

Participant Information Sheet for Student Focus Groups

Researcher: Janine Maddison, School of Natural and Environmental Sciences

Title of Study: Assessing pedagogic benefits of the virtual world to enhance fieldwork.

Invitation

You are being invited to take part in a research study. Before you decide whether or not you wish to take part it is important that you understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please read this information carefully and discuss it with others if you wish. Take time to decide whether or not you wish to take part. If you do decide to take part, you will be asked to sign a consent form. However, you are free to withdraw at any time, without giving any reason and without any penalty or loss of benefits.

What is the purpose of the research?

This research aims to define and classify digital fieldwork approaches and the role they can play in addressing pedagogic challenges within fieldwork and enhancing fieldwork provision within the Biosciences in Higher Education.

An overview of the research methodology can be seen in Figure 1.

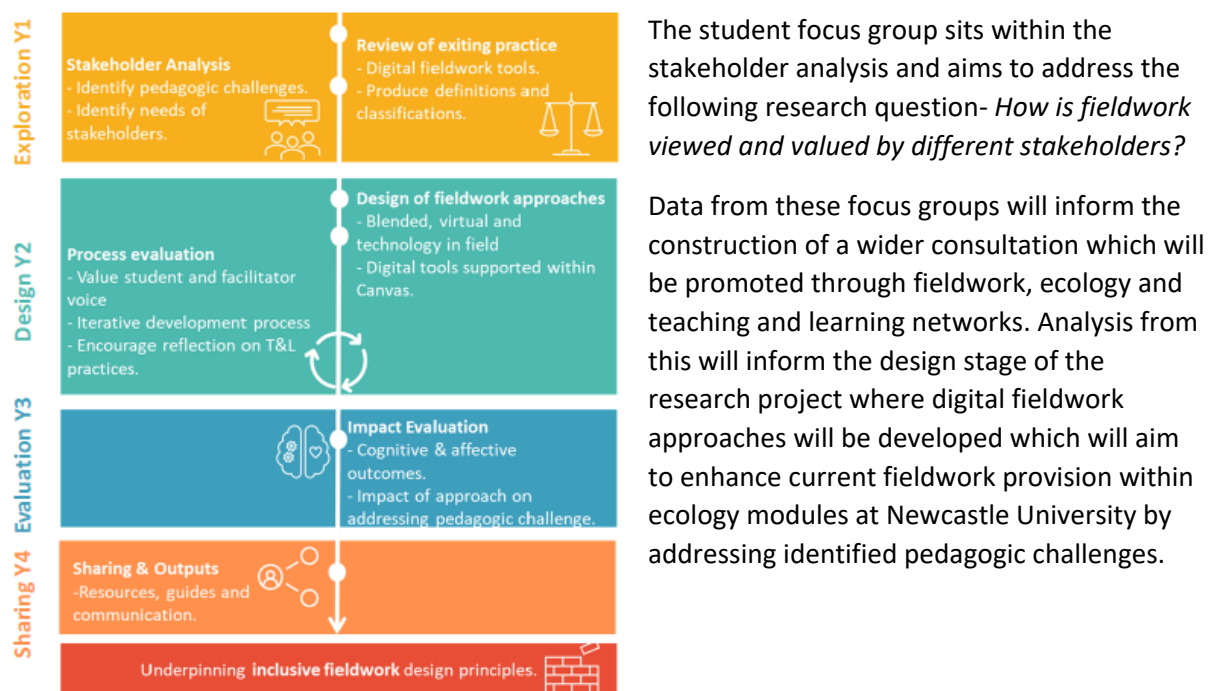


Figure 1: Four Year Overview Research Methodology

Key themes to be discussed during focus groups

- Challenges and opportunities of fieldwork and digital fieldwork approaches.
- Defining characteristics of digital fieldwork approaches.
- Role of digital fieldwork in enhancing existing fieldwork provision.

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What does taking part involve?

The participant is invited to participate in a focus group. The focus group will be conducted face-to-face with a total of 6 participants and a facilitator.

Participants will be asked for individual reflections, take part in a group discussion and finally prioritise outcomes of the focus group through voting.

The focus group will last approximately 2 hours with refreshments provided.

What information will be collected and who will have access to the information collected?

The focus group will be recorded, the audio will be transcribed and the researcher will take notes. Participant reflections and prioritised outcomes from the focus group will be shared and recorded during the focus groups.

Year of study will be collected at interview. Participants may be asked to share their first names during the focus groups. Post-interview other identifiers (Participant A, B etc) will be used to keep individual responses of participants confidential.

Participants will not be asked for information on sensitive information.

Data and metadata storage will follow the requirements and data protection of Newcastle University, which makes use of a secure online cloud storage with regular backups.

We will use your name and email to contact you about the research study. We will use anonymised identifiers [Participant A, B etc] when collating and analysing data collection.

Individuals at Newcastle University may look at your research data to check the accuracy of the research study. The only individuals at Newcastle University who will have access to information that identifies you will be individuals who need to contact you to query a response or audit the data collection process.

If you agree to take part in the research study, your data will become part of a dataset which can be accessed by other users running other research studies at Newcastle University and in other organisations. These organisations may be other Universities. Your information will only be used by organisations and researchers to conduct research.

If you agree to take part in the research study the data provided will be de-identified and made available as "open data" through a research data repository <https://research.ncl.ac.uk/rdm/sharing>. This means the de-identified study data will be publicly available and may be used for purposes not related to this study. It will not be possible to identify you from the "open data".

Why have I been invited to take part?

Focus groups are sought with students from across Stages of Study at Newcastle University who have experience of fieldwork in Ecology, Biology, Geography, Environmental Science and related disciplines.

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Who is the sponsor and data controller for this research?

Newcastle University is the sponsor for this study based in the United Kingdom. Newcastle University will be using information from you in order to undertake this study and will act as the data controller for this study. This means that Newcastle University is responsible for looking after your information and using it properly.

The lawful basis for carrying out this study under GDPR is Task in the Public Interest, (Article 6,1e) as research is cited as part of the University's duties.

Your rights to access, change or move your information are limited, as Newcastle University need to manage your information in specific ways in order for the research to be reliable and accurate. If you withdraw from the study, all information and data you have provided will be removed from the study.

You can find out more about how Newcastle University uses your information at <https://www.ncl.ac.uk/data.protection/> and/or by contacting their Data Protection Officer rec-man@ncl.ac.uk.

Who is funding this research?

Newcastle University

Has this study received ethical approval?

This study has received ethical approval from Newcastle University Ethics Committee on 11/10/2021
Ref: 14962/2021

Who should I contact for further information relating to the research?

Janine Maddison, j.l.maddison2@newcastle.ac.uk

Who should I contact in order to file a complaint?

Research Study: Sara Marsham, sara.marsham@newcastle.ac.uk

If you wish to raise a complaint on how your personal data is handled, you can contact the Data Protection Officer who will investigate the matter: rec-man@ncl.ac.uk

If you are not satisfied with their response you can complain to the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO): <https://ico.org.uk/>