

NPSIA GUIDELINES GRADUATE STUDENT FIELD RESEARCH

If your research involves data gathering and field research, preparation is key to success.

The objective of these guidelines is to support students to prepare for the academic and logistic challenges of field work. They are voluntary/non-binding.

It is the student's responsibility to understand Carleton's policies and procedures for graduate student field research and the risks associated with field work in some settings. We understand that even if students follow this guidance, risk can only be mitigated, not eliminated.

Please consider signing the attestation on the final page of these guidelines. You can submit the attestation to the Administrative Team prior to field travel.

Carleton University's policies and resources related to field research include:

- Research Ethics Board for Faculty of Public and Global Affairs (CUREB-A): <https://carleton.ca/researchethics/cureb-a/>
- Office of Risk Management Field Safety Site: <https://carleton.ca/ehs/field-safety/> Please note the link to the *CU Field Safety Plan* available on this site.
- Preparing for Travel: <https://carleton.ca/ci/preparing-for-travel/outbound-visitors/>
- Field Trip Approval Form: <https://carleton.ca/ehs/wp-content/uploads/sites/12/2022-Fillable-Field-Trip-Planning-and-Approval-Record.pdf>
- International SOS: <https://carleton.ca/riskmanagement/international-sos/>
- Risk Assessment Checklist: <https://carleton.ca/ehs/wp-content/uploads/sites/12/Risk-Assessment-Checklist-for-International-Travel-for-Research-and-Professional-Development.pdf>

ACADEMIC PREPARATION

Student Registration Status

You should be registered as a student at Carleton University while undertaking field research. It is the responsibility of the student to understand their student status and its implications for field research.

Financial Support

Your research planning process should include a budget that calculates the financial cost associated with field research and a realistic plan to secure sufficient funding.

Explore the [awards and bursaries](#) available at Carleton University, as well as opportunities external to Carleton. Work with your supervisor to identify sources of financial support.

If you receive financial support for your field work, ensure that you carefully understand the reporting requirements and any funding constraints **prior** to booking travel.

Ethics Clearance

If your MRE/Thesis/Dissertation includes any research involving human participants, your research approach must be reviewed by the Carleton University Research Ethics Board (CUREB). NPSIA falls under CUREB-A. Further details are available on this website:

<https://carleton.ca/researchethics/cureb-a/>

Please be aware that the process of ethics review is comprehensive and can take time. If you require an ethics review, please incorporate sufficient time for this step as you plan your MRE/Thesis/Dissertation.

Once your ethics clearance has been processed, record the measures outlined by CUREB in an easily accessible format (online google sheet) to ensure quick access to these requirements and ease of compliance.

Data Management Plan

You will need to develop a plan for data gathering, data management, and data interpretation. Please note that the MacOdrum library can support students in creating a [data management plan](#).

Interview Planning

If your research includes interviews, take advantage of your time in the field by being adequately prepared.

- For interviews, you will need to plan for data storage (recording devices), transcription, and its interpretation/ extraction/coding. Software exists to help with these tasks – discuss with your supervisor and consult the Library for guidance on software to help with your interviews.
- Identify and contact participants well in advance of your field visit.
- Using tools like google sheets, develop an online schedule that you can share with your supervisory team. While making this schedule, please make sure that you provide yourself sufficient time between interviews to account for interviews going overtime and for travel between destinations.
- Ensure that you have sufficient time in your schedule for ‘snowball’ interviewees – individuals that are recommended in the field.
- Understand national holidays and cultural/religious practices that may impede interviews on certain days/times (e.g. Friday afternoon).
- Each day, set aside ‘reflection time’ to assess the information gleaned from the interviews, and if it necessary, adjust your questions (in accordance with ethics protocols), interview approach etc.

LOGISTICS

International SOS

Carleton students, faculty, and staff who are travelling or living abroad have free 24/7 access to [International SOS](#), a health and security services firm that offers medical and safety advice, and personal assistance to registrants anywhere in the world almost instantly. Services include pre-trip information, appointments with doctors, financial assistance, legal counsel, support during emergencies, and more. International SOS can also complete a predeparture risk assessment at no additional cost.

To register for an account, you will need the following information:

- Membership number: 27ACAS714670;
- Username: your Carleton email address.
- The International SOS [contact information](#) for your destination and the free [Assistance App](#).

Know Your Destination

Thoroughly research your field location well in advance of your field visit.

- Understand its history.
- Know its culture and the necessary adjustments you must make to adhere to religious or cultural norms (dress, diet, etc.)
- Know the climate and the necessary clothing or other amenities to adapt to climate conditions.
- If you do not speak the language, ensure that you have knowledge of basic phrases or have easy access to translation software (available offline).
- Ensure you are aware of official holidays that might impact on your field research.
- Understand any security concerns and educate yourself on necessary precautions to keep yourself safe (see below).

Understand the Law

You are subject to the laws of the country in which you are undertaking field work. Understand these laws and how they will impact your behaviour.

- Be aware that drugs, including cannabis, are criminalised in many countries.
- Many countries have laws that restrict sexual orientation, gender identity and expression. Be aware of those laws and the implications of violating them.

In some cases, violation of local laws can result in serious penalties ranging from prison time to the death penalty. Canadian consular services officials can provide some assistance, but they cannot override the decisions of local authorities, and if you are detained, they cannot arrange for your release.

Safety and Security

Research in insecure areas carries risks for both you and your research subjects. Be aware of any safety or crime risks and work to mitigate those risks.

The Canadian government provides [travel advice](#) for each country, identifying the risk levels (green - take normal security precautions; yellow – exercise a high degree of caution; orange – avoid non-essential travel; red – avoid all travel). Students should generally not be undertaking field research in ‘red’ zones.

Please note that security conditions can change quickly, and official information may not reflect the situation on the ground. Ensure that you ask your contacts in the field questions about security risks specific to the regions in which you are travelling/planning to travel.

Canadian consular officials are limited in their ability to provide assistance to Canadians travelling or living in insecure areas. Moreover, insurance policies may limit the coverage of benefits in insecure settings. It is the responsibility of students to understand these risks and limitations.

Passport/Visa Requirements

Ensure that your passport will be valid at least six months after your return date to Canada.

Check the immigration requirements to enter the destination country for the purpose of research. You may wish to verify the requirements with the corresponding Embassy/Consulate in Ottawa.

If you require a visa or other entry document for your selected designation, give yourself enough time for that visa to be processed. Even if the visa is available at the border, try and obtain that visa before you travel.

In some locations, it will be necessary to regularly show your identity documents to police or other officials. If this is the case, ensure that you can securely keep your identity documents with you—i.e. protect them from theft.

Physical Health

It is the student's responsibility to ensure adequate health insurance to cover the costs of illness and injury/accidents during your field research. Note some health facilities require upfront payment of any medical costs regardless of insurance policy.

Ensure your vaccinations up to date well in advance of your departure and receive any recommended medications for your travel destination. Travel with any prescription medications (in original containers with the script) and non-prescription medications – such as Imodium, acetaminophen, etc.

Understand food and water safety issues, and take necessary precautions (i.e. to not eat anything that is not peeled, not to drink water/brush teeth with tap water etc.)

If mosquito borne diseases are an issue, travel with mosquito repellent with deet, ensure that you sleep under a mosquito net, and take the recommended anti-malaria prophylaxis. Consider travelling with a malaria test kit. If tick-borne diseases are an issue, ensure that you spray shoes and socks with tick spray.

While students can access [Carleton's health services](#), for some travel locations, it might be beneficial to make an appointment at a dedicated travel clinic.

Mental Health

Field research can impact on your mental health through loneliness, the stress and anxiety of data gathering as well as navigating a new environment, concerns about personal safety, and culture shock.

Culture shock refers to feelings of uncertainty, confusion, or anxiety that people may experience in a new and unfamiliar setting. Culture shock is real and normal. [Field work](#) can expose students to the challenging reality of insecure environments, authoritarian contexts, and extreme poverty and inequality. If you have not had previous experience living or working abroad, you may need to give yourself time to adjust to a new cultural and security environment.

Strategies exist to help protect your mental health while undertaking field research and returning home from the field. These strategies include accessing therapy and counselling as well as peer support networks. [International SOS](#) and [Carleton's Wellness Services](#) can provide students with support, please utilise these resources.

Travel Itinerary

Do not leave accommodation to chance. Book hostels, hotels, or other forms of accommodation well in advance of your travel, using reputable online platforms with security features.

Develop an online, detailed itinerary that includes your travel dates, flight information, hotel bookings. Share this itinerary with family members and your supervisor. This itinerary can be

uploaded into [International SOS](#), so you will receive notifications of any emergency issues in your travel destination.

Communications Plan

Be aware of potential connectivity issues in your country/region of destination, as well as the risk of extensive data charges. Explore the possibilities of using an e-sim for travellers. In advance of travel, develop a communications plan to maintain connectivity with family members and your supervisor.

Field Safety Plan

It is a good practice to develop a [field safety plan](#) and share that with your supervisor and the administrative team at NPSIA, particularly if you are travelling in regions identified by the Canadian government to be 'at risk' locations. This safety plan could be integrated within the Travel itinerary.

A field safety plan should include the following:

- Name and contact details of student.
- Site and Location.
- Information on travel route plan (i.e. how applicant will get to/from field location).
- Name and contact details of Carleton Supervisor.
- Name and contact details of Emergency Contact:
- Name, location, and contact details of closest Health Center:
- Medical/Travel Insurance Contact/Details.
- Identification of Risks and Mitigation Measures, where applicable/

Supervisors can also request students to submit a [Field Trip Planning and Approval Form](#) in advance of their trip.

Travel Registry

Students can register with the online Canadian government [travel registry](#).

Carleton University students and staff are also advised to register in the Carleton University Travel Registry when participating in university related travel outside of Canada.

Instructions:

- Log into your Carleton Central Account.
- Under 'personal information', select the Travel Registry.
- Click on the Add Travel button to initiate an entry.
- Indicate the date that you will be leaving Canada and your expected date of return.
- If you will be travelling to more than one international location, your expected date of return should be the date you will be leaving to go onto your next destination. Note that this does not apply to destinations you visit on connecting flights during your travel.
- Complete a separate entry with the appropriate dates for each leg of your journey.
- Indicate an emergency contact with whom University officials can communicate in the event of an emergency.

Additional Logistics Tips

- Scan identity documents and have them available on your phone or computer. (Useful in the event of theft or loss).

- Carry a folder that includes printed copies of important documents for your trip, including:
 - Identity documents (including passport) and vaccination certificate (including yellow fever if applicable).
 - Copies of itinerary.
 - Emergency contact phone numbers, including consular assistance number of local Canadian office.
- Travel with US \$ in small denominations. Note that some countries only accept new bills and will reject any bills that are torn/worn.
- Do not carry your money all in one location.
- Carry credit cards in RFID blocking wallets/containers.
- Consider purchasing anti-theft bags.
- If travelling to LIC or LMIC, knowledge of how to drive a manual transmission is an asset.
- Buy a power bank to charge phone.
- Travel with key amenities - a flashlight, sanitizing wipes/liquid.
- Travel with enough medication to last for the duration of your trip.

Checklist

Student Registration Status	
Budget	
Understand Grant/Funding Constraints/Reporting Rules	
Ethics Clearance	
Ethics Adherence Checklist	
Passport/Visa Requirements Check	
Health Safety – Vaccines, Medication sufficient for trip etc	
Flights and Accommodation Booked	
Health Insurance Coverage Verified	
International SOS - Registration	
Carleton Travel Registry - Registration	
Travel Itinerary Online and Shared with Supervisor & Family, International SOS	
Field Safety Plan	
Canadian Government Travel Overseas - Registration	
Foreign currency US\$ in small denominations (NB some countries only accept new bills)	

Attestation

Date: _____

Student Name: _____

Student Number: _____

Supervisor: _____

I confirm that I have read the “NPSIA Field Research Guidelines” in advance of my planned field research.

Signature of Student

Signature of Supervisor