

School of Geography, Geology and the Environment

Contingency planning and Emergency procedures for Field Course Leaders.

All staff on field courses should familiarise themselves with the following guidelines:

Preparation

- Prior to departure it is vital that knowledge of the field area is gained and where possible an assessment of the site should be undertaken before fieldwork starts, to ascertain any hazards and the suitability for the activities to be undertaken. This may take the form of a pre-trip visit or contact with local inhabitants who can pass on any relevant information. There may also be inherent hazards that will need to be considered. These hazards and the control measures identified in the risk assessment should be included in the field course information pack.
- All Field Course leaders should familiarise themselves with the arrangements for contacting the local support agencies such as the Police and medical services, at every site/area to be visited prior to departure.
- All staff and students must be informed of the nature of the field work and the associated hazards. Instructed on appropriate clothing to be worn throughout the entire trip and given advice on any special needs.

Field work guidance Documents.

Staff requiring additional information on all aspects of field work should refer to the following documents for guidance

Additional information on safety in fieldwork is contained the following:

Guidance on Health and Safety in Fieldwork (2011) UCEA
(copy on the Intranet)

<http://www.ucea.ac.uk/download.cfm/docid/7789411F-7DFC-42B7-B39A740562F68E79>

Guidance Note: safety in fieldwork (1997) NERC

Guidelines and Code of Practice for Fieldwork, Outdoor and other off-Campus Activities as part of an Academic Course (1994) AUCL

Fitness of Participants.

The requirement to undertake fieldwork and the abilities of disabled, sick, pregnant or other students being unable to undertake it can cause problems, especially within safety guidelines. As a first stage process of assessment, students' health records are reviewed and as appropriate referred to Occupational Health where issues of concern arise. Further involvement with Occupational Health, Student Support Field course leaders and the School Manager will resolve these issues.

Risk Assessment.

- Field course leaders should complete a full Risk Assessment using the Field Course Risk Assessment form, which they must sign and pass on to the HOS for approval before filing in the School Office. Specific field courses may require additional needs to be considered, outside of the standard form.
- Where accommodation is booked outside of travel agency, a full risk assessment on the safety of the establishment must be carried out by the field course leader.

First Aid

- Depending on the risk assessment, the number of qualified first aiders on the trip will need to be established. At least one staff member attending a field trip must, as a minimum support hold a current St John's approved first aid certificate.
- Medical cover for all staff and students outside of the UK is available through the university insurance scheme. All foreign field course leaders should familiarise themselves with the University's insurance cover. @
<https://www.keele.ac.uk/finance/insurance/travelinsurance/>
- Field course leaders should be aware of specific medical conditions of all participants. Medical information on students is available through the school database, or by contacting one of the subject administrators. Before departure all staff assisting on field courses must make the field course leader aware of any medical condition(s) which might impinge on their ability to fulfil their role within the field course

- When visiting within the European Union staff and students are advised to carry a certificate of health insurance (Form E111, available free of charge from the post office and internet)
- Staff and students should not knowingly undertake activities that due to physical or psychological problems may put themselves or others at risk.

Disabled staff and students.

- Field Course leaders must make every reasonable effort to ensure that disabled persons have access to fieldwork activities and are able to participate fully in them. This may include special safety arrangements that should be identified during the risk assessment and coordinated with Student Support.

Evacuation and Repatriation

- Where field trips run in isolated areas, not organised by travel companies, escape plans must be formulated during the planning stage, to allow withdrawal of the group or individuals in the event of injury, illness, civil unrest, or deteriorating weather conditions.
- Prior to departure, in the event of civil unrest or natural disasters in the field area advice must be sought from the Foreign Office, embassy or consulate of the government involved this must be strictly adhered to.
- Field course leaders should provide a field course plan to the School Manager outlining the itinerary, including contact addresses, emergency contact numbers and procedures so that contact can be made in the event of an emergency. The School Manager will supply field course leaders with mobile telephone numbers of staff for use in the event of an emergency. All last minute major changes to the organised route or activities must be reported to the School Manager prior to departure.

Driving on field courses.

Please refer to the document, Driving on behalf of the School of GGE.

In the Field.

In the event of an emergency involving one of the following,

- *Lost student or staff member (see Missing Person procedure)*
- *Arrest or detention by local authorities of one of your group and or criminal charges brought against a member(s) of your group.*

- *On set of any serious medical condition by any member of the group.*
- *Any emergency involving a staff member or student which may involve severe negative publicity for the university.*

Field course leaders should contact the School Manager, giving a clear and full description of the emergency and any requirements they feel necessary in dealing with the situation. Contact should normally be made through the School Office, outside of office hours contact the School Manager on his mobile. In the event of a severe incident, the University authorities will be informed, and as appropriate, the Health and Safety Unit.

- Field course leaders should complete a written report within 30 days. In the case of accidents, appropriate statements from witnesses, physical evidence and photographs will greatly assist any investigation. This procedure is extremely important as serious accidents and diseases have to be reported to the Health and Safety Executive.
- In the event of illness to any member of the leadership team or participant(s) an additional risk assessment should be made of the changed situation and appropriate action taken to rectify any shortcomings in areas of safety and scheduled activities. If appropriate safety standards cannot be met the activities/trip should be terminated.

In the event of the following,

- ❖ Lost airline tickets.
- ❖ Loss of money, wallets, credit cards, traveller's checks, etc.
- ❖ Lost passport, visa, etc
- ❖ Loss of equipment

Individuals involved must report the loss to the local police force; secure a local crime number/report for subsequent insurance claim(s) through the university insurance.

Field Course leaders should inform all students that they have personal insurance, which covers theft and loss of personal property.

If additional financial assistance is required from Keele University, please contact the School Manager who is able to arrange money transfers etc. This can be either a direct transfer to a staff member's personal account or by the use of the university credit card, to make payments to individual

companies.

In the event of civil unrest or natural disasters whilst in the field, advice from the Foreign Office, embassy or consulate of the government involved must be strictly adhered to.

Unacceptable behaviour by Students

Any student acting irresponsibly, criminally or in any unreasonable way in the opinion of the field course leader (s) will be subject to University Regulation 20

(<http://www.keele.ac.uk/admin/ps/governance/acts/Regulations/Reg%2020.htm>)

required to leave the class, make their own way back to Keele at their own expense and report to the Head of School.

The consequences of this can include being unable to continue with your degree programme

Missing Person procedure.

In the event of a student or staff member going missing the following procedure should take place.

- Interview last witnesses of missing person to try to establish possible reasons for absence.
- A thorough search of the surrounding area where person was last seen.
- If no contact is made within six hours, notify local Police force.
- Notify the School Office
- The next of kin will be notified by the School if the person is not found within a reasonable period of time, but no later than 24 hours.

Communication of Public Information Release of information to the press or media should be made only with the approval of the University Secretary and Registrar's Office, who will deal with all external enquiries for information/statement(s) concerning any incident. No information should be supplied to third parties unless specifically authorised by the Head of School.

Contact School Manger number as supplied.

- Where it is necessary to deal directly with parents/guardians of students, the field course leader should provide only basic information, emphasising that all official communications will be via the University.

University Secretary and Registrar Telephone: +44 (0) 1782 733372

Repatriation or Evacuation

- In the event of all or individual staff members or students needing to return to the UK, the field course leader in conjunction with any required assistance from the School will make the necessary arrangements. Field course leaders should make provision, prior to departure, of having additional funds available to support a limited repatriation programme. In the event of a major situation, please contact the School Manager who will organise the necessary action through a specialist rescue company.

On return.

All field course leaders will contact the School Office to confirm their safe return and debrief appropriate staff on any issues as appropriate

- Staff mobile telephone numbers should only be used in the event of an emergency.

School office: +44 (0)1782 733615

Secondary contact: Dr Richard Waller Mobile
(from abroad): 011 44 7887996736
(from UK): 0778 799 6736