

Site Fieldwork Policy and Guidelines

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| Approved by | Academic Board |
| Approval date | 24/04/2023 |
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| Date for Review | 2028 |
| Responsible Officer(s) and Committee(s) | Director of Academic Strategy Discipline Coordinators Committee |
| Related documents | Accreditation of Academic Faculty Policy and Procedures Course Unit Booklet Policy Course Unit Booklet Verification Process Fieldwork Agreements template (sample attached) |
| Higher Education Standards (2021) | 2.1 Facilities and Infrastructure 2.3 Wellbeing and Safety 2.4 Student Grievances and Complaints 5.4 Delivery with Other Parties |
| National Code (2018) | Standard 2 Recruitment of an Overseas Student (2.1.2) Standard 3 Formalisation of enrolment/written agreements (3.3.1) Standard 6 Overseas Student Support Services (6.1.9, 6.3) |

1. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to demonstrate Sydney College of Divinity values authentic learning and is committed to developing graduate capabilities through field-based opportunities. This is particularly important for units where cross-cultural experience and/or site tours of historical/religious significance are integral to the learning outcomes. In such cases, field-based units support the provision of authentic learning in a variety of settings which enable students to develop and maximise their graduate capabilities and potential employability.

2. Scope

This policy demonstrates SCD has accredited fieldwork units within various courses that allow students to engage in an immersive learning experience. This may involve visiting:

- Overseas sites that are relevant to the biblical world (eg Old Testament sites, New Testament sites);

- Overseas sites that are relevant to the history of the Church and its theology (eg Patristic sites, Reformation sites);
- Overseas or local sites that are relevant to a mission or ministry based practicum;
- Overseas or local sites that are relevant to a major research project (eg involvement as team members on an archaeological dig relevant to the biblical world);
- Other overseas or local sites that have intrinsic academic value as a part of the programs of the College (as approved by the Academic Board).

Roles of the Teaching Body/Member Institution

| Prior to Field Experience | During Field Experience | After Field Experience |
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| Explain expectations, establish learning goals and assessments, and familiarise with fieldwork protocols | Assist students to make sense of the field experience | Debrief with students and help reflect critically on their learning in the field experience, including summary instruction and evaluation |
| Prepare students for placement through orientation, pre-briefings, and guided instruction, reading and research | Assist students to deal with tensions, difficulties, cultural and health issues, including any placement related conflict | Assist the student with final assessment tasks and integrating the field component with unit outcomes |
| Ensure student's travel, insurance and medical requirements are up-to-date prior to departure | Provide regular guidance to assist students to connect their learning objectives with the field practices | Evaluate the learning experience for future students |
| Assist students to complete any specific Fieldwork Partner requirements | Guide and support students in ethical behaviour | |

3. Definitions

The Policy Document Glossary applies to this policy.

4. Statements and Objectives

Principles of Fieldwork

- Field-based activities are incorporated into the curriculum as a practical, integrated learning activity to enhance student achievement of desired graduate attributes and employability skills.
- Students are advised of their responsibilities and relevant college policies and procedures to minimise risks to health, safety and welfare of all stakeholders involved in field placements.
- Students and staff must participate in all planning, orientation and preparation activities as required prior to departure.

- Students and staff have a responsibility to work safely in the field, taking reasonable care and practical steps to ensure the safety and wellbeing of themselves and all others among whom they work in the field.
- Fieldwork Partnerships are arranged to ensure suitable and timely access to specific cultural guidance and supervision before and during the site visit.
- Students and staff must abide by all legitimate instructions given by the Fieldwork Partners.
- Fieldwork agreements, which outline the roles and responsibilities of all parties, are negotiated with Fieldwork Partners.

Students are informed at the outset of the unit of any fieldwork requirements, including costs, travel dates and conditions, and cultural and academic requirements during the placement period.

Integration of Fieldwork with Learning Outcomes and Assessment Profiles

Fieldwork units will include a rationale and a detailed outline showing how the field experience is integrated with the learning outcomes and the assessment requirements for each approved unit. This outline will be approved by the relevant Discipline Coordinator prior to offering the unit.

Regulations

1. Students

- a. Students must be a bona fide student formally enrolled in an accredited course of the Sydney College of Divinity or in a comparable course in another institution and be enrolled as an SCD Cross-Institutional student.
- b. Students enrolled in a fieldwork unit must attend an Information Meeting conducted by the Teaching Body well before departure, which will include all enrolled students, participating faculty and, where relevant, a representative of the travel company involved.
- c. Students enrolled in a fieldwork unit must receive preliminary instruction and guided readings relevant to the issues to be encountered and submit a specified assignment before the travel commences, and complete further assignment tasks during and following the field placement as outlined in the Course Unit Booklet.
- d. Students enrolled in a fieldwork unit must meet all organisational requirements of the Fieldwork Information Booklet provided by the Teaching Body.

2. Faculty

- a. The Teaching Body must appoint an appropriately qualified faculty member to coordinate the unit and allocate sufficient staff to ensure the efficient and safe conduct of the learning experience and the academic integrity of the unit.
- b. As well as having distributed the Course Unit Booklet at the usual time at the beginning of the unit, the unit coordinator is responsible for ensuring the construction and distribution of the Information Booklet well in advance of the site visit.

3. *Documentation*

- 3.1. A comprehensive Fieldwork Information Booklet must be distributed to all tour participants (students and faculty) well before departure, including at least the following:
 - a. All travel details and costs involved;
 - b. A full itinerary of the site visit, including details and key features of sites to be visited and relevant contact details at the sites;
 - c. A full list of participating staff and any other personnel and their respective responsibilities.
 - d. Full details of any government requirements pertinent to the travel arrangements.

- 3.2. A clear and comprehensive Course Unit Booklet must be distributed to all unit participants (students and faculty) at the beginning of the unit, in compliance with the SCD CUB requirements.

4. *Specific FEE-HELP Regulations:*

- a. All transport, accommodation and meals are to be charged to students directly as incidental fees, and cannot be charged in the tuition fee. Only tuition-related activities can be deferred on a student's FEE-HELP loan. Any non-compulsory activity (such as optional sightseeing) cannot be allocated as tuition fees. Any experience a student could arrange independently of the group, even if it involves the same learning experience, cannot be charged in tuition fees.
- b. Notwithstanding the guidelines within this policy, Teaching Bodies are to ensure the application of FEE-HELP complies at all times with the latest regulation updates of the Department of Education and Training.

Part B: Guidelines

In conducting a fieldwork unit, the Teaching Body should take all necessary steps to ensure the safe and ethical conduct of the whole unit. These Guidelines detail some important processes that will help to attain that end.

- a. The Teaching Body should investigate, with all due diligence and in a timely manner, the government requirements regarding costing, travel companies, travel and accommodation, as well as the public reputation and reliability of the travel company involved, with special regard to its personnel, travel delivery, and its financial, pedagogical and safety record.
- b. The Teaching Body should advertise the details of travel beforehand with a brochure articulating the itinerary/dates of sites to be visited, the costs involved, the travel company and other relevant travel details.
- c. The Teaching Body should provide students well before departure accurate details regarding passports, currency, special equipment needs, and instructions regarding medical, health or safety issues, as well as clear instruction concerning special cultural sensitivities.
- d. The Teaching Body should ensure it has full contact details of family or other emergency contact people for all participating students and staff.

- e. The Teaching Body may extend the learning experience to non-students, provided that such participants pay for the travel independently, meet all the requirements of the travel organisation, and do not divert staff from their primary pedagogical and pastoral oversight of the students.
- f. The Teaching Body must conduct a risk assessment and have a risk management plan that recognises the guidelines and advice of the Department of Foreign Affairs.
- g. The Teaching Body is responsible for the financial management of the field experience. Any cost of financing the cash flow of a fieldwork unit is a cost and risk to the Teaching Body, not the SCD.
- h. The Teaching Body should ensure all marketing is conducted in accordance with the ethical framework of the SCD.

5. Related Procedures and Forms

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| Guidelines | |
| Appendix A | Examples of Integration Outline |

Appendix A: Examples of Integration Outline

M5128/M7228/M8128: Cross-Cultural Fieldwork

Rationale

This suite of units is provided to enable students to undertake an in situ experience of cross-cultural mission as a practical study of the significance of inter-cultural issues in a living and dynamic situation. The international fieldwork placement is an integral component of providing that in situ experience.

Fieldwork Integration: M8128 Learning Outcomes and Assessment Profile

| Learning Outcome | Fieldwork Examples |
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| Analyse key issues involved in a specific cross-cultural ministry | Actively participates in and gains direct knowledge of Fieldwork Partner's ministry and local engagement challenges |
| Assess the relative importance of various cultural issues in terms of the interrelationships of culture and gospel within that culture | Gains first-hand experience and direct understanding of the role and importance that contextualisation plays in communicating the gospel as the gospel is actualised in a community setting different from their customary community Experiences and learns to evaluate the validity of cultural distinctives through personal relationships Can reflect first-hand on how specific cultural perspectives impact gospel acceptance in specific practices |
| Analyse cultural elements in their own formation and propose adjustments needed for effectual cross-cultural ministry | Reflect critically through personal experience and field relationships on how their own cultural presuppositions have at once shaped and limited their understanding of the gospel Will be able to identify how their own enculturation can promote gospel acceptance |
| Initiate effective personal engagement in a range of cross-cultural ministry experiences with limited supervision | Provides multiple opportunities in a safe supervised environment to engage personally in real and dynamic cross-cultural contexts |
| Apply insights gained from the field experience to an actual or projected personal program in cross-cultural ministry | Reflecting critically on this outcome in-country will ground future projected programs in real-world contexts |

M8128 Engaging in Inter-Cultural Ministry: Assessment Profile

Preparatory Assignment (pre-departure)

Review a variety of literature (at least 6 items) dealing with the cultural elements involved in the communication of the gospel. This will include class notes, secondary works and primary sources relevant to the culture in which the fieldwork is to be undertaken.

Your review will include the following:

- Identify components of the gospel that are essential to all cultures
- Describe some general means of communicating these elements in your own culture and, as far as you can ascertain, in the culture you plan to visit
- Identify some fundamental principles of communication that operate in both cultures
- Evaluate the strengths and/or weaknesses of the use of some specific distinctive cultural means of communicating the gospel in the two cultures
- Suggest possible means for effective communication of the gospel that you would like to test in the field.

Practical Fieldwork (in the field)

In conjunction with your Field Supervisor, construct a program of practical ministry functions for your implementation in the local culture.

Under appropriate supervision, conduct a range of ministry functions, to include 2 or more different functions in 2 or more different settings. These functions may include areas where you have worked at home which will need cultural adaptation or completely new areas of work required in the local culture.

Throughout the fieldwork experience, ensure regular critical feedback sessions with your supervisor or other resource person(s).

At the conclusion of your field placement, construct an evaluative report on the practical experience, which will include observations from your supervisor and projections for your ongoing ministry.

Critical Reflection (during and following placement)

During your field placement, maintain a critical reflective journal of your Fieldwork experience. This journal will be not just a diary of places and events, but a thoughtful record of how specific cultural elements have featured in the communication of the gospel.

Reflection on this should include the impact of such features on the shaping of the gospel message, the impact on the recipients, and the impact on yourself.

It should include an account of what expectations and plans you had at the outset, how your plans worked out or were adapted, the measure of their success, and what change you would make to your ministry as a result.

Your journal should contain regular entries, in proportion to the length of your placement, as arranged prior to departure for the field.

While your journal will remain private, you will be required to present a comprehensive report based on the journal record which, in conjunction with your Field Supervisor's Report, will serve as your final item of assessment.

H5194/H7294/H8194: Holy Land Fieldwork

Rationale

The suite of fieldwork units aims to provide candidates with the opportunity to spend a significant period in one or more remote locations relevant to the biblical, theological, historical or ministry narrative of theological texts and/or movements, in order to appreciate and communicate more fully the impact of such locations on the interpretation of those narratives.

The specific location for one such engagement with these units is the Holy Land including Egypt and Jordan. A period of fieldwork at historical sites of the Holy Land enables students to gain first-hand direct knowledge of the geographic, climatic and cultural features that have influenced both the biblical historical narrative and the ongoing history of the peoples of that land.

Fieldwork Integration: H8194 Learning Outcomes and Assessment Profile

| Learning Outcome | Fieldwork Examples |
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| <p>Analyse key contextual features which have contributed to the field under study.</p> | <p>Visits to geographically significant sites (Sea of Galilee, Jerusalem, Bethlehem, Mount Carmel) develop a deep insight into specific ways in which geography has influenced the biblical historical narrative.</p> <p>Opportunity to view historical local maps of Holy Land helps to inform students of early Christian world view of Holy Land</p> |
| <p>Assess the relative importance of various local historical, geographical or cultural features in terms of their positive or negative contribution to the particular narrative within the field under study</p> | <p>The intense connection of spiritual pilgrimage with specific historical sites develops students' understanding of spiritual development during Old Testament, New Testament and Crusades eras.</p> <p>Direct observation and analysis of significant replica sites (e.g. Tabernacle) enables students to assess the particular cultural and historically determined features of ancient biblical worship and their continuing significance in modern history.</p> |
| <p>Critically analyse a specific topic within the field under study in terms of its local origin and its subsequent broader development</p> | <p>Analysis of current historical issues is enhanced through direct personal experience of and exposure to key biblical areas and contemporary cultural expressions not otherwise obtainable without fieldwork immersion</p> |
| <p>Reflect on the impact of the travel experience on their personal development and theological and/or ministry understanding within the field under study</p> | <p>Structured personal immersion in historical locations and contexts deepens the students' personal and critical reflection on specific biblical and contemporary narratives for both theological and ministry implications.</p> |
| <p>Produce a presentation depicting the connection between the location visited and the narrative within the field under study, with a focus on an application to contemporary theological understanding and/or practice</p> | <p>Intimately informed presentations enable the students to distil the crucial understandings of such a personally enriching experience and to establish meaningful projections for themselves and others in their theology and ministry</p> |

H8194 Holy Land Fieldwork: Assessment Profile

Preparatory Assignment (pre-departure)

Review a variety of literature (at least 6 items) dealing with the distinctive elements that have influenced the history of the land(s) to be visited. This will include class notes, secondary works and primary sources relevant to the biblical and post-biblical historical development of the region.

Your review will include the following:

- A summary timeline of principal historical events
- A summary description of significant sites, geographical features, and cultural developments that have been influential in the history of the region
- An evaluation of the positive and/or negative impact of some of these features on the historical development of the region
- An indication of the field experiences that you plan/would like to undertake in the land
- Personal expectations of discovery, anticipated confirmation or potential revision of currently held views resulting from the field experience.

Practical and Reflective Fieldwork (in the field)

In conjunction with your Field Supervisor, construct and undertake a program of 60 hours of field investigation of sites to inspect, people to meet and to interview, cultural experiences to explore, and historical events to analyse in the field. These encounters should all focus on gaining a deeper appreciation of the historical dynamics that have operated throughout the centuries and an understanding of the current historical situation of the region.

You should maintain a critical reflective journal of your Fieldwork experience. This journal will be not just a diary of places and events, but a thoughtful record of the historical inquiry that has been conducted and the results of that inquiry. It will include evaluative commentary on the contribution of holy sites, local geography, politics, and traditions of the region to the shaping of its historical development. The journal should include an account of what general expectations you had at the outset, what specific expected and/or unexpected historical insights you developed during the field experience, and what effect this experience will have on your ongoing historical perspective on the region.

While your journal will remain private, you will be required to present a comprehensive report of your historical learning based on the journal record.

Presentation (following placement)

Produce a presentation item (essay, portfolio, group presentation, etc) that provides new understanding and critical insights derived from the field experience. The presentation should be an integration of your previous literature review (item 1 above) and your comprehensive report (item 2 above). While providing details of the field experience itself, the presentation should aim at informing an audience who did not participate in the field experience, with a particular focus on the way in which these new historical insights may shape a contemporary perspective of the Holy Land.