What do I need to do to get approval for off-campus fieldwork (collections) under the MQ COVIDSafe Plan for Research?

What is considered off-campus non-human research fieldwork?

- Research that is off-campus at cultural or collecting institutions such as archives, museums, libraries or galleries that does not involve human subjects but will involve face to face interactions with curators, librarians, archivists or other staff or users of the institution. It may involve a team, collaborators or research students but will usually be undertaken by a single researcher.

What do I need to know before planning?

- Contact your Department Manager to discuss your plans well in advance.
- All applications are to be submitted at least 2 weeks before within-NSW fieldwork, and up to 4 weeks before interstate fieldwork. Applications without due notice will be delayed.
- Submission of documents does not mean approval.
- You must await notification of approval before making any arrangements to travel or conduct fieldwork.
- If approvals are not in place, you cannot go to the field.
- The Absence on Duty (AoD) systems act as the record keeping hub. All documents need to be attached in those systems.

What is the process I need to follow?

1) Researcher/HDR student to complete a Detailed COVIDSafe travel plan, COVIDSafe emergency response plan and a statement that the researcher and any accompanying team members will adhere to the requirements of the MQ COVIDSafe plan for research and the COVIDSafe plans of the institution visited.
2) Attach the above plans to a ‘normal’ Absence on Duty (AoD) request.
3) The Department Manager and Head of Department will consider your application. Review and make any amendments as requested by them in the AoD system and resubmit.
4) Once Department Manager and Head of Department are satisfied with the application, they will send it to the Faculty to obtain relevant approvals (to fse.execdean@mq.edu.au). Note to researchers and HDR students – do not send applications direct to Faculty. Your Department Manager is your contact.
5) Once fieldwork approval is obtained from the relevant approver (see below), your Department Manager will be notified and they will approve your Absence on Duty (AoD) and you will receive an email notification of approval.
6) Only with this approval in place can fieldwork be considered approved.

What Phase are we in and what approvals are needed?

For fieldwork within NSW
- Use Phase 2 of the fieldwork (collections) COVIDSafe Plan for Research (copied below).
- Approval required by the Associate Dean Research/Executive Dean, or depending on the trip, approval from the Vice-Chancellor may be needed.
- Researcher/HDR student to await email notification from the AoD system.

For interstate fieldwork
- Use Phase 3 of the fieldwork (collections) COVIDSafe Plan for Research (copied below).
- Approval required by the Vice-Chancellor. Currently, interstate research fieldwork (collections) is not being approved except in exceptional circumstances.
- Researcher/HDR student to await email notification from the AoD system.

For international fieldwork
- International travel is currently prohibited and is not being approved.
Phase 2 - fieldwork is limited to routine, within NSW fieldwork

-Capacity
- Travel is limited to the institutions you will visit.
- The number of researchers should be minimised to essential researchers only with consideration as to how interactions may be completed with physical distancing or staggered over different periods of time.
- Travel by car is recommended if safe and practical to do so. If travelling by car, consider a maximum of 2 people in one large vehicle. As a guideline, a large vehicle is at least the size of a Toyota Hilux. Use social distancing as much as possible (e.g., 1 passenger in backseat). If there are more than two researchers in the team, source additional vehicles. Managers may consider the use of large hire cars or personal vehicles for travel in line with existing approval processes.
- Public transport and air travel are to be avoided.
- Researchers should discuss the requirements of their research with their supervisors before undertaking research with non-Macquarie personnel (e.g., volunteers, collaborators).
- Research in off campus collections to be abandoned if any researcher experiences symptoms of COVID-19. Researcher and any team to be tested for COVID-19.
- In the case of all travel other than short trips to local collections, a detailed **COVIDSafe travel plan** must be provided that outlines stopping locations and how social distancing will be maintained. This includes passengers and journey stops (e.g., fuel stops, meal breaks, toilet breaks). For trips longer than 2 hours one-way, all drivers are to take a break after 2 hours as per 'normal' practice. This travel plan is to be submitted as an additional document for AOD requests.
- Any **COVIDSafe emergency response plans** established by the institutions at which research will be undertaken should be consulted in advance and observed in the case of incident. Where available, these should be submitted as an additional document in AOD requests. Researchers must also document the following: The distance to the nearest medical facility that could support them or a team member with COVID symptoms. The mode of transportation of the person to the nearest medical facility. How will they respond if Government guidelines and restrictions change or an area is placed in lockdown? If there are no nearby medical facilities, what other emergency evacuation plans will be activated?

-Access
- COVIDSafe research in off campus collections to be approved by Executive Deans. This is in addition to AOD and MQ travel approvals as per 'normal' procedure.
- Minimise the number of days in the collection to that which is essential and necessary to complete the research.
- Comply with institutional limits on the number of users at any one time, and any other Covid Safety Plans in place at the institution.
- Avoid travel to communities and zones deemed high risk due to high numbers / clusters of COVID-19 cases refer to zone maps on NSW Health website. Where practical, avoid travel between high and low risk zones.
- Reduce interactions with institutional staff and other users to that which is necessary, where possible pre-arranging access via electronic means and practice physical distancing while onsite.
- Where possible, meals to be bought from home to reduce contact with the public and public spaces.
- If an overnight trip is approved, limit the use of large turnover accommodation such as motels. Separate rooms for all team members (e.g., avoid communal hostels, bunkhouses, bathrooms, kitchens).
All COVID-19 restrictions guidelines and approvals carried on person at all times.
All researchers should be recommended (but not required) to download and use the Australian Government’s COVIDSafe App to assist with contact tracing if required.

-Hygiene
Activities should comply with physical distancing wherever possible and with physical distancing regulations enforced by institutions.
Do not share work equipment (e.g., magnifying glasses, cameras, rulers, pencils, computers).
No more than one team member should work with or on an object (manuscript, artefact, archival record) at any one time and in any single session.
Activities should comply with hygiene measures for objects enforced by institutions (e.g., single users only, use of gloves, quarantine period between users).
Any equipment to be used must be cleaned and disinfected by the users before and after use (before leaving University, during fieldwork, upon return).
Sufficient PPE, disinfectant and cleaning products as appropriate should be made available before and after the off-campus research, and carried and used regularly while on it
Rigorous personal hygiene practices must be implemented multiple times a day and particularly before and after any essential journey stops (e.g., meal and rest stops)
Reduce interactions with the public. Where contact is required en route, extra precautions should be taken including: wearing disposable gloves while handling fuel pump and paying (gloves will be disposed of immediately after).
Where contact is required in the institution, extra precautions should be taken including the wearing of masks and maintenance of physical distancing.

-Training
Department and/or Faculty Fieldwork Managers should develop and provide COVIDSafe-consistent training to all researchers (staff and postgraduates) on the use of PPE and cleaning of equipment.
Department and/or Faculty Fieldwork Managers should develop and provide COVIDSafe-consistent training/induction protocols. New researchers should receive this training with particular emphasis on abandoning fieldwork if sick, practicing hand and respiratory hygiene, maintaining physical distancing, and extra restrictions and protocols for off-campus research. Previously trained/inducted researchers should receive an update emphasising abandoning off-campus research if sick, practicing hand and respiratory hygiene, maintaining physical distancing, and extra restrictions and protocols for off-campus research.

-Supervision
Departments should ensure adequate, expert supervision of research students in the field (e.g., a supervisor, another experienced postgraduate, an experienced collaborator).
Phase 3 - allows for research at interstate cultural and collecting institutions, but is dependent upon the re-opening of State borders. Approval will follow Government and Macquarie University policies and restrictions on interstate travel.

-Capacity
- This plan covers all research in off-campus cultural and collecting institutions, including archives, libraries, museums and galleries.
- Research in interstate collections is likely to include the following as a priority (in no particular order): high-value projects where not undertaking the work would jeopardise meeting project milestones and impede scientific progress, and/or result in work having to be restarted or abandoned; studies that are already underway where data is required to complete datasets; studies that are funded by national (e.g., ARC) or industry grants where postponement has a financial, progress or contractual consequence; research that is crucial to a postgraduate thesis; research where timing is dictated by access conditions of the collection.
- Travel is limited to the institutions you will visit.
- The number of researchers should be minimised to essential researchers only with consideration as to how interactions may be completed with physical distancing or staggered over different periods of time.
- Travel by car is recommended if safe and practical to do so. If travelling by car, consider a maximum of 2 people in one large vehicle. As a guideline, a large vehicle is at least the size of a Toyota Hilux. Use social distancing as much as possible (e.g., 1 passenger in backseat). If there are more than two researchers in the team, source additional vehicles. Managers may consider the use of large hire cars for travel in line with existing approval processes.
- Travel by air must adhere to Government and airline policies. On-ground travel by large hire car is recommended (see previous guideline regarding number of passengers and size of vehicle). Avoid taxis and public transport unless adequate hygiene and physical distancing measures are in place.
- Researchers should discuss the requirements of their research with their supervisors before undertaking research with non-Macquarie personnel (e.g., volunteers, collaborators).
- Research in off campus collections to be abandoned if any researcher experiences symptoms of COVID-19. Researcher and any team to be tested for COVID-19.
- A detailed COVIDSafe travel plan must be provided that outlines stopping locations and how social distancing will be maintained. This includes passengers and journey stops (e.g., fuel stops, meal breaks, toilet breaks). For trips longer than 2 hours one-way, all drivers are to take a break after 2 hours as per 'normal' practice. This travel plan is to be submitted as an additional document for AOD requests.
- Any COVIDSafe emergency response plans established by the institutions at which research will be undertaken should be consulted in advance and observed in the case of incident. Where available, these should be submitted as an additional document in AOD requests. Researchers must also document the following: The distance to the nearest medical facility that could support them or a team member with COVID symptoms. The mode of transportation of the person to the nearest medical facility. How will they respond if Government guidelines and restrictions change or an area is placed in lockdown? If there are no nearby medical facilities, what other emergency evacuation plans will be activated?

-Access
- As State borders reopen, access will need to adhere to respective Stage government guidelines (e.g., access paperwork, any quarantine requirements, travel restrictions etc).
Researchers will need to demonstrate awareness of and adherence to interstate guidelines and restrictions as part of their AOD request.

COVIDSafe research at off-campus collections to be approved by Executive Deans. This is in addition to AOD and MQ travel approvals as per ‘normal’ research travel.

Minimise the number of days in the collection to that which is essential and necessary to complete the research.

Avoid travel to communities and zones deemed high risk due to high numbers / clusters of COVID-19 cases refer to zone maps on NSW Health website. Where practical avoid travel between high and low risk zones.

Reduce interactions with institutional staff and other users to that which is necessary, where possible pre-arranging access via electronic means and practice physical distancing while onsite.

Researchers should reduce contact with the public and public spaces as much as possible in sourcing food and supplies.

If an overnight trip is approved, limit the use of large turnover accommodation such as motels. Separate rooms for all trip members (e.g., avoid communal hostels, bunkhouses, bathrooms, kitchens).

All COVID-19 restrictions, guidelines and approvals carried on person at all times.

All researchers should be recommended (but not required) to download and use the Australian Government's COVIDSafe App to assist with contact tracing if required.

-Hygiene

Activities should comply with physical distancing wherever possible and with physical distancing regulations enforced by institutions.

Do not share work equipment (e.g., magnifying glasses, cameras, rulers, pencils).

No more than one team member should work with or on an object (manuscript, artefact, archival record) at any one time and in any single session.

Activities should comply with hygiene measures for objects enforced by institutions (e.g., single users only, use of gloves, quarantine period between users).

Any equipment to be used must be cleaned and disinfected by the users before and after use (before leaving University, during fieldwork, and upon return).

Sufficient PPE, disinfectant and cleaning products as appropriate should be made available before and after the off-campus research, and carried and used regularly while on it.

Rigorous personal hygiene practices must be implemented multiple times a day and particularly before and after any essential journey stops (e.g., meal and rest stops).

Reduce interactions with the public. Where contact is required en route, extra precautions should be taken including: wearing disposable gloves while handling fuel pump and paying (gloves will be disposed of immediately after).

Where contact is required in the institution, extra precautions should be taken including the wearing of masks, maintenance of physical distancing, and rigorous adherence to procedures for collection and drop-off of objects established by collections.

If travelling by air, personal responsibility and vigilance is required with personal hygiene at airports and before, during and after flights. Consider wearing PPE (e.g., masks) if appropriate.

Procedures for collection and drop-off of field equipment and field samples should be revised to ensure physical distancing and COVIDSafe practices in consultation with Faculty/Department Fieldwork Managers.

Procedures for collection and drop-off of any equipment borrowed from MQ should be revised to ensure physical distancing and COVIDSafe practices.

-Training
• Department and/or Faculty Fieldwork Managers should develop and provide COVIDSafe-consistent training to all researchers (staff and postgraduates) on the use of PPE and cleaning of equipment.
• Department and/or Faculty Fieldwork Managers should develop and provide COVIDSafe-consistent training/induction protocols. New researchers should receive this training with particular emphasis on abandoning fieldwork if sick, practicing hand and respiratory hygiene, maintaining physical distancing, and extra restrictions and protocols for off-campus research. Previously trained/inducted researchers should receive an update emphasising abandoning off-campus research if sick, practicing hand and respiratory hygiene, maintaining physical distancing, and extra restrictions and protocols for off-campus research.

-Supervision
• Departments should ensure adequate, expert supervision of research students in the field (e.g., a supervisor, another experienced postgraduate, an experienced collaborator).