College of Arts and Architecture
Academic Field Trips/Group Travel with Students (Domestic Trips)

Guidelines

Please note that this document is an internal policy statement for the College of Arts and Architecture. The Office of Risk Management should be consulted if you have any questions concerning safety and/or liability issues when planning a student field trip. The Risk Management Office maintains a website at http://www.controller.psu.edu/Divisions/RiskManagement/indexRM.html. The website contains information related to insurances, contracts, and a listing of charter bus operators who have met the University’s minimum auto liability insurance requirements. Additional College policies and forms for field trips can be found on the A & A Financial Office website at http://www.artsandarchitecture.psu.edu/finance/academic-field-trip-links

Overview

Academic field trips are a common and frequent occurrence at Penn State. Risk and liability issues have recently emerged in connection with academic field trips. At the present time, no University policy exists for local and domestic field trips. University Policy TR13 International Group Travel Approval Policy and the related International Group Travel Risk Management Checklist address international group travel, but there is no corresponding University policy or guideline for non-international travel. The College of Arts and Architecture developed these guidelines to assist departments, faculty, and staff with procedures to ensure the safety of field trip participants and to reduce liability and risk to the University.

Guidelines

The following guidelines apply when planning an academic field trip within the United States:

- Any external field trip agreements, applications, releases, or similar documents, all of which are considered “contracts”, must be reviewed by Risk Management and signed by an Assistant Treasurer in advance of the field trip (in accordance with policy FN-11).
- A University employee is required to accompany the group if the field trip is sponsored by the University. The employee is “in charge” of the activity. Note – if the field trip is academic, it is always considered to be a University sponsored activity.
- Personal vehicles should not be used to transport students to the field trip location. The University must provide transportation if the event is sponsored by the University (fleet vehicle or bus transportation). Bus transportation must be requested via approved purchasing methods using an approved charter bus operator.
- In many cases, additional transportation will occur at the field trip site. Transportation arrangements generally require an agreement. These “agreements” are considered contracts and must be reviewed by Risk Management and signed by an Assistant Treasurer in advance of the field trip.
• The College of Arts and Architecture has developed a “CHECKLIST” to gather required information for Academic Field Trips. This form requires approval by the Faculty in Charge and the Department Head. If student participants will be charged a fee, the College Financial Officer must approve the fee in advance.
• The academic department must retain a roster of faculty and students traveling on a field trip, including emergency contact information for each participant. A contact person, who remains on campus, should also be identified.
• An itinerary must be provided to the academic department, especially if a field trip involves visiting multiple locations, or overnight stays.
• In the event of an emergency, University Policy SY03 Emergencies Involving Students, provides specific instructions for notification of emergency contacts. Arts and Architecture has also developed “Procedures for Faculty while “in charge” of Field Trip” with additional guidance for faculty in the event of an emergency.
• Emergency communications should be available at all times. A working cell phone is sufficient for this purpose. The College has purchased a pre-paid cell phone. Contact the Financial Office to sign out the College cell phone. If the field trip is in a remote location, emergency transportation should be available at all times during the field trip.
• The College of Arts and Architecture has developed a “Code of Conduct” and a “Memorandum of Understanding” that are required for students who participate in group travel with an overnight stay and for international group travel.
• For lengthy field trips in distant locations within the United States or its territories, the University Policy TR13 International Group Travel Approval Policy and the related International Group Travel Risk Management Checklist should be consulted and reviewed. The international checklist provides a good format to follow for lengthy out-of-state trips.

To help protect both the University and its employees, the following should occur:

• Each department should have a procedure for faculty to notify their respective department head of field trips in advance. In Arts and Architecture, the Academic Field Trip CHECKLIST and all supporting documentation must be approved by the department head and submitted to the College Financial Officer prior to the date of the trip.
• The purpose of the trip must be relevant to the University’s academic mission and any University employee in charge of or helping to supervise the field trip must be acting within the scope of their employment.
• If an injury occurs on a field trip, the appropriate University injury report forms (different forms for employee vs. non-employee) must be completed. The accident should be reported immediately to the College Safety Officer, Dave Will. The form for employee injuries is online at: http://guru.psu.edu/gfug/instruct/8-05ex.pdf. The form for injuries to non-employees (this includes students) is a paper form “32696 Incident Form” available from Dave Will. Questions regarding procedures when an injury occurs should be directed to Dave Will or to Risk Management.

A department may implement additional field trip and safety guidelines, but these are the necessary minimum requirements for the College of Arts and Architecture.