

Fieldwork Education Policy

Commencement Date: 30 May, 2008

Category: Students

1. PURPOSE

To provide a framework for maximising achievement of learning outcomes and to ensure a safe and supportive environment during fieldwork education activities and placements for staff and students.

2. APPLICATION

All students and staff of the University undertaking fieldwork education activities associated with a Curtin course, whether in Australia or at an overseas location.

Where an activity such as an excursion, visit or accessing a site is considered fieldwork but does not engage a fieldwork agent some provisions of this policy may not apply.

3. EXCEPTIONS

Nil

4. DEFINITIONS

Curtin Fieldwork Coordinator

Is an academic area staff member responsible for management and coordination of the academic area's fieldwork education program.

Fieldwork Education Partner

Is an agent, contractor, collaborating agency, facility, industry, organisation, school, site or placement provider that provides structured and supervised practical experience for students for the purposes of a qualification awarded by Curtin.

Award Course

Means a structured combination of units approved by the University Academic Board which when completed qualifies the student for an award from Curtin.

Fieldwork Orientation

Is preparation for fieldwork to provide students with essential information on procedures, expectations and requirements to undertake fieldwork activities or placement.

Fieldwork Partner Supervisor

Is a fieldwork education partner or placement provider or agency supervisor, mentor, preceptor, cooperating teacher or non-Curtin staff member responsible for supervising and assessing a student.

International Fieldwork Activity

Is an integral part of a course, required by the University, and includes any approved practical work, teaching, study or research activity conducted outside Australia.

Isolated, Regional or Remote Locations

Means a place separated by time or significant distance from essential emergency and required services such that the location presents a significant increase in risk.

Work Integrated Learning

Programs provide educational opportunities that enable students to combine the theory acquired through

course work into a practical environment or application, resulting in a greater understanding of the nature of the associated industry/field/discipline.

Academic Area

Is any teaching, research or service area at Curtin eg Faculty, School, Department or Centre.

Curtin Fieldwork Supervisor

Is an academic area staff member responsible for supervision and assessment of a fieldwork education activity, placement and/or student.

Fieldwork Education

Is any approved practical work, teaching, study or research activity, usually conducted outside the normal place of University business, required by the University as an integral part of the course.

Placement

Is an integral part of a course, required by the University, and includes any approved practical work, teaching, study or research activity, usually conducted outside the normal place of University business or is a site of student fieldwork practice.

Reasonable Adjustment

Is an action taken that assists a student with a disability to undertake their studies and achieve the learning outcomes on the same basis as students without disabilities. An adjustment is **reasonable** in relation to a student with a disability if it balances the interests of all parties affected. In assessing whether an adjustment to the course is reasonable, Curtin is entitled to maintain the academic requirements of the course, and other requirements or components that are essential.

Student

Is a person who is enrolled in, a unit, course or program of study approved by Curtin, and which leads to, or is capable of leading to, an academic award of the University.

5. POLICY STATEMENT

Fieldwork education is a valued pedagogical activity at Curtin and forms an integral part of many academic programs. Fieldwork education activities are normally conducted in unfamiliar surroundings off-campus and outside of the classroom requiring an appropriate level of preparation and application to ensure that it is conducted safely and with minimal risk to students, staff and fieldwork education partner. The University commits to ensure appropriate preparation for fieldwork education activities, that the management of fieldwork education supports staff, students and fieldwork education partner and is consistent with legislation and relevant Curtin policies, minimum standards and guidelines.

6. PRINCIPLES

The following principles apply to fieldwork education at Curtin:

6.1 Fieldwork activities are incorporated into the curriculum as a practical, integrated learning activity to enhance student achievement of the graduate attributes and employability skills.

6.2 All fieldwork education students and staff will be advised of their responsibilities and relevant Curtin policies and procedures to minimise risks to the health, safety and welfare of all students, staff, fieldwork education partners, clients and others involved in fieldwork education.

6.3 All students must participate in any required planning and orientation or preparation activities and agree to adhere to all University and fieldwork agent's workplace policies and procedures relating to fieldwork education activities.

6.4 Students have a responsibility to work safely in the field, taking reasonable care and practical steps to protect their own health and safety and that of any other participants, staff, clients, visitors and volunteers at the fieldwork.

6.5 Staff involved in coordinating, supervising and assessing students undertaking fieldwork education will be provided with appropriate support and resources.

6.6 Where fieldwork education partners are involved in fieldwork education activities, they will be made aware of and agree to their responsibilities.

6.7 Students will be informed at the outset of the course of the inherent requirements of fieldwork education including when it is the student's responsibility to find a suitable fieldwork activity or placement and any costs. Such requirements will be stated in the course requirements.

6.8 Types of Fieldwork

6.8.1 Fieldwork education includes but is not limited to units which require clinical or practical work placements or activities; participation in laboratories; plant visits; industrial premises or site visits; practicums; study tours; field trips; work experience; service industry placements; isolated and remote fieldwork camps and/or excursions and international field trips/placements.

6.8.2 To satisfy professional requirements, some students may be required to complete a specified period of time in approved work experience associated with the specific industry during the period that the student is undertaking studies (eg during vacation or in employment as a part-time student).

6.8.3 Fieldwork education does not include; voluntary and leisure activities; some paid work experience; and some work experience and site visits that are not part of an award course.

6.9 Isolated, Regional, Remote and International Fieldwork Education

6.9.1 Students undertaking approved fieldwork education activities in isolated, regional remote or international locations must complete the appropriate orientation or preparation and meet relevant fitness standards for the activity, as required by the academic area.

6.10 Legislative Requirements

6.10.1 All students and staff undertaking fieldwork education activities will be required to comply with relevant legislative requirements. Such requirements may relate but are not limited to, occupational safety and health, criminal record screening, working with children checks, equal opportunity and anti-discrimination provisions, health and immunisation screening checks, disability provisions, and privacy.

6.11 Agreements and Contracts

6.11.1 Where there is a fieldwork education partner involved in a fieldwork education activity an agreement or contract will be entered into between the University and the fieldwork education partner.

6.12 Code of Conduct

6.12.1 Students are responsible for ensuring that their conduct during fieldwork education meets with the specified professional ethics, standards and/or Code of Conduct for the fieldwork activity and complies with Curtin Guiding Ethical Principles and the Student Charter at all times.

6.12.2 Each Curtin academic or service area will advise students of the relevant professional standards or codes of conduct that outline acceptable levels of professional and personal behaviour during the fieldwork education activity. Students may also be required to meet the professional standards of the fieldwork education partner or fieldwork activity site.

6.13 Student Preparation and Fieldwork Inclusion

6.13.1 Fieldwork education orientation or preparation will be conducted for each fieldwork activity to ensure that all participants and staff are informed about that activity. Information should include but is not limited to specific information about the activity; information about hazards and possible risks and how to avoid or minimise the risks; organisational or logistical matters; insurance cover; fieldwork emergency procedures.

6.13.2 If a fieldwork education partner requires completion of their own workplace orientation, students must complete this preparation in addition to Curtin's fieldwork preparation.

6.13.3 In order to participate in fieldwork education activities or placements each student must

meet the following criteria:

6.13.3.1 be enrolled in the relevant fieldwork unit or admitted to a Curtin award course;
6.13.3.2 have passed all pre-requisite or co-requisite unit and/or requirements;
6.13.3.3 have completed all critical components of any required screening and health checks;
6.13.3.4 be mentally, medically, physically and personally fit and free from communicable disease to meet the inherent requirements of the tasks required for the Fieldwork activity unless reasonable adjustments have been sought, approved and provided;

6.13.4 demonstrate a reasonable level of professionalism before, during and after the fieldwork activity or placement;

6.13.5 completed the mandatory fieldwork orientation or preparation sessions as required by the academic area and fieldwork education partner prior to commencement of the fieldwork activity;

6.13.6 be available to undertake any required mandatory fieldwork hours.

6.14 Fieldwork Exclusion

6.14.1 A student may be refused participation in a fieldwork education activity or placement and as a result may be unable to complete the unit or course requirements. Exclusion will apply to a student who;

6.14.1.1 cannot demonstrate the appropriate pre-requisite knowledge, skills or behaviour; or
6.14.1.2 cannot demonstrate the specified fitness requirements to undertake the required fieldwork activity with appropriate agreed reasonable adjustments; or
6.14.1.3 does not complete a required the fieldwork orientation or preparation; or
6.14.1.4 refuses to undertake the required screening checks or does not have the appropriate screening checks or certificates; or
6.14.1.5 is in breach of a relevant Code of Conduct during the fieldwork education activity.

6.14.2 A student who has a pre-existing medical condition which affects the student's functioning for the tasks required during the fieldwork education activity may be excluded from that activity if there is a risk to the health and safety of the student or others.

6.14.3 The Exclusion of Students from Clinical and Practical Placements section of the Assessment Policy applies in relation to students and fieldwork education activities and placements.

6.15 Confidentiality, Privacy and Disclosure

6.15.1 Students will be required to sign a statement of confidentiality to meet the requirements of the University and/or the fieldwork education partner, where relevant.

6.15.2 Curtin voluntarily commits to meet the standards set by the Information Privacy Principles of the Privacy Act 1988 (Commonwealth). Personal information disclosed by a student will not normally be communicated to other Curtin staff or fieldwork education partner without the student's consent. There may be some exceptions if disclosure is required by law or is deemed necessary in the interest of public safety or the student's own safety.

6.15.3 The outcome of a student's previous fieldwork education activity or placement assessment may be disclosed to a subsequent fieldwork education agent for the purpose of informing and guiding the future development of the student.

6.15.4 Students will be encouraged to disclose any disability, medical or other condition that may affect their capacity to successfully carry out fieldwork education activities. This

disclosure should be made at the time the fieldwork placement is being planned, or subsequently when the fieldwork activity is in progress if the student finds that his/her capacity is affected.

6.15.5 Students must disclose to the University any disability, medical or other condition if they are seeking a 'reasonable adjustment' in a fieldwork education activity or placement. Students must also provide appropriate supporting documentation regarding the reasonable adjustment during the planning process for the fieldwork activity prior to fieldwork education activities commencing or, if fieldwork has commenced, as soon as the situation arises.

6.15.6 Disclosure of pre-existing medical or other conditions that may impact on a student's participation in fieldwork education activities will be required for insurance coverage purposes.

6.16 Students with a Disability or Medical Condition

6.16.1 The University is committed to providing equitable access for students with disabilities and medical conditions as outlined in its Disability Access and Inclusion Plan. The University is liable for the acts of its agents (ie fieldwork education partner) in upholding the principles of the Disability Access and Inclusion Plan.

6.16.2 It is the University's responsibility to inform fieldwork education partners about its Disability Access and Inclusion Plan and to inform them about the Disability Services Commission's reporting requirements.

6.16.3 It is the University's responsibility to make 'reasonable adjustments' for students with a disability or medical condition to undertake fieldwork education activities. This includes ensuring that appropriate adjustments are arranged by fieldwork education partners. Confidential disclosure of a disability or medical condition to the University is required to action this (see Confidentiality, Privacy and Disclosure section).

6.16.4 Where it is not possible for a student to participate in fieldwork education activities because of a disability or medical condition, the University will endeavour to provide alternative experiences that will allow for the learning outcomes of the unit or course to be met. It is understood that students must meet the inherent requirements of fieldwork activities and placements and in some situations suitable alternatives may not be available. In some circumstances this may mean that students are unable to meet accreditation or registration standards for practice in that discipline.

6.17 Fieldwork Education Guidelines and Procedures

6.17.1 Each academic area is responsible for preparing, maintaining and providing clear guidelines to students, staff and fieldwork education partners.

6.18 Student Acknowledgment of Fieldwork Preparation

6.18.1 Prior to commencing a fieldwork education activity, students may be required to complete and sign a form providing essential personal information and acknowledging that they are aware of or have been provided with essential information relating to the fieldwork activity.

6.19 Screening Checks and Certificates

6.19.1 Students, in most instances, will be required to provide screening checks and/or certificates with a result consistent with the fieldwork education activity requirements and in order to meet legislative requirements prior to commencing fieldwork education activities.

6.19.2 Students are required to follow relevant medical advice concerning the avoidance of health risk and provide evidence of any required level of immunisation.

6.20 Insurance

6.20.1 Students are covered by the University's insurance policies for approved fieldwork education activities. Information on insurance provisions shall be provided to all parties prior to commencing the fieldwork education activity.

6.21 Notifiable Incidents

6.21.1 Any incident that arises during a fieldwork education activity which may cause an immediate and significant risk to a person (not necessarily an injury) must be reported to both the fieldwork education partner and to the academic area representative responsible for the activity. Guidelines for the management of such instances will be provided to students, staff and the fieldwork education partner prior to the undertaking of a fieldwork activity.

6.22 Student Withdrawals from Fieldwork

6.22.1 A student may only withdraw from a fieldwork education activity and undertake the fieldwork activity at a later time where this is due to exceptional circumstances outside their control. Approval must be sought for withdrawal prior to ceasing the fieldwork activity. All withdrawals must be approved by the relevant academic area. A student will not be permitted to withdraw from a fieldwork activity or placement simply to avoid failing the placement. The Assessment Policy applies.

7. LIST OF SCHEDULES

[Schedule A - Relevant Legislation and Curtin Policy and Procedures](#)

RESPONSIBILITIES	
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Approval Authority	Academic Board
Review Date	01-Nov-2010

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