



Risk Management Guide  
for Academic Field Trips

Wellesley College  
Office of Risk Management & Compliance  
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# Academic Field Trips

## *Faculty and Staff Guide to Liability, Insurance and Risk Management Issues*

### **What Is an Academic Field Trip?**

An Academic Field Trip is defined as a course-related activity that serves educational purposes and occurs outside of the classroom at a location other than on the campus at which the course is regularly taught. These trips are usually led by faculty as part of the course curriculum and are required for class credit. Examples of academic field trips include, but are not limited to, travel to museums, geological areas, farms, and businesses.

Academic Field Trips should be listed on the course syllabus, and include destination/s; date/s of travel; purpose of the Trip; and whether or not transportation will be provided. It is highly recommended that transportation be provided. The course syllabus is a good place to include the Informed Consent Form.

### **Experiences That Are Not Academic Field Trips**

Faculty may recommend off-campus meetings, shows or conferences that would be appropriate curriculum enhancements that students may attend voluntarily. Students attend at their own expense and Wellesley College is not responsible for travel or supervision to these events or activities.

Off-campus activities or trips with a College athletic team, student club or organization, or other College department not for academic credit, are “voluntary field trips”, not “academic field trips.” Please see the “Wellesley College Risk Management Guide for Voluntary (Non-Academic) Field Trips” document for additional guidance.

### **Why Is There a Distinction?**

Academic field trips are considered part of the course curriculum and conducted within the academic mission of Wellesley College. This means that Wellesley College assumes the liability for academic field trips. Non-academic, voluntary field trips have a varying amount of liability exposure to the College depending on the amount of control the College has over a given field trip.

### **Are Academic Field Trips Covered by the College’s Insurance?**

Yes. Wellesley College purchases insurance policies for liability coverage. Claims against the College are handled by the College’s Risk Manager ([riskmanagement@wellesley.edu](mailto:riskmanagement@wellesley.edu)) through its insurance broker.

Other types of coverage that may apply to the trip include:

- Auto liability insurance for travel involving college-owned or rented vehicles, or other authorized private vehicles
- Travel accident insurance for trips more than 100 miles from campus
- Workers’ compensation insurance for employees who are injured while working as part of the trip

- Students are covered for their personal injury by their personal health insurance

## **What Can I Do to Minimize Field Trip Risks and Liability?**

It is impossible to eliminate all risks entirely. However, advance planning can help minimize the exposures to Field Trip Leaders, students, and Wellesley College. The following information is designed to serve as a guide to assist Wellesley College faculty and staff in making a reasonable effort to ensure a safe educational experience for students participating in field trips under their guidance. (Also see Appendix for a “Checklist for Planning an Academic Field Trip.”)

## **What Do I Need to Consider, As The Field Trip Leader(s), In Planning a Field Trip?**

### **1. Destination Site and Activities**

*Please Note: Trips that are outside the continental U.S. should consult with the Office of International Studies and the Office of Risk Management for additional guidelines.*

The Field Trip Leader(s) should be familiar with the site and share this knowledge with participants. If an overnight stay is included, lodging premises and locations should be reasonably safe and written documentation should be provided highlighting any associated risks.

The Field Trip Leader(s) should determine what skills are necessary for participation, what students should do to acquire those skills and how competency will be evaluated prior to the trip. Keep in mind, students who have disabilities may not be excluded from the trip because of their disability, so accommodations may be needed.

The number of field trip leader(s) for the trip should reflect the number of participants, and their competency level should be based upon the number of students and range of their skill levels. Orientation for field trip participants should include procedures for a “buddy system” and information on known risks as well as local cultural, custom and legal requirements.

### **2. Transportation**

The majority of Wellesley College academic field trips are by College-owned vehicle, however, trips by chartered buses, rental vehicles and commercial airlines also occur. Determine your transportation needs in advance to allow time to make the necessary arrangements.

- **Travel Using College-owned Vehicles**

Wellesley College Motor Pool (x3280) can assist in determining the type of vehicle(s) needed for a field trip as well as arrange for the vehicle use. See <https://www.wellesley.edu/risk/vehicles> for more information.

- **Travel Using Faculty or Staff Personal, Rental or Borrowed Vehicles**

Faculty and staff are strongly encouraged to use college-owned vehicles for all field trips rather than their own personal vehicle. If using a personal vehicle, faculty and staff should understand that their own personal auto insurance (liability and property damage) is primary. <https://www.wellesley.edu/risk/vehicles/personal-vehicles>

### 3. **Set Trip Expectations**

The Field Trip Leader(s) should provide the participants with an orientation prior to departure. The type of field trip will dictate the level of detail needed in the orientation, but both verbal and written communication is essential. **(When the trip is first announced, Leader should advise students to wait to purchase airline tickets until after the orientation, if applicable)**

Orientation materials should include the following:

- trip destination and purpose
- a travel itinerary including route, rest and meal stops
- lodging information, if applicable
- transportation information
- appropriate documents, clothing and equipment needed for the trip, including protective gear, sunscreen and insect repellent
- the established rules and protocols specific to the field trip.
- any known unique hazards
- a summary of activities and physical requirements students will encounter
- any known or unusual circumstances that would require advance preparation or equipment
- emergency planning and response protocols

### 4. **Technology During Travel**

- Check out [this page](https://www.wellesley.edu/lts/techsupport/travel) for some general information. (<https://www.wellesley.edu/lts/techsupport/travel>)
- Make sure you have VPN installed and fully tested and use them everywhere possible. This makes all data transfer encrypted and hard for anyone to snoop. In addition, several of the applications on campus will not be accessible if you are not on VPN. Suggest the same for the students traveling with you.
- [Important information regarding Duo](#)
- Contact the Helpdesk to get a physical key (called the Yubikey) as a backup for DUO in case your phone fails to work for DUO confirmation.
- Contact the Helpdesk to make sure that your laptop is fully encrypted and that you have screenlock enabled so that in the event of a theft, none of your data is accessible.

### 5. **Emergency Planning**

The type of field trip also dictates the level of emergency planning needed. If the trip location is remote, it is strongly recommended that at least two persons on the trip have first aid skills, a first aid kit and a cell phone or appropriate means of communication in

the event emergency aid is needed. Confirmation that cell phones will operate from the field trip site should be made in advance so that alternative arrangements (e.g., satellite phone) can be made if needed. Also determine a protocol for circumstances that may necessitate the Field Trip Leader(s) leaving the group to accompany an injured or ill student.

The Field Trip Leader(s) should make sure that each field trip participant completes an Emergency Medical Information form (See Appendix). A copy of this document should be kept with the Field Trip Leader(s). This document should be destroyed after the trip is over.

Students should be reminded to carry ID and medical insurance cards. The Field Trip Leader(s) should carry emergency phone numbers to reach key contacts at Wellesley College. All participants should know how to contact Wellesley Campus Police from the site, find and use the first aid kit, access a cell phone or other phone and what to do if separated from the group.

## 5. **Trip Contingencies**

Even with the best planning effort, things can still go wrong. Try to anticipate complications that could arise, and then develop contingency plans in advance.

Examples include:

- a student needs to leave early because of a personal emergency
- a student violates established rules
- weather or transportation delays or cancellations

Understand any contract limitations or restrictions. Will the “unused portion” of pre-paid trip expenses be refundable? What resources are available for rescheduling?

## 6. **Special Requirements for Participation**

If students going on the field trip have disabilities or special requirements that may need to be accommodated, then the Office of Disability Services (x2434) can assist with information and accommodation requests for students. Be sure to let all students know this is an option during trip planning.

For domestic trips, all students should have the usual immunizations already upon entering college. Follow international (CDC) protocols on immunizations for travel out of country.

## 7. **Compliance with College Policies**

Make sure all participants understand that College policies for faculty, staff and students apply to field trips regardless of the location. This includes the College’s Honor Code. Instructional activities and settings should be consistent with Wellesley College policies including, but not limited to, policies on alcohol and drug use, policies on harassment and sexual misconduct and the policy on hazing.

Trip leaders are considered responsible employees under Title IX and need to be educated on those duties. Trip leaders are mandatory reporters of all incidents of sexual discrimination (including sexual violence) and should be trained to handle complaints of sexual assault, domestic violence, dating violence and stalking. This includes being attentive to the needs and rights of both victims and alleged perpetrators. For more information, please contact the College's Title IX Coordinator, x2214.

Trip leaders are also designated as Campus Security Authorities (CSAs) under the Clery Act, and need to receive the same training as CSAs on the home campus. For more information, please contact the Lieutenant of the Wellesley College Police Department, x3883.

## 8. **Certificates of Insurance**

Sometimes the field trip destination, organization, or establishment will require a Certificate of Insurance from Wellesley College prior to use of their facility or event participation. If asked to provide this document, the Office of Risk Management ([riskmanagement@wellesley.edu](mailto:riskmanagement@wellesley.edu)) can provide a Certificate of Insurance for other parties. Please complete the form found here: <https://www.wellesley.edu/risk/certins> in order to submit a request for a certificate of insurance.

## 9. **Records and Documentation**

Field Trip Leaders should consider the nature of the field trip and review documentation to ensure that language is clear and accurate when providing information to participants or preparing informed consent forms or release statements. These are written records that should be obtained in advance of the field trip and easily accessible. We recommend that the Field Trip Leader keep copies, as well as maintain a back-up record in the departmental office. See the Appendix for sample forms.

- **Trip Authorization.** Ensure documentation exists at the departmental level indicating the trip is a College authorized program and retain a list of authorized attendees. The department should also have a copy of the itinerary and contact information.
- **Informed Consent and Emergency Release Form** (See Appendix). It is recommended that Field Trip Leaders use an informed consent form, which also includes medical information and emergency release authorization, for all academic field trips. This form is designed to give the student basic information about the trip, and to warn the student of the hazards involved. It also sets a standard for behavior, letting the student know that she is responsible for herself and that failure to follow guidelines may result in dismissal from the trip. It is not a waiver, since the student does not give up any rights in signing the agreement. Students under the age of 18 are generally treated like any other student for purposes of field trips, and do not need parental signatures for informed consent forms.
- **Liability Waivers and Releases** (See Appendix). Waivers and releases are only needed if activities during the academic field trip present dangers or risks to participants that are extraordinary. Please contact the Office of Risk Management,

[riskmanagement@wellesley.edu](mailto:riskmanagement@wellesley.edu) to request a customized release waiver to meet the specific needs of your field trip.

### **What Do I Do If Something Goes Wrong During the Field Trip?**

Emergencies can take two major forms: (1) something happens outside the trip or program that adversely impacts your ability to travel or complete the program; (2) something happens to one or more trip participants or program equipment.

- (1) If something happens outside the trip or program that adversely impacts your ability to travel or complete the program, it is important to contact the institution to
  - a. Inform the Dean on Call and the department of the probable delays
  - b. Confirm with the Controller that the Trip Leader has sufficient resources to meet the financial needs (food, shelter and transportation) until the group can safely return home
  - c. Work with the Dean on Call and designated others to inform students' family members about the delays and the college's response
  - d. If there are local security concerns, work with campus police and coordinate with local law enforcement on the best ways to ensure group safety
- (2) In the event of a personal emergency, Field Trip Leaders should attend to the injured and then determine what condition(s) or act(s) caused the injury or illness. The Field Trip Leader(s) should initiate any steps that are necessary to prevent similar incidents in the future.

Things to look for and document are:

- Specific sequence of events that led to the emergency situation.
- Conditions that may have contributed to the emergency situation.
- Statements from eyewitnesses, if available.

As soon as possible, contact your department, the Dean of Student's Office, and Campus Police to report the situation and receive assistance.

For College sponsored travel greater than 100 miles from campus, the College's Group Travel Accident Insurance and Travel Assistance Services are available to faculty, staff and students. Field Trip Leaders should become familiar with the coverage and bring brochures on the field trip. See the Appendix or <https://www.wellesley.edu/risk/facstaff/travel> for more information and email the Risk Manager, [riskmanagement@wellesley.edu](mailto:riskmanagement@wellesley.edu), with any specific questions.

Once it is possible to document the incident, the following procedures apply for reporting claims:

#### **Medical Claims**

- **Faculty and Staff Work-Related Injuries and Illnesses (Workers' Compensation)**

Faculty and staff that are part of sanctioned field trip experiences are considered to be working within the scope of their employment. If an injury occurs to an employee during the trip, employees are covered by Wellesley College's workers' compensation insurance policy as long as the accident or injury arises out of or during the course of their work activity.

Employees are responsible for notifying their supervisor of an injury or illness. The supervisor is then responsible for completing an Accident and Reporting Treatment (A.R.T.) form (See Appendix) and submitting it to the Office of Human Resources and the Office of Environmental Health and Safety within 24 hours, unless the accident resulted in a work-related fatality in which case it needs to be reported within 8 hours.

Incidents that are not reported may cause employees to be ineligible for future benefits related to this injury or illness. Please note: an employee cannot receive reimbursement for medical expenses from both Workers' Compensation and a group medical plan.

- **Students' Accidents or Injuries while Participating in a College Activity**

The Field Trip Leader(s) should use the Field Trip Incident Report form (see Appendix) to report any accident or injury to a student that occurs during a field trip. This information is necessary in order to provide the Office of Environmental Health and Safety with documentation that will assist the College in taking appropriate steps or corrective measures to eliminate hazards that may be connected with College activities or to help determine negligence on the part of the institution if required.

Students are responsible for their own medical insurance coverage for field trips just as they are while attending classes on campus. The student's medical insurance is considered primary unless it is established that the accident or injury was caused by a negligent act on the part of Wellesley College.

## **Property Claims**

All losses or damage to College property should be reported to the Office of Risk Management, [riskmanagement@wellesley.edu](mailto:riskmanagement@wellesley.edu). Please be advised - the use of personal property by employees or students while participating in a field trip is at the employee or student's own risk. Wellesley College does not pay for loss, theft or damage to personal property.

## **Vehicle Claims**

- **College Vehicles**

Report the accident immediately to Campus Police, x2121. Also report the accident to Motor Pool, x3280, as they can help to arrange for transportation in the event you need transportation back to campus. "Hit and run" and vandalism incidents are criminal incidents and should be reported within 24 hours to Campus Police or local police, if off-campus.

- **Non-Owned College Vehicle, Personal, or Borrowed Vehicle while you are Conducting College Business**

Report the accident to the Office of Risk Management, [riskmanagement@wellesley.edu](mailto:riskmanagement@wellesley.edu). See <https://www.wellesley.edu/risk/vehicles/accidents> for all accident reporting requirements.

### **Any additional questions???**

Please feel free to contact the College's Risk Manager at [riskmanagement@wellesley.edu](mailto:riskmanagement@wellesley.edu) for any questions related to this guide.

# Appendix

1. Checklist for Planning a Wellesley College Academic Field Trip
2. Field Trip Incident Report Form – for reporting student (non-employee) injuries
3. Student Waiver, Release and Participation Form
4. Emergency Medical Information Form and Medical Treatment Authorization

## **Important Links**

- Insurance Requirements for Rental Vehicles *SEE*  
<https://www.wellesley.edu/risk/vehicles/rental>
- Register your travel, obtain your travel assistance card  
<https://www.wellesley.edu/risk/facstaff/travel>
- Accident Reporting and Treatment (ART) Form – for reporting employee injuries *SEE*  
<https://www.wellesley.edu/sites/default/files/assets/departments/humanresources/files/forms/workerscomp.pdf>

# Checklist for Planning a Wellesley College Academic Field Trip

## Planning

- Obtain departmental approval (when appropriate) for field trip.
- Make sure that information concerning field trips is included in the course description and syllabus, and has a well-defined academic purpose.
- Secure written contracts if working with a collaborating entity who is coordinating all or part of trip responsibilities; submit contract to Risk Management and General Counsel for review prior to signing. Secure contracts for other Trip services, including transportation, facilities use, etc., as needed.
- Ensure that both Title IX and Campus Security Authority training has been completed as part of the responsibility of being a Field Trip Leader.
- Identify and follow Wellesley policies and procedures applicable to field trips such as:
  - Health and safety standards and policy on activities
  - Vehicle use
  - Orientation for faculty, staff and students
  - Required administrative written documentation
  - Student health and accident insurance
- Determine whether an Informed Consent Agreement or Waiver is to be used. If Waivers are needed, consult Risk Management.

## Accommodations

- Specify lodging and travel requirements in course description and syllabus (e.g., expected cost, and travel dates); provide details prior to field trip
- Inform all students to contact the Office of Disability Services X2434 to make any necessary arrangements
- Check and document cancellation policies when fees are collected as a group; if fees may not be recovered, check with Controller's office on purchasing trip insurance or covering student fees
- Arrange housing (family/home stay, same gender rooming preference, dorm, apartment, hotel, etc.). Choose group safety over cost when making housing arrangements when options are available.
- Arrange for meals or determine how meals will be gotten.
- Arrange for Transportation (air, bus, public transportation, rental vehicle, college owned vehicle, personal vehicle)

## Orientation Meeting

Discuss and provide written documentation on:

- Academic expectations – conditions of participation
- Approved and restricted activities
- Acknowledge risks and realities of field trip site or activities
- Behavioral expectations
- Any zero tolerance issues
- Consequences of student misconduct or threats to the safety of others
- Climate at the field trip site; include altitude issues if applicable
- Appropriate clothing and gear, do not overlook sunscreen and insect repellent
- Communication and information resources (phone, fax, e-mail, etc.)
- Emergency plans and incident reporting procedures (accidents, theft, problems with staff or other participants, illness, weather delays)
- Emergency contact information

- ❑ Cell phones/buddy systems
- ❑ Procedures for separation from group
- ❑ General safety and personal security
- ❑ Health and safety guidelines including any possible health hazards
- ❑ College policies that will apply:
  - College's Honor Code
  - Alcohol and other drug use policy
  - Sexual misconduct and hazing policies
  - Disciplinary policies
- ❑ Outline any relevant expenses (e.g., meals "on your own")
- ❑ Inform participants of required pre-trip documentation
  - Waivers, insurance coverage, permission forms

### **Clarify**

- ❑ All contracts and agreements
- ❑ Students' adult role in policy, information and procedures
- ❑ Expectations when students are acting independently of the program
- ❑ Insurance
- ❑ Medical coverage for students, faculty and staff
- ❑ Liability (institutional and personal)

### **Assemble paperwork you will be taking**

- ❑ Signed Emergency Medical Information Form
- ❑ Signed Informed Consent Forms
- ❑ Emergency contacts for each site
- ❑ Itinerary

### **Finally**

- ❑ Look forward to your trip as you are now a well-prepared Field Trip Leader!



# Wellesley College

## Academic Field Trips – Informed Consent Form

*Please Print the Following Information and Read and Sign the Following Agreement*

Participant Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
Class name/ No.: \_\_\_\_\_ Year / Semester \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_

### **Informed Consent and Assumption of Risk**

Wellesley College is a non-profit educational institution. References to Wellesley College (henceforth referred to as Wellesley) include its trustees, employees, volunteers, students, and participating organizations, agents and assigns.

I understand that one or more field trips are mandatory for completing the academic requirements of this class and I freely choose to participate in this class and its Field Trips to various locations as described in the class syllabus during the semester (henceforth referred to as the Trip). I understand that Trip Activities will include \_\_\_\_\_.

I understand that Wellesley is not an agent of, and has no responsibility for any third party including without limitation any sponsor which may provide any services including food, lodging, travel, or any equipment associated with the Trip.

I agree that participating in any activity is an acceptance of some risk of injury. I agree that my safety is primarily dependent upon my taking proper care of myself. I agree to make sure that I know how to safely participate in any activities, and I agree to observe any rules and practices that may be employed to minimize the risk of injury. I agree to stop and seek assistance if I do not believe I can safely continue in any activity. I agree to limit my participation to reflect my personal fitness level. I agree to wear or use proper protection or gear as dictated by the activity. I will not wear or use or do anything that would pose a hazard to myself or others, including using or ingesting any substance which could pose a hazard to myself or others. I agree that if I do not act in accordance with this agreement I may not be permitted to continue to participate in the Trip/s.

Despite precautions, accidents and injuries can occur. I understand that travel and other activities the Program may undertake may be potentially dangerous and that I may be injured and/or lose or damage personal property, or suffer financial loss as a result of participation in the Trip. Therefore, **I ASSUME ALL RISKS RELATED TO THE ACTIVITIES** including but not limited to:

- Death, injury or illness from accidents of any nature whatsoever, including but not limited to bodily injury of any nature whether severe or not which may occur as a result of participating in an activity or contact with persons or physical surroundings, including animals, insects or plants; arising from travel by air, car, bus, subway or any other means; death, injury or illness including food poisoning arising from the provision of food or beverage by restaurants or other service providers.
- Loss or injury as a result of a crime or criminal act, terrorism, war, civil unrest, riot, detention by a foreign government, arrest or other act of any government or authority.
- Theft or loss of my personal property during the Trip/s.
- Loss or injury as a result of natural disaster or other disturbances.
- Alteration including delay, extension or cancellation of the Trips due to natural disaster, civil unrest, war, terrorist attack, medical quarantine or any other disturbances or causes.

I further acknowledge that the above list is not inclusive of all possible risks associated with the Program, and that I am aware of the risks involved whether described or not. I hereby certify that I have full knowledge of the nature and extent of the risks inherent in the Trip/s and the use of facilities, equipment, or services in association with the Trip/s, and that I am voluntarily assuming all risks, whether known or unknown.

My signature below indicates that I have read, understood, and freely signed this agreement. I further certify that I am legally competent to sign this agreement. This agreement shall be construed and enforced in accordance with the laws of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, and I consent to the jurisdiction of said state.

### **IMPORTANT - READ ENTIRE AGREEMENT BEFORE SIGNING**

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_ month/day/year

# Wellesley College Emergency Medical Information Form

Information on this form will be used only for medical purposes in case of an emergency on this trip. Your medical information will only be accessible to the trip leader(s) and this document will be destroyed after the trip is over.

Name of Participant: \_\_\_\_\_

## **Emergency Contacts**

### Primary Contact

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Relationship to you: \_\_\_\_\_

Day Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Evening Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Cell: \_\_\_\_\_

Home Address: \_\_\_\_\_

### Secondary Contact

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Relationship to you: \_\_\_\_\_

Day Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Evening Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Cell: \_\_\_\_\_

Home Address: \_\_\_\_\_

## **Medical Insurance Information**

Insurance Company: \_\_\_\_\_

Primary Care Physician: \_\_\_\_\_ Doctor's Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

## **Allergies**

Please list any food, medication or other allergies you have: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

## **Medical Conditions**

Do you have any medical condition that requires special precautions or treatment? Yes No

If yes, please list (for example, diabetes, epilepsy, high blood pressure, heart disease, pulmonary disease such as emphysema or bronchitis, asthma, cancer, medication-dependent depression or anxiety):

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

I certify that the above information is correct to my knowledge.

SIGNATURE \_\_\_\_\_ DATE \_\_\_\_\_

## **MEDICAL TREATMENT AUTHORIZATION**

I, the undersigned, do hereby authorize Wellesley College and its agents or representatives to consent, on my behalf, to any medical/hospital care or treatment (including locations outside the U.S.) to be rendered upon the advice of any licensed physician. I agree to be responsible for all necessary charges incurred by any hospitalization or treatment rendered pursuant to this authorization.

Name Printed: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian's Signature (if participant is under 18 years of age) \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_