

UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA

DEPARTMENT FINANCE

GUIDELINES FOR ENSURING THE SAFETY OF STUDENTS DURING COMMUNITY-BASED EDUCATION

1. POLICY STATEMENT

The University holds the view that the safety of its members of staff and students is of major importance. This applies when they are on the campus as well as when they are involved elsewhere in community-based education (CBE).

The University will take all reasonable steps to ensure the safety of its staff and students. The management structures of the University (represented by the deans and directors as well as the heads of schools, academic departments and support service departments) strive to ensure their safety.

2. RATIONALE FOR COMMUNITY-BASED EDUCATION (CBE)

CBE forms part of the learning experiences of students in a large number of fields of study and training programmes at the University.

The majority of students settle in a community after the completion of their studies. Their training should prepare them to deal with the circumstances that they will encounter in their work environment. The training that the University of Pretoria offers should therefore be appropriate for the contemporary South African society.

Students can only acquire some skills and insight through involvement in the community. The skills and insight that they acquire in the course of CBE/service rendering is considered to be an important part of their preparation for adult life.

3. RESPONSIBILITY OF THE SCHOOL/DEPARTMENT

The school/department concerned has the primary responsibility for ensuring the safety of the students that are involved in CBE. If there are rumours of disturbance or unrest in a particular area, students should not be permitted to enter that area. The school/department should take all reasonable precautions to ensure that students are not exposed to danger in the course of their involvement in CBE.

It is recommended that schools/departments in which the students are involved in CBE/service rendering should appoint a panel of knowledgeable persons each year to consider the necessity of the CBE placements and the adequacy of the precautionary measures. In this context, the term *knowledgeable persons* refer to persons that have previously been involved in CBE as well as persons in the communities in which the CBE will take place. It is furthermore suggested that the lecturers that are involved in CBE/service rendering should arrange amongst themselves an orientation or training course each year on how to deal with emergency situations.

Before students are assigned to a particular place, that place should be investigated thoroughly by the lecturers concerned. An agreement should be entered into with the local authority (for example, the health authority or provincial education department) in terms of which the authority and the community undertake to supervise the work of the staff and students in exchange for the service that the latter render to the community. The decisions taken in this regard should be recorded in writing and be freely available. The lecturers should visit their students regularly.

Safety measures should be discussed thoroughly in the course of the orientation of the students. The measures should be made available to each student in written form. Lecturers are required to ensure that the students read the written measures under supervision and are given an opportunity to ask questions before CBE commences. The guardians of prospective students should be provided with written information on the risks related to the various fields of study.

At least one cellphone that is ready for use should be provided to students that travel together in a group. The school/department should make arrangements with the police regarding the speedy rendering of assistance in the event of an incident. The telephone numbers of the local police station, organisation that does vehicle tracking for the University (Netstar) and a contact person at the University should be entered into the cellphone. Students should be trained in the use of the cellphone and be informed on the operation of the Netstar tracking system.

4. RESPONSIBILITY OF THE STUDENT

The University cannot assume total responsibility for the safety of its students. Each student is co-responsible for the maintenance of precautions that can ensure his/her safety. The co-operation of the student is indispensable for ensuring maximum safety. During the course of CBE students should have in their possession a pamphlet that contains essential information.

The following guidelines are applicable to students' responsibility regarding the ensuring of their safety during their participation in CBE:

- Should students become aware of any local unrest, they should not enter the area. In such an event they should liaise with the lecturer concerned. The area may then only be entered with the consent of the lecturer.
- Students should only go to their place of work or activity in the community during the day.
- Students should never travel alone in cars in the community.
- Students should preferably not accept food or drinks from families in the community.
- Students should never work alone in the community facilities. The groups in which they work should be as large as possible.
- When students work in the community, they should ideally be accompanied by at least one person that lives or works there.

- Students should not wear or carry conspicuous jewellery and other expensive items. Cell phones must be concealed.
- Students should ensure that their lecturers always know exactly where they are. Deviations from the programme should be communicated to the lecturers.
- Should students become aware that they have been exposed to an infectious disease, they should inform their lecturers thereof immediately. In the event of a needle prick or similar injury (that concerns students in the health sciences) the applicable regulations of the faculty concerned should be strictly adhered to. See Annexure A in this regard.

5. RESPONSIBILITY OF THE DRIVER OF THE VEHICLE THAT CONVEYS STUDENTS

The driver of a vehicle that is used for CBE should check the vehicle thoroughly before the commencement of the trip to determine whether there is sufficient fuel for the planned trip, the brakes are in good working order, the tyres are in a sound condition and the equipment for fitting the spare wheel is in the vehicle.

Traffic rules should be obeyed at all times. The maximum permissible speed on gravel roads is 60 kilometres per hour. The maximum permissible speed of mini buses is 100 kilometres per hour.

A person that is under the influence of alcohol or drugs may not drive the vehicle. As far as possible the driver should ensure that he/she knows where the destination is before commencing the trip. This implies that he/she should have previously undertaken the trip, use a reliable road map or be accompanied by a local person that knows the road.

The precautions against vehicle crime should be strictly adhered to. Refer to the guidelines contained in Annexure B in this regard.

6. PRIVATE TRANSPORT/PRIVATE PROPERTY

Students should be informed that the University cannot be held responsible for private vehicles that are being used by students during CBE excursions. Neither will the University be liable for any injury, death, or damages suffered by passengers being transported in such vehicles.

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