

HORRY-GEORGETOWN TECHNICAL COLLEGE

PROCEDURE

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Related Policy: 8.1.1
Title: Field Trips/Student or Group Travel
Responsibility: Vice President for Academic Affairs
Vice President for Student Affairs

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President

I. Field Trip/Student or Group Travel Procedure

For the purpose of this procedure, “field trip” is meant to convey an out-of-the-ordinary and off-Campus experience requiring participant travel. Field trips and travel may be categorized as out-of-area or in-area, depending upon the nature and destination of the experience. “Out-of-area” is defined as any location outside the Horry-Georgetown Technical College service area of Horry and Georgetown counties. “In-area” is defined as any location within the Horry-Georgetown Technical College (HGTC) service area of Horry and Georgetown counties. Section I through Section VII of this procedure govern all out-of-area travel with HGTC students, in- and out-of-area field trips with minor participants—not including transport to and from regular campus activities—and all travel requiring overnight stays.

In-area field trips/travel and learning experiences involving HGTC students and such as are typical to the College environment, including site visits, demonstrations, field work, lab activities and other appropriate activities offered as a part of or supplement to learning, are governed by Section VIII of this procedure, as well as all other applicable policies and procedures.

HGTC recognizes the benefits of off-campus student/group travel in conjunction with academic, co-curricular, and College sponsored programs. HGTC 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.

It is the responsibility of the Field Trip Sponsor of the organized student/group travel (College Department, registered student organization, academic program, College employee, etc.) to assure compliance with all applicable College policies and procedures. If an individual student travels under this policy, a full time College employee (Field Trip Sponsor) must assume the responsibility for compliance with all applicable policies and procedures.

The parameters set forth in this Procedure apply to College-authorized travel for currently enrolled HGTC students and/or participants in HGTC-sanctioned programs for services, i.e., Upward Bound. The College is not responsible for any unauthorized travel, including such travel done outside the guidelines listed herein.

II. Field Trip Sponsor Responsibilities for Field Trips

Field Trip Sponsors must be a full-time employee of Horry-Georgetown Technical College. The Field Trip Sponsor must ensure that a completed, signed Travel Authorization Form is submitted to the Finance Office at least fifteen (15) working days (Monday-Friday) in advance of any trip if applicable. Field Trip Sponsors must obtain all written approvals via the signed Field Trip Notification Form and Roster to include the signatures of the Academic Chair, Dean, Vice President for Academic Affairs at least ten (10) working days before a scheduled field trip or class activity away from campus. Field Trip Sponsors must specify how the proposed field trip is related to the course objective or club mission. Field Trip Sponsors are responsible for making all trip preparations, including transportation and registrations.

In addition, Field Trip Sponsors traveling with Student Engagement fees must also obtain the signature of the Vice President for Student Affairs on the Field Trip Notification and Roster.

Original signed trip forms will be maintained in the Office of Student Affairs and copies of the trip forms will be sent to Academic Affairs.

- A. Travel Authorization Form;
- B. Field Trip Notification and Roster;
- C. Voluntary Assumption of Risk, Waiver & Release Agreement; and
- D. Consent for Medical Treatment

After a trip is completed, all travel paperwork will be imaged and become a permanent record of the College.

All students/groups must be accompanied by a full-time member of the faculty or a full-time College staff employee (Field Trip Sponsor) regardless of the mode of travel, except in the following instances:

- A. Permission received from Vice President for Academic Affairs in-area travel supervised by Adjunct Faculty.

- B. Adult students arrange their personal travel, pursuant to Section IV of this procedure. The Field Trip Sponsor is responsible for compliance with all applicable policies and procedures.

The ratio of chaperones to participants must be as follows: In area trips 1:30, out of area or overnight travel 1:20. Faculty/staff must prepare viable alternatives of equal grading value or attendance credit for students who are not able to attend a required field trip or who refuse to sign the necessary forms. Students who refuse to sign necessary forms will not be permitted to participate in the field trip.

Any HGTC employee traveling with a student group shall not consume alcoholic beverages at any time during the trip, including while traveling to and from sites to be visited.

Field Trip Sponsors shall not engage in willful misconduct including, but not limited to:

- A. Using alcohol or controlled substances while on the trip,
- B. Engaging in solicitous relationships
- C. Placing students in clearly dangerous circumstance
- D. Not taking appropriate, expedient action (such as sending the student home, if prudent), when it becomes evident that a student is placing themselves or the group in danger, and
- E. Hosting or condoning an occasion where any of the above is violated.

The Field Trip Sponsor shall inform students participating in the trip of their responsibilities related to the instructional/classroom time they may miss as follows:

- A. At least ten (10) instructional weekdays (Monday-Friday) in advance, students participating in a trip should notify the instructors of courses/classes they will miss as a result of participating in the trip.
- B. Students should inform those instructors of the days and times they will be absent and request appropriate arrangements to make up missed assignments.

While on the trip, the Field Trip Sponsor must maintain a copy of the Voluntary Assumption of Risk, Waiver, & Release Agreements and the Consent for Medical Treatment forms which must be completed by students as a condition of participation.

Individual departments or groups may have further requirements for approval of student/group

travel which must be submitted to the appropriate Academic Chair, Dean, Vice President for Academic Affairs and/or Vice President for Student Affairs for review and authorization, in advance.

III. Student/Field Trip Sponsor Responsibilities for Field Trips

It is the responsibility of the Field Trip Sponsor and student participants to advise of any known limitations, special disabilities, certified medical conditions, or needs that may require an accommodation. In the event of any emergency or severe behavioral/conduct violation involving students, the Field Trip Sponsor must immediately take responsible, reasonable action to the address the situation and must notify his/her direct supervisor and/or the Vice President for Student Affairs by telephone as soon as possible.

The Field Trip Sponsor must advise students of rules and regulations regarding conduct during the trip including, but not limited to, hotel curfew and responsibility for obligations, purchases or damages incurred by the students/group. Any student traveling on a College-sponsored, recognized, or funded trip will be subject to enforcement of the HGTC Student Code of Conduct and local, state, and federal laws at all times while traveling on an authorized trip. No student traveling on a College-sponsored, recognized, or funded trip may use alcohol or illegal drugs at any time while on a trip. The Field Trip Sponsor must report any disciplinary issue to the Vice President for Student Affairs immediately.

IV. Required Documentation

Field Trip Sponsor Responsibilities:

Travel Authorization Form. All requests for student/group travel must be initiated by the Field Trip Sponsor, as outlined in Section I, and authorized in advance. The Field Trip Sponsor must ensure that a completed, signed Travel Authorization Form is submitted to the Finance Office at least fifteen (15) working days (Monday-Friday) in advance of any trip.

Field Trip Notification Form and Roster. Field Trip Sponsors must obtain all written approvals via the signed Field Trip Notification Form and Roster to include the signatures of the Academic Chair, Dean and Vice President for Academic Affairs at least ten (10) working days before a scheduled field trip or class activity away from Campus. Advisors to student organizations must obtain written approval via the signed Field trip Notification Form and Roster from the Vice President for Student Affairs at least ten (10) working days prior to the field trip.

Itinerary/Orientation. The Field Trip Sponsor must also provide appropriate trip information to all students traveling. (e.g. pre-trip meeting/orientation, date and time of departure and duration of trip, mode of travel, number of chaperones, purpose of trip, known hazards, special clothing or equipment required because of planned group activities, weather, or other conditions, etc.) Upon receipt of trip information, all participants and/or their legal guardian(s) will be required to provide a signed Voluntary Assumption of Risk, Waiver & Release Agreement and Consent for

Medical Treatment. Further, an orientation meeting is recommended for all trips, and a parent/guardian orientation is required for all trips involving minors.

The following are the minimally required documents that must be obtained from each participant and submitted at least ten (10) working days (Monday-Friday) prior to trip departure. When submitted, the documents must contain all required signatures. Participants unwilling or unable to provide required documentation will not be permitted to participate in the field trip.

Participant Documentation:

Voluntary Assumption of Risk, Waiver & Release Agreement. In order that students, parents, and/or legal guardians may fully appreciate and assess the risks associated with the off-campus activity and make an informed decision about whether or not to participate in the activity, or limit participation in certain aspects of the field trip, all student/group travelers and/or their parent/guardian must complete a Voluntary Assumption of Risk, Waiver and Release Agreement form. This form will verify that the student travelers and/or their parent/guardian understand and accept the risks involved in participating in the travel activity, assume full responsibility for their behavior, and voluntarily agree to release the College from liability for any claims or injuries that may arise from their participation in the activity. Field Trip Sponsors will maintain a copy of the Voluntary Assumption of Risk, Waiver and Release Agreement. During the field trip, original signed forms will be maintained in the Office of Student Affairs and a copy in the Office of Academic Affairs. After the field trip, the original forms will be imaged and saved on a secure server on the College's network. After the forms are imaged, the originals will be shredded.

Consent for Medical Treatment. All student/group travelers (including minors) must complete a Consent for Medical Treatment form that authorizes medical treatment in the event of an emergency during the off-campus trip. Minor students must obtain the signature of a parent or guardian on this form. Field Trip Sponsors will maintain a copy of the Consent for Medical Treatment. As outlined in Section I, original signed forms will be maintained in the Office of Student Affairs, and a copy of the signed forms will be maintained in the Office of Academic Affairs.

Medical Coverage. HGTC assumes no responsibility for medical coverage of student travelers. It is recommended 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 or proof of insurance with them on the trip.

V. Modes of Travel/Transportation

Absent extraordinary circumstances (specifically approved by the President or Vice President), no personal vehicles shall be used by any College personnel for transporting students on field trips. This does not preclude adult students from providing their own transportation to and/or from events or sanctioned travel opportunities, providing the student

notifies Field Trip Sponsor in advance of departure and provides all required documentation as outlined in Section III. In such instances, the student assumes all liability as a driver and waives College liability for their actions as a driver.

Absent extraordinary circumstances (specifically approved by the President or Vice President), field trip transportation offered by Horry-Georgetown Technical College shall be conducted by:

- A. Fully insured, properly licensed professional drivers using either licensed commercial/charter vehicles or vehicles owned and maintained by the State of South Carolina that meet all appropriate safety standards, including but not limited to: use of passenger restraints, and occupant protection requirements.
- B. Field Trip Sponsors or chaperones driving College cars or vehicles rented by the College shall be deemed to have met the licensure and safety requirements.

Student use of College vehicles is governed by College Policy 4.2.4, Official Student Use of College Vehicles. Students operating a College vehicle must be directly supervised by the Field Trip Sponsor at all times.

Each mode of transportation requires that common and mode-specific safety precautions (e.g. seatbelts) be used at all times. In addition to following applicable local, state and federal laws and using sound judgment when traveling, students and College personnel must follow the procedures associated with this policy according to the specific mode of travel involved. Travel conditions must be considered prior to departure on any travel involving students, and the Field Trip Sponsor must exercise sound judgment in making decisions regarding travel.

- A. Vehicles owned, leased, rented or borrowed by the College. All drivers operating College owned, rented, leased or borrowed vehicles as part of organized student/group travel must:
 - 1. Be a full or part-time faculty or staff member and possess a valid South Carolina or other state driver's license or
 - 2. Be a currently enrolled student with the direct supervision of the Field Trip Sponsor and possess a valid South Carolina or other state driver's license.
- B. Commercial Travel. Students traveling by commercial transportation, must comply with all laws regulating travel and the rules of the specific carrier.
- C. Safety Requirements. Drivers and passengers must act responsibly and use sound judgment when traveling. Further, drivers must:

1. Obey all traffic laws and regulations, including posted speed limits.
2. 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 as indicated in the Code of Conduct.
3. Wear seat belts at all times. The number of occupants in the vehicle must not exceed the number of seat belts.
4. Not exceed the vehicle manufacturer's recommended load capacity (see owner manuals for specific instructions.)
5. Avoid horseplay, racing or other distracting or aggressive behavior.
6. Refrain from cell phone use while driving.
7. Refrain from eating while driving.

VI. Unapproved Expenses

Any unapproved travel-related expense incurred by the student, faculty or staff traveler is the responsibility of the respective traveler. Students must be informed that the College assumes no responsibility for providing student/groups with funds in case of unanticipated delays or other incidents, which may require additional expenditures. Reimbursement for emergency circumstances may be considered.

VII. Trip Contingencies and Emergencies

A. Trip Contingencies

Even with the best planning effort, things can still go wrong. Field Trip Sponsors or chaperones should try to anticipate complications that could arise, and develop contingency plans in advance. Examples of unplanned circumstances include, but are not limited to the following: student needs to return early because of a personal or family emergency; student violates established conduct rules; weather or transportation delays or cancellations require overnight housing. Field Trip Sponsors should seek to understand contract limitations and restrictions, whether they arise from rental vehicle, lodging, admission or other agreements. (Determine whether any portion of pre-paid trip expenses will be refundable, etc.)

B. Emergencies:

In the event of an emergency (e.g. car accidents, injuries, hospitalizations or death) or serious student behavioral conduct issue, Field Trip Sponsors or chaperones must

immediately seek professional assistance as required, and then immediately notify: 1) The listed emergency contact(s) for the student(s) involved, 2) the Vice President for Student Affairs, and 3) their respective academic chair/direct supervisor by telephone as soon as possible.

VIII. Special Requirements for Travel Involving Minors

The following requirements are specific to travel involving minors (e.g. student participants in Upward Bound, et al). These are in addition to other procedures outlined herein.

- A. All participants in overnight travel and events must be rising seventh-grade students or older.
- B. For travel involving minors, a mandatory orientation meeting with parents/guardians must be scheduled no fewer than fifteen (15) working days (Monday-Friday) prior to departure. Participants who are not represented at the meeting by parent/guardian will not be allowed to participate. At the mandatory meeting, all required documents will be distributed and all necessary forms collected.
- C. Required documents must be received no later than ten (10) working days (Monday-Friday) prior to travel or student participation will be disallowed. During the field trip, original signed forms will be maintained in the Office of Student Affairs and a copy will be maintained in the Office of Academic Affairs. After the field trip, the original forms will be imaged and saved on a secure server on the College's network. After the forms are imaged, the originals will be shredded.
- D. Only activities directly related to scheduled events shall be allowed, with absolutely no participation in unscheduled, unauthorized or unnecessarily risky activities. Activities will be outlined, scheduled and listed on the travel itinerary and strictly followed.
- E. It is the responsibility of participants and/or parents/guardians to inform the College of any existing certified medical condition that requires medication. Further, all participants with said condition(s) must be able to keep, monitor and administer all required medications without assistance; however, if assistance is required, the College reserves the right to determine what level of assistance is reasonable and does not negatively affect the rights or participation of other students.
- F. The ratio of chaperons to participants will be as follows: Generally, for minors to participate and specifically, as required for travel by Upward Bound program participants, the student to chaperone ratio will be in keeping with the guidelines set forth by area districts, but not to exceed 12:1.

- G. The College reserves the right to restrict, limit or disallow student participation if extenuating or unusual circumstances exist that do cause or may cause unnecessary risk or liability to the participant, faculty, staff or other participants.
- H. A signed Field Trip Rules of Conduct Form is required for students traveling with the Upward Bound Grants. During the field trip, original signed forms will be maintained in the Office of Student Affairs and a copy will be maintained in the Office of Academic Affairs. After the field trip, the original forms will be imaged and saved on a secure server on the College's network. After the forms are imaged, the originals will be shredded.

IX. In-Area Field Trips/Travel with HGTC Students

- A. Student/Field Trip Sponsor Responsibilities: It is expected that HGTC faculty, staff and students participating in in-area field trips/travel will exercise all appropriate caution and protocol, in keeping with applicable College policies and procedures, Student Code of Conduct for the South Carolina Technical College System State and Federal laws, and general safety guidelines.
- B. Required Documentation: The in-area Field Trip Sponsor is required to complete a Field Trip Notification Form and Roster, obtain written approval from the Academic Chair, appropriate Dean and Vice President for Academic Affairs. The originals should be sent to the Student Affairs Office and a copy to the Academic Affairs Office at least two working days (Monday – Friday) prior to departure. After the field trip, the original forms will be imaged and saved on a secure server on the College's network. After the forms are imaged, the originals will be shredded.
- C. Vehicles: Use of College Vehicles for in-area field trips/travel is governed by HGTC Policy 4.2.2, College Vehicle Usage.

X. Exceptions

Any exception to this procedure will only be granted by written authorization of the College President.