

Quick Guide to Field Trips and Away Days

The *LSE 2030 Strategy* (LSE, 2019) identifies events that enable students to make connections within their cohorts and across cohorts as one of the ways in which we will support students in developing innovative ways of learning, creating and collaborating.

Guidelines at a glance

There are many ways of organising field trips and away days, but the following guidelines might be helpful:

- **Where?**

Suitable venues do get booked up well in advance, so you do need to book a venue at an early stage of the planning. You can research the suitability of venues online, but you should visit the venue before confirming any booking if at all possible. At the end of this quick guide you will find a checklist to help you with researching venues.

- **What?**

There should be a theme for the trip, ideally connected to the curriculum at programme or course level. There should also be clearly defined learning outcomes. These should include 'higher order' learning outcomes such as analysis, creativity or critical thinking, but you should also consider outcomes linked to communication, team-working, professional expertise and functioning knowledge. Some examples would be:

- Methods practice (a mini research project)
- Object-based learning
- Simulations/serious games
- A 'lecture in the field' e.g. a guided walk

- **Student communication**

Details of the trip need to be included in a pre-registration email. These details should also be included in any welcome week sessions and reminders included in MT1 lectures and classes/seminars.

Students should be provided with a detailed itinerary with timings for learning activities, meals, social activities and in some instances bed-times/wake-up times.

- **Staffing**

Based on the nature of the activity you need to decide on the ideal staff-student ratio (usually around 10-15 students per staff member). You might want to consider using GTA/Fellows and/or undergraduate demonstrators (e.g. from 2nd- 3rd-year). You also need to consider how staff will be rewarded in workload models (e.g. Dept of Geography and Environment count each field trip day as equivalent to 5 hours teaching/marking). You also need to consider EDI issues such as caring responsibilities if the activities are outside normal working hours.

- **Social activities**

If the trip involves overnight stays you may want to organise social activities (e.g. quiz, film screening, guided walk), which can further help develop a sense of community. It is often a good idea to arrange these activities in partnership

with students. Whatever activities you organise you do have to be aware of EDI issues.

- **Outcomes**

You need to provide students with a clear message about the value of the trip and how they should articulate this on, for example, their CV. This information also needs to be shared with academic mentors.

You also need to consider whether the students will produce a tangible output as well as developing skills. You should also consider whether this output will be linked to assessment, and if it is what alternative will be available to students who were not able to go on the trip.

- Instagram/twitter #hashtag
- Photo competition

What are the benefits of field trips and away days?

Settings outside the classroom can enable students to practice developing skills in relatively low-stakes environments, and they can then draw on these experiences later when the stakes are higher (Bruffee, 1999).

When activities are structured around collaborative learning tasks, and particularly when those tasks include some aspect of 'real world' issues or roles, they can support students in:

- developing higher order thinking skills;
- building self-esteem;
- developing a range of communication skills;
- developing confidence and skills in the digital domain;
- encouraging understanding of diversity;
- developing collaborative problem-solving approaches

(Fung, 2017)

Where can we find out more?

If you would like support with planning your field trip or away day please consult your [departmental adviser](#). Ideally students will be involved in the process and funding is available to evaluate the impact of the approach taken, and to produce case studies for use by other Departments.

References

Bruffee, K. (1999) *Collaborative Learning: Higher Education, Interdependence and the Authority of Knowledge*, 2nd Edition, Baltimore, John Hopkin University Press.

Fung, D (2017) *A Connected Curriculum for Higher Education*, London, UCL Press.

Field Trips and Away Days - Venue checklist

Once you have identified possible venue/s you might like to use this checklist to help you identify whether or not it is suitable, and plan for any additional services that you may need to arrange.

<p>Layout – if you need students to carry out group work you will need the rooms to be laid out ‘cabaret style’. Check that any rooms will accommodate numbers in this layout.</p>	
<p>Does the room have natural daylight? If it doesn’t you might want to organise some activities that take place outside.</p>	
<p>What AV and teaching equipment might you need? (LCD projector? Screen? Flipchart? Laptop? Speakers) Is there an additional cost?</p>	
<p>Wi-fi – is this provided free of charge? Is the bandwidth sufficient for any planned activities?</p>	
<p>Meals and refreshments - you will need to think about how these fit around the activities you have planned, and confirm timings with venue. How will you record dietary requirements?</p>	
<p>Equality and Diversity – is the venue fully-accessible for students who have disabilities. Most venues will have an accessibility statement available online. Is there a designated quiet area for prayer?</p>	
<p>Transport – will you need to arrange transport to the venue or within sites during a field trip? If so, are there convenient pick-up/drop-off points?</p>	
<p>If the trip involves overnight stays, what are the accommodation arrangements? Are they suitable e.g. ensuite or not? Balance of genders?</p>	
<p>What support is available on site – room layout? Technical?</p>	