

Student Trip Guidelines

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Applies to: All persons involved in student trips

This memorandum is for informational purposes.

Introduction

Field trips, such as site visits, professional meetings, research trips and tours of places of interest, constitute an important academic component of many University classes and programs. A field trip may be part of a course completed for academic credit or a special non-credit opportunity.

Some trips are taken by student groups, including registered student organizations, that are not considered University-sponsored trips. Off-campus trips that are not substantially organized or supervised by University personnel are not within the control of the University and are therefore not the responsibility of the University. Faculty advisors to student groups, and other University personnel, should be mindful that the level of their involvement in planning or participating in a student trip could convert the trip into a University-sponsored trip for which the University is responsible.

Field Trips

The following guidelines are intended to clarify best practices with regard to University-sponsored field trips. It is important that the guidelines are followed to ensure consistency and compliance with University policies and to minimize risk.

Definitions

Field Trip – An off-campus student trip sponsored by the University, college, department and/or program as part of the requirements of a class or for which credit will be awarded, or which is substantially planned or supervised by University personnel.

Mandatory Field Trip – All students in the class are expected to participate. Failure to participate has an academic consequence. Only an official absence would be accepted as an excuse for non-participation. In a situation where a student cannot participate in the field trip, an equivalent experience is typically provided.

Optional Field Trip – Students can elect to participate in the field trip with no academic consequence.

Signing an Assumption of Risk and Release

It is usually inappropriate to require a release for mandatory field trips.

For optional field trips, if there are any unusual, hidden, or significant risks associated with the trip, or if the trip includes an overnight stay, students should be required to sign an assumption of risk and release.

Standard forms and assistance tailoring the appropriate form to a specific trip or event, may be obtained by contacting the Office of General Counsel.

Students participating in an optional field trip that is to be completed within one day and poses no unusual, hidden, or significant risks typically do not need to sign a release.

Transportation

University personnel should take a state vehicle if possible, and provide space for all participants. It could be a Motor Pool vehicle or a department's vehicle, if one is available. The use of such vehicles, permitted drivers, and insurance information is available at: <http://www.k-state.edu/policies/ppm/3040.html>

If any of the students are permitted to travel by personal vehicle, the students who do so must be made aware, in a written document such as the trip itinerary, that the official field trip for them does not begin until they arrive at the site(s), and it ends when they leave the site(s). It is recommended that such students be required to sign a document acknowledging and agreeing to that understanding. The document should make clear that students choosing to travel by personal vehicle are responsible for making such travel arrangements and for getting themselves safely to and from the site(s). If the field trip is mandatory, the University should offer transportation to and from campus, and could require that it be used by all participants.

Study Abroad Programs and Trips

The Office of International Programs oversees study abroad programs and University-sponsored international trips for students. Information, applications and release forms are available through the study abroad office within OIP: <http://www.k-state.edu/studyabroad/>

Student Organization Trips

If the faculty advisor or a department is very involved, either in planning or participating in a student organization's trip, it is likely to be considered a University-sponsored event where the University could be held liable for injuries and damages. In that case, state vehicles should be used if at all possible, and other reasonable precautions should be taken. Insurance claims can get complicated when private vehicles are used for state business or a mix of state and personal business and it is not clear whether the event is covered by some private insurance or falls under the state's self-insurance provisions. Since state vehicles are available for University-sponsored events, it is best to go ahead and use them, because the insurance coverage is clear and the University does not have to worry about incurring damages from any vehicular accidents associated with the trip.

Faculty advisors to student organizations are acting within the scope of their job duties in serving as advisors, and so the Kansas Tort Claims Act (our self-insurance law) applies to cover their personal liability. However, their negligent or inappropriate acts on the job can still result in disciplinary action.

If a trip is planned and carried out just by the members of a registered student organization, it is not a University-sponsored event and state vehicles would not be available. In that case, a student could take everyone in a private vehicle or the group could rent a vehicle from a private company. The University would have no responsibility for any occurrences during the event. But the faculty advisor should be careful not to take any actions (such as asking students to sign a release, publicizing the event, or supervising or participating in the event) that could cause the event to be considered a University-sponsored event.

ASSUMPTION OF RISK AND RELEASE

In consideration of being allowed to participate in the Kansas State University sponsored trip to Chicago, Illinois to attend the IEEE PES T&D Conference & Exhibition affiliated with the Electrical Power Affiliates Program, from April 14, 2014 through April 17, 2014, I hereby waive, release, and discharge for myself, my heirs, executors, administrators, legal representatives, assigns, and successors in interest ("successors"), Kansas State University, the State of Kansas, the Kansas Board of Regents, and their agents, officers and employees, from all claims, demands, and causes of action of any kind, including claims for negligence, which may arise from or be related to my participation in the aforementioned program/event, including travel to and from said event.

I fully realize the risks associated with participation in the aforementioned program, and I fully assume those risks, including, but not limited to: the possibility of serious physical and/or mental trauma or injury (including without limitation death), as well as any other health risks; and dangers arising from weather conditions, natural disasters, and criminal activities of third parties. I also agree and acknowledge that my participation in said program is voluntary and I will not enter and participate unless I am medically able, realizing my own physical limitations and abilities.

I agree for myself and successors that the above representations are contractually binding and are not mere recitals. I have reviewed and understand this release and fully understand and assume the risks associated with participation in the program.

Date

Signature of Participant

Printed Name

Address

If participant is under 18 years of age, a parent or legal guardian's signature is required.

Date

Signature of Parent/Guardian

Printed Name

Address