

BOSTON COLLEGE

STUDENT GROUP TRAVEL POLICIES

Related to Service and Immersion Programs

I. General

Boston College recognizes the benefits of off-campus student/group travel in conjunction with academic, co-curricular, and service/immersion programs. Boston College also acknowledges the need for certain regulations and procedures to promote safety, maximize educational value, manage risk, minimize liability, and enable appropriate response in times of crisis.

These student travel guidelines are considered the minimum required for authorized, organized student travel. Departments, academic divisions, and/or registered student organizations may mandate additional standards as deemed necessary to address the unique goals or requirements associated with a particular type of organized student travel.

II. Definitions

University refers to Boston College.

For the purpose of these policies, *student travel* refers to voluntary, university-sponsored domestic and international trips for students, faculty, and staff.

A *sponsoring department* refers to the division, department, or school within the university that is organizing, administering, and financially supporting the program.

A *trip leader* refers to the full-time university faculty or staff person(s) who will prepare the student delegation for travel as well as accompany them on the trip.

An *appropriate administrator* refers to a dean, department director, vice president or university president.

III. Responsibility

All registered student organizations, faculty, and staff seeking to initiate a student trip through the university must receive approval from an appropriate administrator and have a sponsoring department. All trips that have been approved by an appropriate administrator and are being sponsored by a university department must be registered on an annual basis with the Volunteer and Service Learning Center.

For international trips, it is the responsibility of the sponsoring department to assign a trip leader and to assure compliance with these policies and associated procedures. Under no circumstances may an international trip be conducted without at least one trip leader present for the entirety of the trip.

The sponsoring department must advise students of rules regarding conduct during the trip including, but not limited to, those found in the *Boston College Student Guide: Code of Student Conduct*, as well as local, state, and federal laws at all times while traveling. When and if disciplinary issues arise on a student trip, the sponsoring department must report this

to the Office of the Dean for Student Development. In the event of gross misconduct, a trip leader may send a student participant back to campus, with all associated return travel costs being the responsibility of the student.

Sponsoring departments planning organized travel outside the United States are responsible for assuring that no State Department Travel Warning recommends against travel by U.S. citizens to the destination country. Travel is not permitted to countries where the U.S. State Department warns U.S. citizens against travel (via internet: http://travel.state.gov/warnings_list.html). Details on how to acquire specific information on international travel safety guidelines can be obtained through the Volunteer and Service Learning Center.

IV. Required Documentation

In order to ensure quality, promote safety, manage risk, minimize liability, and enable appropriate response in times of crisis, Boston College requires the following documentation:

1. Terms and Conditions of Participation. All student travelers must sign a terms and conditions of participation form verifying that they understand and accept the risks involved in participating in an activity involving travel, that they agree to release and hold harmless Boston College, including all employees or agents of the University, that they have been informed about any immunization recommendations, and that they assume responsibility for their behavior while on the trip. Students under the age of eighteen (18) must have this form signed by a parent or legal guardian.
2. Medical Information. A medical history and information form must be submitted by all trip participants. Sponsoring departments should keep one copy of this form on file, submit a copy to University Health Services and send one copy with the faculty/staff trip leader. Boston College assumes no responsibility for medical coverage of student travelers. It is required that each student, staff or faculty member have their own medical and accident insurance. Any costs not covered by insurance will be the responsibility of the traveler. Insured travelers must carry their insurance cards with them on the trip.
3. Itinerary. The sponsoring department or trip leader must provide appropriate trip information to all students traveling. The itinerary should also be kept on file within the department.
4. Emergency Contact Information. All trip participants are required to provide emergency contact information to the sponsoring department. One copy of this form should be submitted to the Boston College Police Department prior to departing for travel, one copy should be left with a contact person within the University department, and one copy should be taken on the trip by the trip leader.
5. Passport Information. For students traveling internationally, it is recommended that two copies be made of passport information. One copy should be left behind with a contact here in the U.S., and one copy should accompany the student on the trip, but stored separately from the original passport document. In the event that a passport is lost or stolen while abroad, having this copied information can prove very helpful in acquiring a replacement passport at a U.S. embassy.
6. Evaluation. Student participants and trip leaders will be asked to submit an evaluation of the trip in order for the university to assess the effectiveness of the program. Evaluation

forms will be collected by the Volunteer and Service Learning Center, and shared with sponsoring departments.

V. Standards and Conduct

While each trip travels to unique settings, there are general expectations for any university sponsored trip:

1. The trip leader(s) assume primary responsibility for the safety and well-being of student participants, and they are to remain with the student delegation for the entirety of the experience.
2. The trip leader – student ratio for international trips will be 1:10, with a minimum of two trip leaders for any team with more than ten and less than eighteen students. In cases calling for more than one trip leader, an experienced graduate student or other non-undergraduate person affiliated with the university may serve in this role. It is always highly preferable to have more than one trip leader on all trips.
3. Trip leaders are expected to stay in the same lodging accommodations as the student participants.
4. No student is permitted to leave the group, and no student should be left behind during the trip. In the case of illness, arrangements should be made to leave a second trip leader with the ill student.
5. Students and trip leaders are expected to abide by the standards of personal and professional conduct set forth by the university, as well as those established by local and national laws.
6. Student participants are expected to adhere to the direction of the trip leader, and respect the authority of both the trip leader and representatives of the local host organization.
7. The possession and/or use of illegal drugs by any member of a traveling delegation will be grounds for immediate dismissal from the team, and, if warranted, the offending person will be sent home at his or her own expense.
8. Laws for the consumption of alcohol, as well as the legal drinking age of individual team participants, vary. This is particularly true when traveling outside of the U.S. Trip leaders may establish restrictions, or an absolute prohibition, concerning alcohol consumption during a trip. These guidelines should be made clear to all participants in the weeks before the team travels. It is a violation of university conduct to abuse alcohol in any way.
9. Teams are expected to stay together during the evening hours. Students should not be allowed to go out on their own or in small groups during free evening hours. Trip leaders are expected to exercise good judgment and be sensitive to the potential dangers that accompany travel outside of the U.S.

VI. Host Organizations

Trips which travel domestically or internationally for service and immersion programs are expected to coordinate their activities with a host organization or institution. Particularly when leaving the U.S., it is important that student trips are affiliated with established

programs which can assist them with housing, transportation, meals, translation, emergency assistance, and other logistical services which are necessary for the success of the trip.

It is the responsibility of the sponsoring department and assigned trip leaders to establish these relationships, to coordinate all aspects of the itinerary, and to maintain ongoing contact with these host organizations. Special care should be taken to insure that the relationships created and the service rendered by students contributes positively and is not offensive in any way to the community visited.

VII. Transportation

Various modes of transportation may be required for student/group travel. Each mode of transportation requires that common and mode-specific safety precautions (e.g. seatbelts in use) be used at all times. In addition to following applicable local, state, and federal laws and using sound judgment when traveling, students and university personnel must follow the guidelines associated with this policy according to the specific mode of travel involved. Travel conditions and weather forecasts must be considered prior to departure on any travel involving students.

1. Vehicles Owned, Leased, Rented or borrowed by the University. All drivers operating University owned, rented, leased or borrowed vehicles as part of organized student/group travel must:

- a) be a full or part-time faculty or staff member, or student employee
- b) be a volunteer who has been authorized to drive by the sponsoring department or organization
- c) be at least 18 years of age
- d) possess a valid Massachusetts or other state driver's license
- e) possess an acceptable driving record

2. 15-passenger Vans. Due to growing evidence demonstrating the tendency for 15-passenger vans to tip over, the university discourages departments and student groups from using these vehicles whenever possible. If a 15-passenger van is used, recommendations outlined by the National Highway and Traffic Safety Association (www.nhtsa.gov) should be consulted and adhered to. An appropriate administrator must approve the use of a 15-passenger van for student travel.

3. Privately Owned Vehicles. Drivers of privately owned vehicles being used for university sponsored travel must have a valid Massachusetts or other state driver's license and possess personal automobile insurance coverage, and their vehicles must have a current registration. The owner, driver, and passengers of private cars assume liability in the event of accidents.

4. Commercial Travel. Students traveling by commercial air or land transportation, whether domestic or international, must comply with all laws regulating travel and the rules of the specific carrier.

5. Safety Requirements. Drivers and passengers must act responsibly and use sound judgment when traveling. Further, drivers must:

- a) Obey all traffic laws and regulations, including posted speed limits
- b) Not drive under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs or transport or possess alcoholic beverages, illegal drugs, unauthorized firearms or other types of weapons.

- c) Wear seat belts at all times. The number of occupants in the vehicle must not exceed the number of seat belts.
- d) Not exceed the vehicle manufacturer's recommended load capacity (see owner manuals for specific instructions).
- e) Avoid horseplay, racing or other distracting or aggressive behavior.

A copy of these policies and all related forms are available at the Volunteer and Service Learning Center. They may be downloaded at <http://www.bc.edu/offices/service/resources/>

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