



Educational visits procedure

For the avoidance of doubt, please note that throughout this document, any reference to the Course Leader or Academic Officer should be understood to refer to the Foundation Course Leader or Foundation Academic Officer for trips involving Foundation students. For a visit organised through any other service of the University, any reference to the Director, Course Leader and Head of Technical Services should be understood to refer to the Director and relevant Health & Safety professional.

1.0 PRINCIPLES

- 1.1 Educational visits are valued by course teams for providing enhancement to the curriculum by extending the range of contextual references and learning experiences for students. Educational visits may also inform the vocational relevance of the course through attendance at professional events and biennale.
- 1.2 However, we must recognise the cost of these visits and the demands generated upon staff in their organisation. It is therefore essential to observe the principles outlined here in considering the role of educational visits within the student experience.
- 1.3 Course teams should decide on the priority for their course in terms of the curriculum, and plan well in advance with a view to maximum student participation. This may mean that a course offers a visit every alternate year to all year groups, or has one visit each year for a particular year group.
- 1.4 Course teams may seek to collaborate across academic offices / subject areas to share organisation and ensure viable group size.
- 1.5 There are many factors affecting cost-effectiveness and viable group size, and these will need to be decided on a case-by-case basis. However, the guiding principle is that a minimum of two members of staff accompany the visit and that, therefore, the minimum group of students should be 20. This does not imply that the ratio is in all cases to be 1 staff:10 students. A risk assessment should determine the appropriate staff:student ratio.
- 1.6 Adequate and appropriate arrangements must be in place for those students not participating in the visit.
- 1.7 No visits that would fall within expected times of attendance should be suggested or encouraged by course teams if they are not to be organised and accompanied by staff.

- 1.8 The cost of the visit to students must include all direct costs of the visit including transfers, agreed staff expenses etc. except in agreed exceptional cases.
- 1.9 To support the planning process, and minimise the associated risks, the following forms are provided:
- i) A checklist, to act as an aide memoire for the visit organiser. This should be lodged with the Academic office before travel.
 - ii) Educational Visit Form Part A: This is a summary form which should be used to gain agreement in principle from the Director / Foundation Course Leader. No detailed planning should be undertaken, and under no circumstances should any money be paid, before this form has been signed.
 - iii) Educational Visit Form Part B: This provides the detailed information about the visit, and must be signed by the Director / Foundation Course Leader at least five days before travel. A copy must be lodged with the Academic office / Foundation Course Leader, as this form contains essential information about the visit.
 - iv) Risk assessment template: This should be attached to Part B when it is presented to the Head of Technical Services.

All forms are available on the Intranet under: <https://intranet.aub.ac.uk/quality-standards/Pages/Quality-and-Standards-Forms-and-Guides.aspx>

2.0 BEFORE YOU GO – ideally the previous academic year for international trips

In order that we are all prepared for the unexpected emergency that can happen with even the most carefully planned visit, and to avoid the problems caused by poor organisation, all Visit Leaders must comply with the following requirements for planning educational visits. These requirements apply to all visits whether local, day return or with overnight stays in this country or abroad.

- 2.1 Visit Leaders should include the timing of visits in their planning and in their timetable information to CELCAT the year before.
- 2.2. An Educational Visits Information and Risk Assessment Form (EVIRA form) must be completed for all visits. (The form is attached as an appendix to this guidance note).
- 2.3 Before consulting students regarding the possibility of a visit, the outline itinerary and EVIRA form Part A must be agreed with the Course Leader and the Director of School or Foundation Course Leader. For proposed overseas visits, the Visit Leader should refer to the Foreign and Commonwealth Office website for travel safety information regarding the intended destination (<https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice>), and report any warnings or advice about travel. The Visit Leader is further advised to review any additional sources of information recommended by the Estates Manager. The trip will only be approved by the Director / Foundation Course Leader where the risk is considered to be low. *NB Only employees and enrolled students of the University are to be included in the party of any education visit, unless expressly agreed in exceptional circumstances.*

- 2.4 A copy of this paperwork once approved must be placed with the School Office / Foundation Course Leader before offering the visit to students or making bookings with travel firms.
- 2.5 If one or more of the group of students is known to have a disability, specifically one which may make travel or accommodation difficult, this must be discussed at the earliest opportunity. It is illegal to arrange course-related activities which would benefit all students, whilst not making suitable alternative arrangements for anyone who is unable to attend for reasons of a disability.
- 2.6 An Educational Visit is offered as a 'package'. It is not open to students to make their own travel or accommodation arrangements, and participate in the programme. This reflects the University's duty of care for students who are undertaking scheduled activity (see also 3.9ff below).

3.0 BEFORE YOU GO – at least 10 weeks before international travel & 5 weeks for UK trips

- 3.1 A full itinerary should be given to the Academic Office / Foundation Course Leader. This itinerary should include dates/times of departures and returns, destinations, pick-up and drop off points and staff names.
- 3.2 In providing information about the trip to students, the Visit Leader must ensure that all relevant information about the destination is provided. This must include any cautionary advice given on the FCO website, as well as any additional information about cultural differences, or local safety matters. The Visit Leader is also responsible for ensuring that students are aware of the financial implications of the visit, including any costs they will incur in entering the country, or transferring to/from their hotel. In paying for the trip, the student is acknowledging any risks which have been identified, and the full cost.
- 3.3 The Visit Leader must ensure that all bookings are made against presented passports in order that travel tickets are made in exactly the same name as the passport and to check passports are current (i.e. valid for at least six months beyond the travel date).
- 3.4 The University has insurance that is likely to cover most visits. However, the Visit Leader must advise the Head of Estates and Campus Services of the planned visit and obtain confirmation that the visit is covered by our insurance; the EVIRA form will help with assessing this. All Home/EU students must be advised to travel with a European Health Insurance card.
<http://www.nhs.uk/NHSEngland/Healthcareabroad/EHIC/Pages/about-the-ehic.aspx>
- 3.5 All students are required to declare all medical conditions for visits with an overnight stay. This should form part of the booking process, and any student declining to complete the declaration should be excluded from the visit. Any student with a declared medical condition may need to take their own insurance cover.
- 3.6 Reasonable adjustments must be in place for students with a disability. Students will be invited to declare any relevant disability at the earliest opportunity, and certainly before booking their place, to provide the Visit Leader with sufficient time to make suitable arrangements. The Senior Disability Officer will be able to advise on any specific queries.

- 3.7 Travel welfare guidance: In providing information about the trip to student, the Visit Leader should ensure that general welfare guidance is included, such as advice against excessive alcohol consumption. They should also check specific arrangements about the journey to be undertaken (for example, whether coaches have toilet facilities or whether breaks need to be scheduled; whether food and drink will be available en route). Detailed information should be provided to students.
- 3.8 In addition, the Visit Leader should consider the likely / prevailing weather conditions, and whether students are likely to need cold and wet weather clothing, or protection from the sun. This information may, on occasion, be updated shortly before the trip, and it should be clear to students that they also have a responsibility to ensure that they are prepared.
- 3.9 Exceptionally, one or more members of the trip may wish to leave the group at the conclusion of activities (i.e. before the homeward journey). In such cases, each student concerned must make this request in writing to the visit leader in advance, setting out their reasons. Such a request will not unreasonably be refused, although the visit leader will need to take account of matters of safety, and also ensure that the student will not be missing scheduled teaching sessions. The Visit Leader will need to sign to confirm agreement, and keep a copy of the request (notifying all relevant parties including the Academic Office).
- 3.10 If such a request is approved, the University will not be responsible for the student from the time they leave the group (at the conclusion of scheduled activities).
- 3.11 The cost to the student will not normally be varied. Exceptionally, and with the agreement of the Visit Leader and the Director of School, the University may agree to reduce the cost by the equivalent of the return journey, where this involves the purchase of individual tickets. Under no circumstances will shared costs (such as coach hire) be deducted.
- 3.12 For some local events, it may be that students are invited to make their own way to the venue, and that the University arranges transport for those who request it. In such cases, a charge will only be made to those who sign up for travel.

4.0 MONEY MATTERS

- 4.1 The Visit Leader must submit the completed pro-forma to Finance for setting up a control account.
- 4.2 There must be a date by which students should have made their payment to Finance so that there is time to cancel any visits that will be uneconomic. Students must receive clear written advice that deposits are non-refundable.
- 4.3 In no circumstances should full payment/confirmation of places/seats be made to travel companies without full payment having been made by every student. Students must be advised that if they fail to pay their balance by the deadline then they lose their place and their deposit.
- 4.4 It is a student's responsibility to ensure that they have any necessary visas and a valid passport/travel document (i.e. valid for at least 6 months beyond the travel date). For international students, the International Office may be able to offer advice

on the requirements. Students not possessing the necessary documents (passport and/or visa) will be unable to join the trip, but any monies they have paid will be retained and not returned to them.

- 4.5 The Visit Leader is responsible for booking the visit and all financial matters with agreed administrative support from the School Office. Purchase orders and invoices will be approved by the Director of School / Foundation Course Leader and copies will be kept by the Academic Office / Foundation Course Leader.
- 4.6 The Visit Leader should consider how any emergency expenditure will be covered, and if appropriate, discuss with Finance the option of taking a Caxton Debit Card on the visit.

5.0 BEFORE YOU GO – just before travel

- 5.1 The completed EVIRA form Part B must be submitted to the School Technical Manager at least five working days before the visit. The School Technical Manager will review the form, with particular attention to the risk assessment, and if satisfied with the information provided, will sign the form and forward it to the Director / Foundation Course Leader for counter-signature. Note that the Visit Leader should review the guidance on the FCO website again, to confirm any changes since the initial submission.
- 5.2 The Academic Office will confirm to the Visit Leader that approval has been given; under no circumstances may a visit be undertaken (or commenced) for which formal approval has not been given by the Director of School.
- 5.3 An updated student list and complete contact details must be left with the Academic Office / Foundation Course Leader and Reception.
- 5.4 The Visit Leader must have with them the means for paying for any additional expenses caused by an emergency (e.g. a credit card etc).
- 5.5 A full student list and a copy of the EVIRA form should be given to each member of staff travelling with the group.
- 5.6 The Visit Leader should obtain a mobile phone from ITCS and inform all students of emergency contact numbers and visit details. There must be clear arrangements for maintaining contact in the case of an emergency.
- 5.7 First Aid arrangements: Advise students to take personal medication as necessary e.g. travel sickness tablets. Ensure students are aware of how to obtain emergency medical care.

Pre-existing medical conditions: Make sure students understand their responsibilities with regards to existing medical conditions.

- 5.8 Staff should record details of any accident and complete the accident form on the intranet immediately having returned to work.

6.0 WHEN YOU ARE THERE – during the visit

- 6.1 The Visit Leader must complete a register and designate appropriate assembly points on the coach before leaving and again on the coach before the return journey, component journeys and outings as part of overseas/overnight visits.
- 6.2 For overseas/overnight visits the Visit Leader should make arrangements for a twice-daily register. Contact should be made with missing students to verify their whereabouts. If a student misses two consecutive registers the Visit Leader should inform the police and hospitals should be checked for emergency admissions. The Visit Leader should inform the AUB emergency contact that the student is missing. Contact should be maintained with the AUB at all times.
- 6.3 If a student falls ill, is hospitalised or is arrested the Visit Leader must get full information on the situation and inform the AUB emergency contact.
- 6.4 Staff on the visit should make every effort to ensure that students conform to the AUB Code of Conduct and for overseas trips, and adhere to local laws or regulations such as restrictions on drinking alcohol. However, staff are not expected to be 'on call' for every hour of the visit. Students are held accountable for their own behaviour.
- 6.5 For visits abroad, the Visit Leader should maintain contact at regular intervals with the School Office and expect to be contacted by the Director of School / Academic Office at least once during the visit.
- 6.6 Suitable arrangements must be in place in case of emergency. The Visit Leader and all other staff on the trip should be aware of who to contact outside UK working hours (usually another member of the subject team, or the Director of School); and the emergency contact must ensure he/she is available and contactable, and able to pass on any information to relevant University staff.

7.0 IF A STUDENT IS NOT PRESENT FOR THE RETURN JOURNEY

- 7.1 For visits within the UK, the party will normally wait for 30 minutes, and the staff team will attempt to telephone any missing student at least twice (towards the beginning and the end of this period). If one or more students are still not present, the Visit Leader should telephone the AUB emergency contact to notify them. The Visit Leader, in discussion with fellow staff members, should determine whether to remain behind for the student, or to proceed on the journey home with the rest of the party. This will depend on a variety of factors.
- 7.2 For visits abroad, failure to be present for the return journey is deemed an emergency and the Visit Leader should follow the process below.
- 7.3 If a student has not turned up after 30 minutes the Visit Leader must wait at the rendezvous while the rest of the party return. The Visit Leader should telephone AUB emergency contact at this point.
- 7.4 If a student has not turned up after an hour and a half the Visit Leader should inform the local police, and hospitals should be checked for emergency admissions. Contact should be maintained with the AUB at all time.

- 7.5 If there is still no contact with the student and all possibilities have been exhausted, ensure that the local police have the AUB contact details before the Visit Leader returns. All reasonable expenses will be reimbursed by the University promptly on submission of a claim.
- 7.6 On return from the overseas visit, the Visit Leader should attend a debrief meeting with the Director of School and the Head of Technical Services and submit a written report detailing all incidents of concern.