



Best Practices for Field and Study Abroad Experiences

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MISBEHAVIOR IN THE FIELD

John M. Pratte, University of Louisiana Monroe

In The News



- 1. Survey of Academic Field Experiences (PLOS ONE 2014)**
- 2. Signaling Safety (American Anthropologist, 2017)**
- 3. Headline events from large institutions (ex. Marchant at Boston University, Grissino-Mayer at Tennessee)**

Case Study Example



- **Dean's Office received complaint of possible discrimination by faculty member in grading in 2012**
- **Initial 3-student complaint ballooned to interviews with 45 students**
- **No definitive evidence of grade discrimination, but evidence of stalking, sexual harassment, and past bad behavior mishandled by previous administrators**
- **Hearing called to remove tenure and fire**

Case Study, Cont.



- **Hearing brought out evidence of misbehavior on field work, but stated in an incidental manner**
- **Entire department, including chair, had culture of rampant alcohol abuse on field courses**
- **Incidents of DWI, injuries, and sexual harassment as a result of this usage**
- **Faculty member allowed to resign after vote to remove tenure; currently on faculty at another R-1 institution**

Post Mortem



- **Culture had been handed down from previous generations of faculty**
- **Newer faculty were not as invested in this culture, but had gone along with it for fear of retaliation**
- **New directives and training put in place to remedy it, but follow-up relied on department chair's oversight**
- **Never really sure that edicts were followed; might have just been driven underground**



SAFETY IN FIELD RESEARCH

Michael Johnson, University of Central Florida

Missing UCF student

By **Etan Horowitz, Sentinel Staff Writer**
ORLANDO SENTINEL



AUGUST 12, 2006

Boyd Lyon grabbed onto the back of a 300-pound green sea turtle Thursday, and the two disappeared beneath the surface of the Atlantic Ocean. Lyon intended to drive the back of the creature's shell down with one hand and point the front up with the other, so that instead of diving, the turtle would be forced to lead him back to the surface.

It's a tricky maneuver. Most of the turtles on which he had tried it recently got away.

Lyon's fellow researchers waited nearby on a boat for him to emerge.

But he never did.

Missing UCF student



Freediving blackout?

We did not have a dive safety program, because we did not have diving research

We realized that we had no sense of risks that our faculty and students might be taking in their field research

Research Safety



UCF Environmental Health and Safety

About ▾

Offices and Services ▾

Training ▾

Policies and Procedures

Forms

- IRB – protect human subjects
- IACUC – protect animal subjects
- Environmental Health & Safety – protect researchers, but mostly lab safety (chemical, biological, radioactive, etc.)
- Travel approval – for travel to countries with political or criminal danger

Fire Safety >

Workplace Safety >

Laboratory Safety >

Chemical Safety >

Biological Safety >

Animal Research Exposure

Field Research

Environmental Management >

Building Codes >

Controlled Substances

Hazardous Waste >

Radiation Safety >

Laser Safety >

“Field Research”

EH&S “Field Research” Site



“Conducting field research is vital to many disciplines. Like working in a laboratory, it is important to take precautions.

Our office will help you through the necessary steps to be able to conduct field research that meets state and federal regulations. Among the forms, you’ll need to fill out are the [Field Research Safety Planning Record](#), [Field Research Health Form](#), and the [Fieldwork Safety Planning Form](#).

Our goal is to help you plan for ways to minimize risk while conducting research in the field, whether that be in the jungles of the Amazon or the British Library in London.”

**Well, not really.
The forms aren’t required.
But Biology uses the first one.**

Field Research Safety Planning Record



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Field Research Safety Plan

Field Research Safety Plan

The Safety Plan should be shared with all members of the field research team and kept on file with the PI. Multiple trips to the same location can be covered by a single Safety Plan, if the information remains the same. The Safety Plan will need to be sent to EHS when requested during IACUC protocol reviews.

Principal Investigator:

Department:

Phone Number:

E-mail Address:

Single Trip ☐ Re-Occurring Trips ☐
(If Re-Occurring, will there be major changes?) Yes ☐ No ☐

Dates of Travel: (List multiple dates if more than one trip is planned.)

Location of Field Research:

Name: _____ Functional Phone Number: _____
(Where research is conducted)

Address or coordinates: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Country: _____

Nearest Hospital: _____

Field Research: (Include a brief description of the field work.)

Contact 1:

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____ Cell: _____

E-mail: _____

Contact 2:

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____ Cell: _____

E-mail: _____

Emergency Procedures: (Include detailed plans for field location including evacuation and emergency communication)

First Aid Training: (List any members who are first aid trained and type of training they have.)

Required Training: (List all required training, e.g. chainsaw training, SOP for specific chemical, etc.)

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Field Research Safety Plan

Physical Demands: (List any physical demands required for this field research, e.g. climbing, temperature extremes, high altitude, etc.)

Risk Assessments: List identified risks associated with the activity or the physical environment (e.g. extreme weather, wild animals, endemic diseases, firearms, chemicals, etc.) List appropriate measure to be taken to reduce the risks.

Identified Risk	Control of Risk
1.	
2.	
3.	
4.	
5.	
6.	
7.	
8.	
9.	
10.	

Field Team Membership names and phone numbers:

Leader: _____ Phone Number: _____

Name: _____ Phone Number: _____

Name: _____ Phone Number: _____

Name: _____ Phone Number: _____

Name: _____ Phone Number: _____

Name: _____ Phone Number: _____

Field Research Safety Planning Record



University of Central Florida Field Research Safety Planning Record

This form is to be completed by the faculty Principal Investigator/Academic Supervisor to aid in the development of a safety plan. **The completed form should be shared with all the members of the field research team, submitted to the department/center chair or director, and kept on file in the department/center.** A single Planning Record may be used for multiple trips, provided the location, participants, and activities remain the same.

Principal Investigator/Academic Supervisor:	Department or Center:
UCF Contact During Travel (a person designated as an emergency contact): Name: Phone:	Local (Field) Contact During Travel (contact information for the field team): Name: Phone:
Dates of Travel (also attach detailed travel itinerary):	
Location of Field Research: Country: Geographical Site: Nearest City: (Name, distance from site)	
Nature of Field Research (a brief description):	
Emergency Contact Information: Nearest Hospital: (Name, distance from site) U.S. Embassy/Consulate: (Location, phone) Other phone numbers:	

Adapted from other universities

Faculty member fills out, Biology chair “approves” and files w EH&S

<https://ehs.ucf.edu/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/Field-Research-Safety-Planning-Record.pdf>

Asks faculty member to think about safety and use judgment

Field Research Safety Planning Record



Risk Assessment: List risks associated with the activity or the environment such as diving, boating, high altitude, extreme heat or cold, wild animals, endemic diseases, violence, etc. List appropriate measures to be taken to reduce the risks. Add extra lines as needed.

<i>Identified Risk</i>	<i>Control of Risk</i>
1.	
2.	
3.	
4.	
5.	
6.	

Travel Immunizations or Prophylaxis Required:

☐
☐

Altitude sickness medication

Diphtheria

☐
☐

Polio

Rabies

Other (specify):

☐

Better Practice?



- Regulation or policy specifying what is required of faculty and who is responsible for oversight
- What is included? Door-to-door surveys?
- Experienced faculty members should help draft
 - They care about safety, right?
 - “The graduate student alone in the wilderness is the last opportunity for ... something something romantic something”
- Field Research Safety Committee



LEARNING ABROAD OR IN THE FIELD: PREPARING STUDENTS

Kim Martin Long, University of New Orleans

THE INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION GUIDE FOR STUDY ABROAD

All students in the five international programs receive a common guide to rules and safety

It contains a rather long list of “DO NOT’s” including drunkenness, dishonesty, drugs, firearms, curfew violations, sexual misconduct, behavior that poses a threat to anyone, failure to comply with authority

Students sign and date the form, showing that they understand which offenses will result in dismissal

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION FOR STUDENTS

Like the field school materials, the study abroad guide includes information designed to enhance the experience and help with the cultural transition.

It includes a warning about political unrest and what to do.

The guide includes sections of the university's student conduct guide, including consequences, that are in effect while abroad.

UNIVERSITY OF NEW ORLEANS AND STUDY ABROAD

The guides prepared by faculty and staff at UNO are the result of 45 years of experience teaching abroad.

The first summer school was established in Innsbruck, Austria, in 1976.

Lots of trial and error has resulted in a comprehensive guide that may sound negative but that covers all potential incidents that could occur.

UNO ARCHAEOLOGY FIELD SCHOOL IN EUROPE

Dr. Ryan Gray has taken groups of students abroad twice now for international digs on his field school

The first, in summer 2017, collaborated with our partners at the University of Innsbruck and the department of defense (DPAA) to rescue the remains of a Tuskegee Airman.

The second, summer 2019, took place in Bavaria (Kempten, Germany) and worked on a buried city believed to be about 400 BCE.

PRE-DEPARTURE GUIDE

13-page document on preparing students for travel, safety, cultural expectations, etc.

It does have a disclaimer, as do all documents like this distributed to students:

“The University of New Orleans’ Division of International Education does not warrant or guarantee the accuracy or effectiveness of the following information. This information is presented only as suggestions for a safe trip and is intended generally to help students and their families in planning their international travel and education experiences.”

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Section 1: Travel

- Passport
- Getting to Munich & Kempten
- Group Flight
- Weekend Travel
- Train and Eurail Passes
- Accommodations for Weekend Travel
- Customs
- Car Rental (not recommended)

Section 2: Packing

Section 3: Housing

- Green Living Inn
- Smart Motel Kempten
- Electrical Appliances
- Towels, Linens, Blankets, Pillows
- Laundry

Section 4: Food

- Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
- Tipping

Section 5: Money

- ATM Cards & Credit Cards How much?
- How to Budget Yourself

Section 6: Program Policies

- Attendance
- Students with Disabilities
- Rules and Regulations

Section 7: Kempten and Germany

- Cultural Differences
- Cultural Events
- Public Transportation
- Sports

Section 8: Health and Safety

- Phones and Emergency Numbers
- Health
- Medical Support, Facilities, and Prescriptions
- Insurance
- Medical Responsibility
- Safety & Travel
- Additional Resources

The pre-departure guide is full of links, phone numbers, and other resources so that it acts as a “bible” of sorts for the student.

It contains this student agreement statement:

“I understand that during free time within the period of the program as well as before and/or after the period of the program I may elect to travel independently at my own expense. I agree that neither the University of New Orleans nor its agents or employees are responsible for me while I am traveling independently during such free time. I understand that such travel time will be unsupervised by the University, its agents, or employees. I also understand that I will be traveling during the program by various modes of transportation including but not limited to plane, train, bus, boat, van, or car, and I release the University of New Orleans and its agents or employees from any responsibility for loss of property, injury or death during such travel. I further agree that, in the event I become detached from the group, fail to meet a departure time (bus, train, etc.), or I become sick or injured, I will bear all responsibility to seek out, contact, and reach the group at its next available destination; and, I understand that I shall bear all costs attendant to contacting and reaching the program group or program site.”

OTHER MATERIALS GIVEN TO STUDENTS

Because Dr. Gray's field school is a collaborative learning experience, he also provides students with materials from partner organizations, such as

- The University of Innsbruck's document on field school safety
- The DPAA's emergency manual
- Army manuals devoted to describing various types of ordnance (since the area they were excavating could contain these from WW II).