SARC Guidelines for Class Fieldtrips
Domestic Destinations Only
Updated: September 15, 2021

The Office of Property & Liability Risk Management (OPLRM) has several policies and guidelines for student travel of which you may be unaware that will affect a class trip or site visit.

Please read over "Academic Field Trips, Planning advice for departments managing academic field trips" on the OPLRM site

This is additional information you may find helpful:

Students should be informed of a required or optional field trip before they enroll in a course. They should also be informed of expenses associated with the fieldtrip, what will and will not be paid for by the School of Architecture. Prior to enrollment, students should also be made aware of any risks associated with the fieldtrip.

Transportation
You may leave it to your students to determine how they will travel to a site, but if you participate in any way in planning or arranging: organizing carpools or providing gas for example, you must conform to OPLRM restrictions which among other things, do not allow students to drive other students. You may rent a van for your students if you drive it yourself and if you are the only driver. The University forbids the use of certain types of vans, particularly the 15-passenger type. Detailed guidance is available on the OPLRM website.

Housing
If your trip involves staying overnight, you may leave it to your students to find their own housing. But again, it would be important to make sure students know your trip expectations at the beginning of the course

If you are arranging housing yourself:

You do not need to stay with the students, but you should be close and accessible. There is no official limit on the number of people in a room except as specified by local hotel ordinance or regulations, but the University’s position (OPLRM & General Counsel) is that students should not be expected to share beds, and they should be separated by gender. Since a field trip is basically an extension of the classroom experience, we have a responsibility to ensure that students are in a safe environment.

Release of Liability Form
You do not need to ask your students to sign a release of liability form if the trip is required, because we cannot relieve ourselves of the responsibility to provide students with a safe educational environment. However, if the field trip is optional and it involves any inherent risks, you should ask them to sign an Assumption of Risk form for elective school trips and make them aware of what the potential risks might be on the trip. If the trip may involve some elective activities that could be potentially dangerous, then you should ask them to sign the Assumption of Risk and Release form if they choose to participate in those activities. Both forms are on the OPLRM website under academic field trips.

Note: all international programs/trips must be arranged through the International Studies Office which has far more restrictive rules for these items. Please contact your Chair and Anselmo Canfora (anselmo@virginia.edu) to initiate the process for international excursions.

The head of the OPLRM is Julie Richardson, jwr7n@virginia.edu and she welcomes your questions.