

FIELD TRIPS: A Guide for Faculty and Staff

What is a BGSU Field Trip?

A field trip is an off-campus educational/instructional experience provided by BGSU faculty/staff to their students that normally involves travel for the group. A trip to an art museum for art students could be considered a BGSU 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 items to consider in planning your trip:

- Obtain departmental approval where appropriate.
- Identify any special skills or requirements needed for participation on the trip as well as any hazards or dangers that might exist that could affect the health and safety of participants.
- Consider any special clothing or equipment that may be needed due to weather or environmental conditions.
- Ask students to advise you of any accommodations that may need to be made on the basis of a disability.
- Plan for medical or other emergencies such as vehicle breakdown or extreme weather conditions or delay's.
- For trips outside the United States, consult BGSU's Education Abroad office regarding important forms and travel resources.

Transportation by Car or Van

- Determine the number of vehicles and type of vehicles that are needed.
- Make certain there are a sufficient number of approved drivers. At least 2 or more people should be designated as drivers per vehicle.
- Use of personal faculty/staff or student vehicles will make those individuals primarily responsible in the event of an accident.
- All drivers of university owned vehicles are required to be approved by Risk Management to verify the driver meets the University's accepted criteria in order to drive.
- If your department has/uses 15-passenger vans, the University's Vehicle Use and Van Driver Safety Procedure must be followed.
- BGSU Student Organizations are expressly prohibited from traveling in 15-passenger vans as per the Student Handbook.
- The university endorses all State and Federal laws and regulations that pertain to motor vehicle safety including cell phone, seat belt and headlight rules/regulations.
- Smoking is prohibited inside University vehicles.

Vehicle Rental

- The following conditions pertain exclusively to vehicle rental and are in addition to the requirements listed above:
 - Vehicle rental should be arranged using one of BGSU's Contracted Suppliers whenever possible. More information about the vehicle rental process can be found on BGSU's Purchasing Department Website.
 - Vehicle rental shall be arranged by the faculty/staff person in charge of the field trip and not the students.
 - The purchase of supplemental insurance for vehicle rentals is not required when using a BGSU corporate contract.
 - Immediately notify the rental car company in the event of vehicle loss or damage regardless of fault.

Transportation by Bus or Plane

- The use of charter busses shall be coordinated using one of BGSU's Contracted Suppliers to ensure conformity with the institution policies regarding available insurance and provisions for indemnity.
- The use of private or charter aircraft requires written authorization by the University President or a Vice President. Additional information relating to air travel is included in the University Travel and Expense Policy.

Liability Release Form

- Release, Waiver, and Agreement Not to Sue forms are needed when activities are voluntary/optional. Students are not required to sign an agreement for field experiences or field trips which are mandatory (required) as part of a course for academic credit. Voluntary (optional) trips and activities, even when part of a course for credit, require a signed agreement.
- University employees are not required to sign agreements for activities in the course and scope of their employment.
- Community members and unaffiliated persons should sign agreements when participating in University sponsored activities involving higher levels of risk, such as travel, physical activity, etc. Agreements are necessary for minor (under the age of 18) participants in University sponsored events.
- Completed forms are to be maintained by the Department for a period of eight years.
- Additional details and the liability release form can be found on the Risk Management website.

Health, Safety and Security

- It is recommended that all field trips begin and end on campus.
- Communicate information in advance to all participants relating to schedules, departure locations, route, rest, meal stops and lodging.
- It is recommended that a list of all participants including emergency contact information is kept on file with a department designee.
- All participants shall be accompanied to the site by a faculty or staff member.
- Upon arrival, familiarize participants with their surroundings and inform them of any known hazards at the field trip site.
- All participants shall be covered by health insurance and carry appropriate verification with them at all times.

- All participants shall abide by the codes of standards and responsibilities set forth in the BGSU Student and Staff Handbooks.
- All participants with access to the MyBGSU web portal shall keep their personal information including emergency contacts and phone numbers up-to-date.
- Field trips involving outdoor field experiences or team-building activities need to be evaluated by organizers for safety risks and to protect students from unnecessary risk.
- Consider bringing along a first aid kit, if available.
- You may contact BGSU Police at 419-372-2346 at any time for assistance.

Personal Liability and Responsibility

- University employees shall 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 and act accordingly.
- University employees can be held personally liable when their behavior or actions are deemed malicious, reckless or could cause foreseeable harm.
- Exercise a reasonable person's standard of ordinary care in the supervision of students. Standard of care refers to the watchfulness, attention, caution and prudence that a reasonable person in the same circumstances would exercise. If a person's actions do not meet this standard of care then their actions may be considered negligence.
- A special standard of care applies to minor children participants. Adherence to the university's Programs and Activities with Minor Participants policy found on the Human Resources website is required.

Liability Insurance

- University employees are deemed covered by the institution's liability insurance unless their behavior or actions are deemed malicious, reckless or manifestly outside the scope of their official responsibilities.

Contracts

- Proposed University contracts may require review by the Office of General Counsel prior to execution by an authorized signatory.
- A contract is any agreement between the University and another party which is intended to have legal effect, whether or not it is titled "contract."

Incident Reporting

- Any employee or participant injured on a field trip experience that is in need of medical attention should go to the nearest hospital.
- Any injuries should be reported using the BGSU Injury and Illness Report form found on the Environmental Health and Safety website.
- Automobile accidents should immediately be reported to Risk Management. Also report incidents to your academic Chair or Director.
- Thefts or criminal activity should be reported to the local police authority for investigation