



Independent Research Pack

February 2008

The following document contains information and guidelines about conducting independent research, under the supervision of Blue Ventures' research staff.

conservation education research

Undergraduate and postgraduate students are able to carry out research in conjunction with Blue Ventures for their university dissertations and theses. Blue Ventures can provide students with scientific advice and support before they leave and in the field as well as access to present and past datasets. Our staff in London are able to provide advice and guidance on project proposals, and all projects are discussed and reviewed by field science staff and academic partners, to help ensure their viability and benefit to research and conservation activities in the region. Blue Ventures cannot offer funding support.

Students may submit their own project proposal or choose from one of the project proposals listed on the BV website. All projects undertaken with Blue Ventures should aim to contribute to the overall aims and objectives of Blue Ventures, and to the future research and development goals of Blue Ventures. Students should ensure that they have read and understood the expedition and research pages of the website before applying for a Blue Ventures project or submitting a project proposal. Research in a remote location can be subject to time and logistical constraints which students should consider when planning their projects.

Developing your Project

It is important that students spend a significant amount of time on developing their project idea before they contact Blue Ventures and planning their project before they leave for the field.

Students are also expected to carry out a full literature review for their project before they leave for the field. Please consider the following whilst you are developing your project idea:

- Study the Blue Ventures Research pages to gain a better understanding of the areas we concentrate in.
- Read past Blue Ventures research updates and other recommended literature to obtain a wider knowledge of research carried out in your interested subject.
- Talk to your supervisor about your project idea and discuss its design, the possible survey methods you will use and how you will statistically analyse the data you collect.

Students are able to produce more successful projects if sound preparation is carried out pre-departure.

- Perform a comprehensive literature search on and around your project proposal. Use your university library and online journal facilities to search for books and relevant journal papers. It is important to not only read about research that has been done in the same region of the world but also similar research that has been done in other areas of the world.
- It is important that you check the dissertation and theses requirements stipulated by your university and ensure that your project meets them.
- Once you have confirmed the title and aims of a project with your supervisor you should complete the Blue Ventures Project Application Form (see below).

Project Guidelines

- 1) To be able speak French in order to communicate effectively with Malagasy staff, IHSM representatives, etc (**advisable***)
- 2) To be able to read French in order to make use of available literature/reference materials on Madagascar
- 3) To be able to work with minimum supervision
- 4) To be able to work with limited reference materials on site
- 5) To understand limitations of working conditions (in particular electricity availability limited to 4-10pm and communications restricted to 2 times a week, for text only emails).

* If you are able to gain funding to hire a Malagasy interpreter then this will provide excellent assistance in any methods involving social or participatory research.

Terms and Conditions

- A copy of the final thesis or dissertation and any subsequent publications must be submitted to Blue Ventures.
- All students and independent researchers receiving field support must prepare a manuscript, co-authored with Blue Ventures staff, for submission to a scientific journal.
- Blue Ventures general site rules, operational and safety rules apply to all work carried out through Blue Ventures. Whilst on site the student will be under the line management of the expedition leader.
- All students require full and comprehensive medical cover and equipment insurance.
- Students and their supervisors are responsible for obtaining any necessary research permits (e.g. for the collection and export of biological samples), although Blue Ventures will provide support and guidance with this.
- The student reports to and respects the advice of the resident Marine Science Co-ordinator, Socioeconomic Research Coordinator and Field Scientists.
- The student agrees to collaborate and communicate with the expedition staff and participate in day-to-day running of the expedition.
- If fieldwork is required all under-graduates must pay full expedition fees.
- Postgraduate students will be charged a bench fee, in line with the support they require from Blue Ventures.
- Depending on the nature of the project, Blue Ventures may require additional written agreements with the student and/or the supervisor.
- Students will be liable for all costs associated with their work.

BLUE VENTURES PROJECT APPLICATION FORM

Please return the completed proposal form along with a completed volunteer application form, a copy of your CV, including contact details of two referees, to the Blue Ventures head office. All student projects must be approved by a Blue Ventures Research Scientist and a Blue Ventures Director.

Students Name:
University:
Course:
Your Address:
Phone:
Email:
Supervisors Name:
Supervisors University/Institution:
Title of Project:
Aims (What is the objective of your project?):
Background to the Project (What is the basis on which your project is founded?):
Proposed Methods and Data Analysis:
What do you hope to achieve in this project:

Contribution to Blue Ventures work:

I have read and understood all the terms and conditions:

Signature: _____

Date: _____