



National  
Guidance  
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## Field Studies

In this document, Field Studies means off-site visits whose purpose is to investigate an area of study in an outdoor environment.

Field Studies are powerful learning experiences which can bring an academic subject to life. They are traditionally associated with subjects such as natural sciences or history, but the power of the real-world environment can be used to enhance learning in all areas of study.

Field Studies should be managed within the same general policies and guidance as all outdoor learning and off-site visits. The starting point is to ensure that there is competent and effective leadership and management. See OEAP National Guidance document [4.2e "Leadership and Management"](#).

There are some generic considerations relevant to many types of Field Studies. These include:

- the need for leaders to be competent to both teach and supervise groups safely in the chosen terrain;
- the weather and time of year, including the consequences for clothing requirements, underfoot conditions and available daylight – see OEAP National Guidance document [7j "Weather and Group Safety"](#);
- specialist equipment (e.g., waterproofs, rucksacks, helmets, maps, compass, scientific equipment);
- training in field study techniques for staff and participants;
- data recording (e.g., written, photos & video, digital);
- First Aid provision appropriate to the environment – see OEAP National Guidance document [4.4b "First Aid"](#).

Any activity involving remote supervision (as when participants operate in small sub-groups without direct supervision) requires appropriate management. See OEAP National Guidance document [4.2a "Group Management and Supervision"](#).

Field Studies in a school context are subject to the same charging regulations as any other school activity. See OEAP National Guidance document [3.2c "Charging for School Activities"](#).

If an external provider, such as a Field Studies centre, is to be used, see the following OEAP National Guidance documents:

- [4.4g "Selecting External Providers and Facilities"](#)
- [4.4h "Using External Providers"](#)

## Environmental Considerations

### Urban Environments

These are likely to involve interaction with road traffic and with members of the public. Consider road safety and child protection.

### Water

Studies on or near water should take into account the particular hazards involved. There must be sufficient competence within the leadership team to deal with unforeseen emergencies. See OEAP National Guidance document [7i "Group Safety at Water Margins"](#).

Studies using water activities such as canoeing should be regarded as adventure activities and managed appropriately – see OEAP National Guidance document [7a "Adventure Activities"](#).

Coastal studies are likely to involve hazardous environments such as cliffs, beaches and rock platforms subject to tidal changes and wave action. Leaders must understand the effect of the tide in the area and the likely effect of tide and weather on sea state and access to escape routes.

Planning for river studies should take into account likely water levels and the possibility of rapid changes in those levels, including flash flooding. Leaders should also consider flow rates, depth, water quality and water temperature.

### Moorland, Mountain and other Remote or Hazardous Environments

If the study involves operating in a remote environment (e.g. moorland more than 30 minutes' walk away from an access point) or a hazardous environment (e.g. mountains, quarries, cliffs) it should be regarded as an adventure activity and managed appropriately – see OEAP National Guidance document [7a "Adventure Activities"](#).

### Agricultural Environments

Studies in agricultural environments may involve safety issues including those associated with farm machinery, chemicals and livestock. It is particularly important to manage the risk of infections such as e-coli. See OEAP National Guidance document [7g "Farm Visits"](#).

### Overseas Visits

For a study overseas, see OEAP National Guidance document [7r "Overseas Visits"](#).

If the study is taking place in countries or locations remote from the accepted standards of safety and health that prevail in the UK (e.g. developing countries or remote areas of some developed countries), or in challenging environments (e.g. rain forest, tundra, boreal forest, alpine environments, desert or glacial terrain), see OEAP National Guidance document [7q "Overseas Expeditions"](#).

## Resources

The Field Studies Council publishes a range of field studies guides, which are available at [www.field-studies-council.org/product-category/publications](http://www.field-studies-council.org/product-category/publications).

