research/innovation activity involve working with children or adults at risk?
- 2) Which groups either involved in, or potentially affected by, the project need to be considered for safeguarding purposes? E.g. internal researchers (staff/students), external partners, research participants, wider community.
- 3) Have you considered any risk factors which may make any particular group vulnerable to abuse or exploitation? E.g. age, disability, economic/social status, ethnicity, race, gender, environmental factors, literacy, sexuality, displacement etc. Do not forget to include intersectionality in your assessment.
- 4) Have you, in collaboration with all partners, identified the most culturally appropriate method for reporting safeguarding concerns?
- 5) Ensure due consideration is given to any potential power imbalance that may lead to exploitation either between the research participants/community or our partners.
- 6) Ensure digital safeguarding concerns are considered e.g. online interviews, social media platforms etc.
- 7) Are there any barriers to reporting concerns which you may need to consider and mitigate against?
- 8) Does your risk assessment highlight, if required by donor, the need to report safeguarding concerns to any external organisation e.g. donor/funder/sponsor?

Appendix 4: Template Action Plan for Preventing Harm (Safeguarding) in Research & Innovation



Preventing Harm (Safeguarding) in Research & Innovation Action Plan

Project: QUB PI: Partners/Collaborators Involved:

What needs to be done?	By whom	By when

Completed By: Date Completed:

Appendix 5: Duty of Care Guidance for Researchers (Staff/Student)

Principal Investigators and or research/innovation support (staff/students) required to travel for the undertaking of their work should consider the below items prior to departure. Additional advice can be located within the University policy entitled "[Fieldwork in Conflict Zones](#)". The researcher is strongly encouraged to review that document alongside this guidance.

Travel Itinerary/Communication Plan

- Those travelling should ensure that the University (Home Contact) has a full and detailed itinerary regarding their trip including flight numbers, departure times, accommodation, locations of any external visits/field trips and contact details for all relevant in-country destinations. Please note Home Contact¹ is defined as a key person within the University, such as Head of School/Institute/Director/Supervisor who has been nominated and is contactable in an emergency and/or for general support.
- Please note the University policy on "[Fieldwork in Conflict Zones](#)" refers to a "safe system of working" whereby the necessary local and home contacts are identified.
- Ensure that the University has next of kin details for all those going abroad in case of an emergency. Please note, ICE (In Case of Emergency) contact details can be updated via [Queen's Online](#).
- Ensure that a timetable has been scheduled for communication with colleagues in the University whilst abroad. Depending on location and resources this can be via email, phone or VOIP services e.g. Zoom, MS Teams, Face-time, What's App etc. The purpose of these calls is to provide assurance to the University that you and/or the team are well. Should you wish to cancel a scheduled meeting, please inform your University colleague ahead of time to prevent undue worry.
- Prior to travelling abroad individuals should investigate the mobile networks abroad to ensure the continued operation of their personal mobile phones.
- If travelling to a location with limited reception/services, School/Faculties should review if the procurement/usage of a GPS communication device such as a satellite phone or personal location beacon is needed.
- Please note that some countries ban or tightly regulate the use of VPN applications. Such countries include China, Russia, Belarus, North Korea, Turkmenistan, Uganda, Iraq, Turkey, UAE and Oman. Please note, these list of countries and VPN restrictions are subject to change therefore it is recommended to review your destination's position on this prior to departure.

VISA/Insurance/Country Entry Requirements

- Ensure that you have obtained the appropriate insurance for travel. Please refer to the University's Travel Management agency for advice on this.
- Ensure that you have obtained all necessary VISA or travel documents to allow you to enter a country.
- Further information on entry requirements may be found on the [FCDO country specific](#) webpage. It is strongly recommended to review these during the preparation of your travel itinerary.

¹ <https://www.qub.ac.uk/Research/Governance-ethics-and-integrity/FileStore/Fileupload,961273,en.pdf>

- The University’s Policy on [“Fieldwork in Conflict Zones”](#) provides further information on this, which the researcher is strongly advised to review.

Health

- Review vaccination requirements associated with your destination and incorporate into the planning of your trip. Information regarding health requirements for each country can be found via [National Travel Health Network and Centre \(NaTHNaC\)](#) on the TravelHealthPro website. Other potential resources for vaccination advice include [FitForTravel](#) and the [NHS](#).
- If you suffer from a chronic condition and/or are required to take medication regularly, it is recommended to arrange a medical check-up to ensure that you are fit to travel and guarantee that you have all necessary medication in sufficient quantities to undertake your trip.
- Legal requirements for carrying personal medications across international borders can vary according to both the medication and the location. Please note, this can apply equally to over the counter and prescription medications. Travellers should contact the relevant [embassy or high commission](#) for guidance on this. In addition another possible resource for advice may include the [FCDO country advice](#) webpage. Further advice on travelling with personal medication can be found on [NaTHNaC](#) on the TravelHealthPro website.
- You may wish to consider packing your own first aid kit, which depending on destination, may include such items as sunscreen, anti-diarrhoea medication, insect repellent, antihistamines, dressings, isotonic drinks/tablets, mosquito net, anti-malaria drugs, thermometer or water cleansing tablets.
- Ensure that medical insurance has been considered and obtained where necessary. Information on the University’s Travel Insurance can be located [here](#).
- Ensure that you and your colleagues know the protocol to follow should there be a medical emergency during the trip.
- The University’s policy on [“Fieldwork in Conflict Zones”](#) also provides information on consideration of health prior to travel.

Safety and Security

- It is recommended to review the [FCDO website](#) to determine information regarding such matters as the political stability of the country, local laws and customs and safety and security. If you are travelling a potentially unstable country – even for a short duration it is advised to register your presence with your country’s embassy or consulate.
- Ensure that you are aware of the location of the nearest Embassy or Consulate when you arrive in a destination. For those individuals travelling on UK passports you can find the location of Embassies and Consulates [here](#). For those individuals travelling on Irish passports you can find the location of Embassies [here](#).
- Recommended to sign up to email alerts on [FCDO website](#) regarding your intended destination(s).
- FCDO also provide advice for [LGBTQ+](#) and [female](#) travellers.
- For advice on how to reduce your risk of terrorism whilst abroad please review [FCDO website](#). The UK Counter Terrorism Police have also issued advice on [this](#).
- For travel to those destinations that may require a long haul flight, guidance should be consulted regarding how to minimise risks associated with such travel e.g. deep vein thrombosis. Guidance may be sought from such resources as [FitForTravel](#) and [NHS](#).

- Please note that Queen's has an internal policy on research in conflict zones, "[Fieldwork in Conflict Zones](#)", which the researcher is advised to consult.

Helpful Tips When Travelling Abroad

General Safety & Security

- Take care not to draw attention to yourself by wearing or carrying expensive products e.g. phone, laptop, tablet, watch, clothes, bags etc
- It is useful to take copies – scans or photographs of any essential travel documentation in case of loss or theft e.g. passport, visa, medical certificates, insurance documents, drivers license etc. In addition to retaining a hard copy of these in a secure location during your travels, it can also be useful to email them to an email account that you can access whilst travelling.
- Ensure that you can easily locate contact details relating to any University departments that you may need whilst abroad e.g. insurance.
- Avoid carrying large amounts of cash when you are executing your activities abroad. If essential then consider the use of a money belt. You may also wish to have another more accessible purse/wallet to contain any money for immediate expenses. You may also consider a duplicate wallet/purse containing some small denomination coins and expired/redundant cards may also be useful if approached by a thief whilst out and about.
- Sign up to FCDO live travel updates regarding your location therefore ensuring that you are aware of any crises or political instability that may occur whilst you are there.
- Try to avoid using ATMs in public streets, but rather use them in bank lobbies or shopping centres. Take care to protect your PIN and do not loiter unnecessarily.
- Care should be taken, where possible, to avoid individuals eating or moving around independently when abroad. Where independent travel is required, additional care should be taken.

Travelling By Car

- If you will be driving during your trip, please check if your destination requires an [International Driving Permit](#).
- Familiarise yourself with the local driving laws and any other requirements at your destination e.g. speed limits, alcohol limits, emission stickers, additional equipment (warning triangle, reflective jacket etc), headlight converter stickers, GB sticker etc. Information on this can be found on [Gov.uk](#). Please note, requirements may differ depending on such factors as if a UK vehicle is used abroad
- Information on local driving laws and regulations for different locations can be found on the [FCDO website](#). The [AA](#) also provides some guidance on driving internationally.
- If driving whilst away, be it a hire vehicle or personal/company vehicle ensure that you schedule in breaks to prevent driver fatigue. Conduct a pre-check of the vehicle to ensure the vehicle is in good condition ahead of the journey e.g. tyres, lights, seatbelts, brakes, fuel levels etc.
- Ensure that you are aware of breakdown/recovery contact details during your trip for vehicles that you are driving.
- If using taxi services whilst away ensure that you are using licensed taxi drivers. To provide additional assurance prior to getting into the car take a record/photograph of driver details

e.g. driver name, licence plate etc and share with a colleague/fellow traveller including information regarding destination and expected time of arrival.

- Do not get into a taxi which already has another unknown passenger in it.
- Avoid night driving/travelling if possible.
- In case of hijacking leave sufficient room between your vehicle and the car in front to enable you to drive out if approached by potential hijackers.
- If a car pulls up in front of you forcing you to stop – do not get out of the car and leave the engine on. Once the driver of the blocking vehicle exits their car, reverse your car to get away. Activate your hazard lights and horn continuously to draw attention.
- Always keep doors, windows and sunroofs locked particularly in riskier areas and “stop-go” situations such as traffic lights etc.
- Keep all valuables out of sight in car.
- When conversing with unfamiliar people never fully lower your car window.
- Regarding parking the vehicle, park a well-lit area especially at night time which is close to your destination. In multi-storey car parks reverse your vehicle in to the spot, ensuring it is not beside pillars and is close to the exit, preferably on ground level.
- When you return to your vehicle have your keys ready and check the back seats prior to entry to ensure no intruders in the vehicle.
- If you see an incident or someone tries to flag you down, think carefully before stopping and/or exiting your vehicle. The incident may not be genuine. It may be safer to report the incident via mobile phone or at the next safe public telephone.

Food and Drink

- Check whether local water supplies are safe to drink. If not avoid consuming drinks and foods that may have been washed with water e.g. salads. Avoid ice cubes in your drinks.
- Ahead of travelling, consider any dietary requirements you may have and how you may mitigate the risk for this when abroad.
- Limit intake of alcohol, particularly in hotter climates as this may lead to dehydration. Drink plenty of potable water to keep hydrated.
- If unsure of potable nature of water boil water prior to brushing teeth. If this is not possible consider other options such as disinfectant tablet or bottled water.
- Think carefully before eating street food, particularly if you suffer from allergies or intolerances.
- Never accept gifts or drinks from strangers. Never leave your drink unattended.

Accommodation

- When arranging accommodation, if you have local contacts in the area, ask them to check it out, or check reviews online.
- For accommodation, consider requesting a room between the third and seventh floors. This will prevent easy external access to your room and in the case of an emergency evacuation provides somewhat easy enough egress from the building via stairs. However, please consider your own health and fitness when booking accommodation i.e. flights of stairs to descend. Please note, in some countries floors above the seventh floor may not be accessible by Fire Service ladders.

- Upon arrival at accommodation, check windows and doors to ensure that all lock securely and that in-room phone is working and providing easy access to reception. If the locks are not functionally correctly request another room from reception.
- When securely in the room consider engaging deadbolts or any other door stopper devices that might be fitted.
- Ensure that you familiarise yourself with the nearest fire exit and the route to take in case of any emergency.

Quick General Travel Resources

- [FCDO Foreign Travel Checklist](#)
- [FCDO Travel Abroad Step-by-Step](#)
- [FCDO – What To Do If You Are Affected by A Crisis Overseas](#)