

# *Field Trips*

## *A Guideline for Faculty and Staff*

### What is a SU Field Trip?

A field trip is an off-campus educational/instructional experience provided by SU faculty/staff to their students which normally involves travel for the group. A trip to an art museum for art students could be considered a SU field trip, but a social gathering or trip without educational purpose would not normally be considered a field trip.

### Planning the Trip

There are a number of steps you may need to consider in planning your trip:

1. Identify any special requirements for participation on the trip -- special skills, fitness, certification -- as well as any hazards or dangers on the trip or at the site that might affect the health and safety of the participants.
2. Obtain departmental approval where appropriate.
3. Ask students to advise you of any special disabilities, problems or needs that may need to be accommodated.
4. Obtain signed parental permission forms for any minor students participating. (under age 18).
5. Consider the need for special clothing or equipment that may be needed because of weather or other conditions.
6. Determine transportation needs -- reservation of vehicles, drivers, need for site supervision.
7. Plan for emergencies -- theft, illness, vehicle emergency, weather delays, student misconduct or threats to the safety of others.
8. If the trip is outside the continental U.S., consult Education Abroad (206-296-2226) for additional information.

### Transportation

Arrange for University vans or charter bus transportation well in advance through Campus Public Safety. Do not use students' personal vehicles. (Students can be approved to drive University vehicles for field trips, provided they meet the University Public Safety requirements. University employees must accompany the students during the travel time of such trips). Determine the route, stops, timetables, and assign drivers. You'll need a system for communicating and performing student counts. Make sure you have an adequate number of drivers for longer trips to allow sufficient rest for drivers. If

you intend to use vehicles from rental agencies, be sure to purchase a basic limit of liability insurance if none is provided with the vehicle.

## Communication & Site Orientation

Communicate information to students in advance about schedules, departure locations, route, rest and meal stops, lodging, emergency procedures, protocol for problems, and rules of conduct.

## Duty to Warn, Protect & Supervise

Familiarize students with the site and their surroundings. Seattle University faculty/staff have a duty to warn their students of any known hazards at the field trip site. University employees must exercise reasonable care to protect and supervise students while they are participating in a field trip conducted by the University.

## Compliance with University Policies

Faculty, staff, and students must comply with University policies while on field trips just as they would on campus.

The instructional activities and setting should conform with the University's policies including those concerning alcohol and drug use, vehicle use, student misconduct, smoking, principles of academic freedom, policy on sexual harassment, and consensual relationships.

## Liability Insurance

Any liability of a faculty or staff member associated with conducting a University-sponsored field trip, for acts that fall within that individual's normal job responsibility, is covered by the University's comprehensive general liability policy.

In most cases, the University will defend and indemnify a University employee for claims arising from his/her negligent act or omission while acting within the scope of employment. Intentionally harmful acts are not within the scope of employment and are not covered.

## Personal Liability & Responsibility

Faculty and staff have no special duty to protect adult students from their own voluntary actions while on their own personal time. However, prudence may dictate setting limits on students' off-time activities while on a field trip.

Similarly, faculty and staff are personally liable for their own personal activities, and, for any intentionally harmful, willful acts or omissions while conducting the field trip. For example, faculty and staff are personally liable if they supply alcohol to students or engage in harassing or other unlawful behavior toward students.

University faculty and staff should consider the proximity of personal, social, and instructional activities in a field trip situation. Be aware of how the situation, setting, and your personal conduct may be perceived by your students, and act accordingly.

## Miscellaneous Forms and Records

**Student Sign-up List** - University faculty/staff should have an official list of participants.

**Medical Insurance** - For extended trips (over 3 days), out of state trips, or trips requiring any special physical skills or fitness level, the University strongly recommends requiring students to have health insurance or a medical care plan.

**Liability Waivers/Permission Forms** - Hazardous optional activities may require liability waivers. Minors will need parental permission to participate. Contact the Office of University Counsel (206-296-2043) for information on the development and use of such forms.

**Site Sponsor Contracts - Waivers or Certificate of Self-Insurance.** The University generally does not agree to hold harmless or indemnify other parties, but will agree to be responsible for all claims arising from negligence of the University or its employees. Contact Associate Vice President for Business & Finance for a Certificate of Self-Insurance to be provided to other parties or for more information.

## Reporting Accidents / Incidents

Report incidents to your department head or Dean and Campus Public Safety (206-296-5990) within 24 hours of the incident. Report injuries immediately.

International field trips should follow reporting instructions from the Education Abroad Office.

Faculty or staff employees who are injured in the course of their employment are covered under workers' compensation. Contact Benefits (206-296-5870) for information and claim forms.

Report thefts or criminal activity to Campus Public Safety and to the local police authority.

Report vehicle accidents involving injury to Campus Public Safety and the local police department. Vehicle accident forms should be completed and returned to Campus Public Safety within 48 hours.

If there is an incident which you believe could lead to a liability claim against the University, please provide a written description of the incident, the names and phone numbers of any witnesses, and forward the information to:

Seattle University  
Campus Public Safety  
901 12<sup>th</sup> Avenue  
P.O. Box 222000  
Seattle, WA 98122-1090