Safety Guide for Students Engaged in Overseas Fieldwork

This safety guide provides information about the precautions that must be taken when engaging in overseas fieldwork. Please read this guide before traveling abroad for fieldwork and consult with your supervising instructor and supervisor regarding the necessary precautions required. In order to minimize risks at the fieldwork site, please refer to the university’s Safe Travel Abroad leaflet as well as the safety materials provided by individual university departments (listed at the end of this guide).

Duration of Fieldwork
Research conducted by faculty members and students as part of their education and research activities at Kyoto University is defined broadly as an academic activity at a site where the physical or living subjects of the education/research (including human beings) are located.

Examples of fieldwork include: weather observation, oceanographic surveys, observation of living organisms as research objects, the collection of individual or group birds, the investigation of a sluggish site, participation in and observation of local community activities, interviews, taking photographs or videos (including the use of drones), and the acquisition of documents and materials.

Before traveling abroad

1. Create a research plan

Understand the necessary procedures for the fieldwork required by your department and create a detailed research plan with your supervisor well in advance. The research plan must be feasible and give due consideration to the circumstances at the site, including safety and security. Share the research plan with your family members, friends, and other relevant parties.

2. Purchase overseas travel insurance with unlimited coverage for medical treatment and rescue expenses. (For further details, please see item 4 in the Safe Travel Abroad leaflet)

Overseas fieldwork can entail many different types of risk. Be sure to enrol in overseas travel insurance with unlimited coverage for medical treatment and rescue expenses, so that you can engage in your research without unnecessary worry. Depending on the content of the fieldwork, some cases may not be covered by the insurance (for example, if you need to climb mountains using pikas, climbing ropes, and other climbing equipment). Before purchasing insurance, please confirm that the policy covers all of the risks that you may face during the fieldwork.

3. Be prepared for an emergency. Keep your Emergency contact list and emergency card with you at all times. (For further details, please see items 3 and 10 of the Safe Travel Abroad leaflet)

Before traveling abroad, make a list of emergency contacts in Japan and abroad, and share the list with your supervisor, department, family members, friends, and other relevant parties.

In the event of an emergency, follow the necessary procedures to ensure your safety. Once you are in a safe situation, contact the local police, embassy, consulate general, your supervisor, family members, and other relevant parties to ask for help.

Familiarize yourself with local laws and regulations before departing to ensure that you do not violate them in any way. Be sure to take appropriate action to protect your rights and interests. Please be assured, however, that provided the local authorities have followed the appropriate legal procedures, even an embassy or consulate general cannot demand your release, appeal for a penalty reduction, or request other special treatment.

Safe Travel Abroad

- The Safe Travel Abroad leaflet provides information on the necessary precautions to ensure your safety when you travel abroad. Please read it before your trip, and also take it with you for reference.

Useful reference materials

- Kyoto University Safety and Occupational Health Reference Manual 2018 (Agency for Health, Safety, and Environment) Section 3 teaches students about health and safety precautions when working in laboratory procedures. (In Japanese and English)

- Safety Guide (Graduate School of Science (SS)) Chapter 10, “Fieldwork,” includes information on the precautions necessary while engaging in fieldwork in Japan and abroad. (In Japanese and English)

- Safety Guide (Graduate School of Agriculture (GA)) Chapter 10, “Fieldwork,” includes information on the precautions necessary while engaging in fieldwork in mountainous areas, coastal areas (including use of ships, and underwater survey diving), and outside of Japan. (In Japanese and English)

- Safety Guide (Field Science Education and Research Center (FSERC)) Chapter 10, “Fieldwork,” includes information on the precautions necessary while engaging in fieldwork in mountainous areas, coastal areas (including use of ships, and underwater survey diving), and outside of Japan. (In Japanese and English)

- Guidance on Safety when Undertaking Fieldwork in Africa (Tanzania, Cameroon, Ethiopia, and Uganda Editions) (Center for African Area Studies, CASAS)

These brochures provide basic information on each country, the procedures required to obtain a research permit and visa, infectious diseases and vaccinations, and of precautions to ensure fieldwork is conducted safely. (Japanese only).

Tanzania:


Cameroon:


Ethiopia:


Uganda:


If you wish to obtain any of the above brochures, please contact the Center for African Area Studies, The Center for African Area Studies,

Address: 16 Yoshida-Honmachi, Sakyo, Kyoto, 606-8501

Email: foe@cas.kyoto-u.ac.jp

Tel: 075-753-7983 (Fax 075-753-7981)

Enviricos: [email protected] (Please replace [4] with B]
8. Modify your research plan if necessary
When making an on-premise plan with participants, it is unusual to suffer from nervousness, stress, and physical exhaustion. If you feel that your health is being affected, ease on off your work and consider modifying your research plan. Your concentration can cause accidents and other problems, be sure to get enough sleep and rest. In some circumstances, you may also need to modify your research plan due to certain local circumstances such as traffic conditions, weather, and security issues. If you need to change your research plan, please report it to your supervisor, family members, friends, and other relevant partners.

9. Obtain information on safety concerns and emergency measures
For further details, please see Item 5 of the Safe Travel Abroad Leaflet.

10. Transportation (driving a car/rusing public transport)
It may be necessary to complete certain procedures required by local law or local authority regulations to obtain a research permit or a visa for the destination country. Confirm the necessary procedures before traveling and prepare well in advance.

11. The handling of research materials (documental, archæological remains, animals, plants, minerals, soils, etc.)
When collecting or handling research materials, be sure to comply and cooperate with the local regulations and prohibitions, as well as those of Japan. Confirm any local police with your superior, rather than your own judgment.

12. Taking photographs, videos (including the use of drones)
It is prohibited for security reasons to take photographs or videos (including the use of drones) in and around government, military and religious facilities. Even if you are in unfamiliar surroundings, your photographs may be different from different situations and circumstances, such as doing research on-site, when visiting a public institution, when staying at your accommodation, and when meeting with local people.

13. Communication
Please be aware that different countries have different customs and culture with regards to speech and behavior. Before traveling to a foreign country, please inform your family members, friends, and local parents about your travel plans and itinerary. This will help you in forming good relationships with local residents. Try to learn the country’s official language, or if possible any local languages as well.

14. Health management
You are responsible to protect yourself from infectious diseases and to prevent their spread.

15. Report your return
When you return to Japan, report to your supervisor, family members, and other relevant parties. Remember to thank those who assisted you in understanding the feedback.

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4. Practice good health management (preventive care, vaccination, and medicines)
(For further details, please see Item 5 and 9 of the Safe Travel Abroad Leaflet)

5. Obtain the necessary research permits and visas (follow the procedures required by the local law)

6. While traveling abroad
Communicate with the parties concerned and ensure that you always have a means of communication.

7. Dealing with on-site emergencies (For further details, please see Item 10 of the Safe Travel Abroad Leaflet)

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9. After arriving at the destination, promptly report your arrival to your supervisor, family members, and other relevant partners. Please maintain communication with these people on a regular basis during the fieldwork period.

10. In some countries, you will be able to use the same mobile phone that you are using in Japan. However, it is dangerous to rely solely on a mobile phone. Please ensure that you also have other means of communication, such as a smartphone or satellite phone, so that you can communicate any time.

11. Although the risk of infectious diseases is remote, it is important to be aware of the risk and take necessary precautions. When you arrive in your destination country, you are required to undergo a health check to prevent the spread of infectious diseases. For further details, please see Item 7 of the Safe Travel Abroad Leaflet.

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