

Fieldwork Guidelines/Procedure

As a major tool of social science research, fieldwork can cover a wide range of data gathering activities with various implications, such as conducting interviews, informal observation, or archive research. It may take place abroad in a very different social and political context or in the researcher's own household. Fieldwork studies may last a few weeks or more than a year.

Given the diversity of forms and objectives of fieldwork, the wide range of situations that may be experienced, and outcomes that may be achieved, fieldwork requires very careful planning. This means not only planning travel, but also of how data will be accumulated and handled during the fieldwork and afterwards.

Fieldwork is sometimes a requirement of a programme. Students remain enrolled during their absence from the university campus and liable for tuition fees, if applicable.

Students undertaking fieldwork must follow the procedures outlined below at least **one month BEFORE travelling** in order to ensure that their research and travel are safe, insured and in compliance with the Graduate Institute's policies.

Research Ethics

Students have a responsibility to work safely in the field and to protect their own health and safety while they are in the field, as well as any other people in the fieldwork location.

Students must read the Graduate Institute Research Ethics [Guidelines](#) and [Checklist](#). Both documents are designed to offer guidance to researchers and students of the Institute, to allow them to self-assess whether their research may be ethically sensitive and to take appropriate measures as needed.

Fieldwork plan and procedure

The two forms below must be completed by students, discussed with their supervisor and signed by the student and the supervisor before fieldwork is commenced (even if travel insurance is not required). Save the forms on your computer and open them in Acrobat to fill them:

- [Travel Evaluation Form](#)
- [Full Risk Assessment Form](#) (only for medium and high risk activities/regions)

When completing the Full Risk Assessment Form, the first step is to consider www.planis.net or travel advice from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of your country. These websites detail current travel advice for each country. As for their risk

assessment check-list, students should consider the risks they may encounter and describe the measures they will take to minimise risk, in particular for high risk activities/regions. They should also plan to have contact with their supervisor at least once a month while on fieldwork, and **at least every two weeks** in high-risk destinations or activities.

Travel Insurance

Once the Full Risk Assessment has been signed off by the student's supervisor, the academic adviser, in concert with the Director of Human Resources, will evaluate for medium/high risk destinations and/or activities whether the student should be added to the Institute's travel insurance where they are not already covered by personal insurance.

Contact

All completed travel-related forms should be returned to the concerned Programme Manager (madis@graduateinstitute.ch, mdev-mia@graduateinstitute.ch or secretariatphd@graduateinstitute.ch) **at least 3 weeks before departure**. In case of questions, students should contact their programme manager.

Upon Return

Students must debrief with their supervisor or another professor / researcher / academic staff-member on problems encountered. Medical or psychological support can be organised via the Institute's Student Support Service if needed (email: student.support@graduateinstitute.ch).