

# **Code of Conduct and Safety Instructions for excursions, mapping courses and fieldwork with students**

**Department of Geosciences, Tübingen University**





## Code of Conduct and Safety Instructions for excursions, mapping courses and fieldwork with students

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### **Preamble**

The Department of Geosciences greatly appreciates members of the Department taking upon themselves the duty of field teaching. It recognises that this teaching is often more burdensome and entails far greater responsibilities than classroom teaching. This Code of Conduct is, therefore, not intended to make leading field teaching more onerous, but, instead, should be regarded as a manual (*Betriebsanleitung*) to enable and support teaching staff to run successful and safe field courses.

This Code of Conduct does not replace any federal, state, or university laws and regulations, that should be adhered to at all times. This applies particularly to health and safety regulations, such as the mandatory preventive care for students at the Faculty of Science Tübingen (in particular concerning tick-based diseases, such as *FSME*)

This Code of Conduct takes into account that field teaching differs from regular classroom teaching in that it usually

- takes place in regions and under conditions that pose additional health and safety risks;
- involves participants that may be inexperienced and unfamiliar with local conditions and field activities;
- requires participants to work and live closely together, with reduced privacy, for a prolonged period of time;
- puts additional responsibilities on the staff who have a duty of care.

This Code of Conduct is based on three keywords:

- **Safety** should be considered at all times as field courses may involve additional risks.
- **Respect** for each other, the environment, and local hosts, laws and customs.
- **Clarity** in rules, grading regulations and assignments avoids misunderstandings, distrust and even safety risks.

**The accident insurance for all official fieldwork and excursions is:**

**Unfallkasse Baden-Württemberg (UKBW)**

<https://www.ukbw.de/>



## A. Safety



### A.1. Driving

- 1) Driving to/from the field area and during the field course is potentially the most dangerous aspect of fieldwork. Staff makes sure that:
  - a) Before leaving the university, they emphasize to students the importance of safe driving and adhering to speed limits and other laws. The speed limit for university vehicles is 120 km/h.
  - b) According to German law, drivers are responsible for a proper technical condition of the vehicle. Thus, the instructors need to check the technical condition together with the assigned drivers.
  - c) Enough drivers are allocated and registered as drivers.
  - d) Drivers are aware of all rules and regulations, especially if (traffic) rules or road conditions differ from those in Germany.
  - e) Drivers keep the vehicle logbook up to date (staff inspects this regularly)
  - f) Drivers are fit to drive and not under the influence of alcohol or any (illicit) drugs or substances.
  - g) Drivers keep all receipts of any relevant expenses.
  - h) Drivers know the route from maps/instructions provided by the instructor.
  - i) The schedule allows for regular (at least every 2 hours) rests and does not encourage speeding.
  - j) Participants do not switch vehicles during trips without informing staff and all drivers involved.
  - k) Drivers only transport the allowed number of passengers.
  - l) Only approved passengers are allowed (no hitchhikers).



- 2) University/Departmental vehicles are for teaching and academic use only. However, during field trips, they are usually the only means of transport available for activities such as shopping. Reasonable use of the vehicles is permissible, but staff must specify in advance which trips are allowed and approve of each and every use of a vehicle. It is advisable that staff keeps the vehicle keys between trips, to avoid any inappropriate use of the vehicles.

- 3) Staff should inform drivers what they should do in the event of an accident or vehicle breakdown.
- 4) University/Departmental vehicles should be cared for. Therefore:
  - a) Any damage to vehicles should be avoided. Driving off-road is forbidden, while driving on unsealed roads should be avoided. When not possible, staff should assess which tracks can be used (at low speed only) and clearly announce this to all users.
  - b) Any damage or problems should be reported to the responsible persons at the Department.
  - c) Vehicles should be returned clean (inside and outside). For longer trips it is required to organise regular technical checks, such as for tyre pressure, oil, fuel, etc., and regular cleaning. Before returning the vehicles to the Department, it is advisable to clean them in the contracted car wash (see vehicle instruction sheets).

#### **A.2. First aid**

- 1) Staff must bring/provide appropriate first aid kit(s), to be provided by the Department for field teaching.
- 2) Participants should be encouraged to carry their own minimum first aid kit.
- 3) Staff ensures that the required number of first aiders are present and is encouraged to themselves attend first-aid courses provided by the university.
- 4) in case of an accident or injury, this should be reported in the appropriate form that is to be available during the field trip.

#### **A.2. Appropriate and safe handling of tools and equipment**

- 1) Staff should make all participants aware of the utilized equipment and tools and make them aware of all potential risks and hazards that could occur by their usage.
- 2) If equipment and special tools are used that may pose a hazard to the user, it must be made clear for everybody where and how it should be correctly handled, and any potentially dangerous parts (sharp or moving parts) should be pointed out.
- 3) When handling hazardous substances, all persons involved must be familiar with the specific safety precautions for the substance, rules for transport and emergency procedures. Disposal must be carried out by the University's Dangerous Goods Department. Contamination of the environment has to be communicated and dealt with depending on the specific substance.
- 4) Operations of unmanned aircraft systems (UAS) have to be carried out according to the current air traffic laws in the country of operations (in Germany: *Luftverkehrs-Ordnung* (LuftVO)).
- 5) All attendants must be aware of the procedures in case of an emergency.
  - a) It must be defined and known to everybody what to do in case of an emergency. The order of measures should be defined and responsible persons for each step should be named.
  - b) Appropriate options for communication, such as cell phones or radio equipment, must be available and the functionality, as well as the numbers to call for help, should be accessible to everybody.

#### **A.3. Safety goggles**

- 1) Safety goggles should be worn at all times when chipping or hammering rocks. This not only goes for the person hammering, but all nearby persons that may be at risk of flying rock chips. Anyone hammering or chipping at rocks should clearly warn others in advance.
- 2) Under no circumstances should hammers, chisels or any such tools and equipment be used improperly. For example, hammers are not chisels and should not be used as such.
- 3) Staff should make this rule clear to all participants. Safety goggles should be provided to or required from all participants if hammering is required during the trip.



#### **A.4. Safety vests**

- 1) All university vehicles carry safety vests, as this is required in most European countries. However, only use these in a road emergency. It is advisable to bring additional safety vests to be used in the field. Use of safety vests is advised:
  - a) when working in areas where there may be hunting.
  - b) when compulsory, for example in quarries.
  - c) when working along roads. In addition, a warning triangle from the vehicles may be used to warn oncoming motorists in advance.
  - d) when participants are dispersed in the field. Safety vests allow sighting them from far away. Even when wearing vests is not made compulsory (at the discretion of staff), participants carrying vests may use them to attract attention in case of an emergency or accident.
- 2) When participants are required to wear or carry vests, it is important that staff do so as well. This not only gives a good example, but also helps participants to find and recognise staff more easily.



#### **A.5. Helmets**

- 1) Helmets should be worn by all participants when working in quarries, near steep cliffs, underground, or in any other place where wearing helmets is compulsory under local or site regulations.
- 2) Helmets have a use-by date. Staff make sure that the use-by date has not expired.

#### **A.6. Protective footwear and clothing**

- 1) Foot and ankle injuries are probably the second-most common (after sunburn) injuries during geological field courses. Footwear deserves special attention. In most cases, hiking boots that protect the ankle are appropriate. Runners or wellingtons/rubber boots are usually unacceptable, except for walking on paths only or in mud/marshes, respectively.
  - a) Staff should judge what footwear is needed and clearly convey the minimum standard before departure, to enable participants to bring appropriate footwear.
  - b) Staff should ensure and enforce that participants wear the appropriate footwear before leaving for the field.
  - c) Staff should inform participants in advance when protective footwear is not required.
  - d) Staff may deny taking participants into the field if they refuse to wear appropriate footwear, provided participants were advised appropriately in advance.



- 2) Wearing appropriate clothing is an obvious necessity. However, staff should bear in mind that participants may not be aware of what is appropriate in the destination area.
  - a) Staff should clearly inform participants on the weather conditions to be expected in the field and of the appropriate clothing to take on the field trip.
  - b) Staff should try to keep track of the weather forecast and local weather warnings in advance and advise participants on a daily basis on appropriate clothing.
  - c) As with footwear, staff can deny taking participants into the field if they deem their clothing unsafe, provided participants were advised appropriately in advance.

#### ***A.7. Sun and hot/cold conditions***

- 1) Sun and heat pose a risk of sunburn (and skin cancer), sunstroke, dehydration and heat rash. All of these can be serious work-related injuries. When visiting hot and/or sunny areas, staff should
  - a) Be aware of the risks and symptoms of sun/heat related injuries/conditions and know what action to take when necessary.
  - b) Clearly warn participants of the expected conditions and the risks involved, before departure to the field area.
  - c) Try to keep track of the weather forecast and advise participants on a daily basis on appropriate measures.
  - d) Strongly encourage the use of sunscreen and the wearing of protective clothing, a hat and possibly even gloves.
  - e) Make sure that participants carry and drink enough water.
  - f) Avoid unnecessary exposure to sun and heat, by, for example, adapting the schedule to the weather, or adding breaks in the shade, preferably with access to drinking water.
  - g) Depending on the area of fieldwork, staff should take care when wearing sunglasses is appropriate to avoid snow blindness (e.g. when working on glaciers etc.)
- 2) For work in cold or alpine conditions staff should inform students of appropriate clothing to bring (e.g. layering system of rain shell, and multiple moisture wicking cloth layers underneath such as fleece or wool clothing).



#### ***A.9. Special activities and equipment***

- 1) Certain activities, such as mountaineering, caving, diving, may require additional equipment. Staff make sure that:
  - a) The equipment is appropriate for the activity and meets all safety standards
  - b) All participants have the necessary training and other prerequisites to undertake the activity and handle the equipment.

#### **A.8. Diseases, dangerous/noxious animals and plants, other risks**

- 1) Almost every place on Earth has some dangerous/noxious animals and plants, or endemic diseases that field course participants may be exposed to. Staff should:
  - a) Make themselves acquainted with any resulting potential risks.
  - b) Inform students of any noxious/dangerous plants or animals they may encounter in the field and
    - i) How to recognise them
    - ii) What action to take to avoid them
    - iii) What to do if harmed in any way
  - c) Strongly advise participants to regularly check for ticks. Students need to consult a physician if they cannot remove a tick by themselves. Students are only allowed to join field trips if they have attended an information sessions on the risk of ticks (Lyme disease/*borreliosis* and *FSME*)
  - d) Inform students about potential risks from insect bites (wasps, hornets, bees etc.): Students need to inform the instructor on any allergies, as far as known (e.g., from insect bites).
  - e) Inform participants of any vaccination/inoculation that may be required in the area of destination. University regulations for travel to e.g. tropical areas should be adhered to.
  - f) Avoid entering areas with elevated risks.
- 2) Staff should inform participants about any specific risks, such as rock falls, avalanches or bush fires, when appropriate.
- 3) Staff should follow University regulations when the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (*Auswärtige Amt*) announces a travel warning (*Reisewarnung*) for the area or country of destination<sup>1</sup>.



#### **A.9. Medical facilities and emergency procedures**

- 1) Staff should make themselves acquainted with medical facilities and emergency procedures in the field area and inform all participants of these.
- 2) Depending on field conditions and field activity (especially in case of unsupervised work as in mapping courses), staff informs all participants of procedures
  - a) In case of accident or similar emergencies
  - b) In case of unexpected inclement weather
  - c) In case of getting lost
  - d) etc.

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.auswaertiges-amt.de/de/ReiseUndSicherheit/reise-und-sicherheitshinweise/reisewarnungen>

- 3) Staff is responsible to organise communication. In most cases exchanging mobile-phone numbers suffices, but care must be taken in remote areas without network. Alternatives need to be considered here.
- 4) Students should not work alone unsupervised. For mapping courses or similar field exercises, students should work in groups of at least two.

#### **A.10. Health, fitness and disabilities**

- 1) The University is legally bound to accommodate for disabled students, as well as for pregnant students and nursing mothers. However, conditions in the field may pose additional requirements regarding health, fitness, allergies or phobias, such as vertigo. It is furthermore acknowledged that some geoscience phenomena can only be accessed with difficulty (e.g. mountain glaciers). Considering that university funds should be allocated to all students, but especially out of respect for individual limitations and acknowledging every student's right to participate in field learning, field courses should attempt to be as inclusive as possible.
- 2) It is the duty of all participants to disclose any relevant health conditions to the staff. Staff must treat this information with absolute discretion and confidentiality. Where possible staff should make arrangements to accommodate for the given health condition(s).
- 3) The Department allows restricted-participation field courses<sup>2</sup>. These, however, need prior approval by the Department. The application should contain/list:
  - a) a short description of the field course and costs for the participants and the Department;
  - b) the educational necessity to limit participation;
  - c) any possible alternatives and reason(s) why these are excluded;
  - d) measures taken to limit restrictions as much as possible;
  - e) availability of other field courses in the same topic for those students who cannot participate.
- 4) The Department may deny approval of a field course, in which case no departmental funds will be provided to the field course and staff cannot count the time spent on the field course as part of their teaching duty (*Lehrdeputat*).
- 5) Staff should endeavour to keep participation restrictions to a minimum. It should, for example, be considered if students must be excluded from the whole field course, or alternatively only for a few days, where alternatives may possibly be provided.
- 6) Announcements of field courses should clearly state any restrictions on participation.
  - a) Each course rates the general fitness requirement as either "no restrictions" or "restricted access". Any restrictions should be clearly stated and explained.
  - b) Any additional requirements should also be clearly announced.
- 7) Details of and reasons for restrictions should be provided and explained during a planning meeting well in advance of the field course.
- 8) If candidate participants are excluded, staff should clearly explain them why.

#### **A.11. Exclusion from field courses or field days**

- 1) Participants may cancel their participation for health reasons (e.g. injury, illness, pregnancy, etc.). Even if a student does not request this, participation may be denied by staff if it would constitute an unreasonable risk for the student or the safe and successful execution of the field course. Excluded students should be given priority for alternative courses.
  - a) Illness and injury may occur during a field course and participants may then not be able to participate in the field programme for one or more days.
  - b) Staff should ensure that participants are able to participate safely. Staff may exclude participants from the day's programme if they are deemed unfit.
  - c) Where possible, staff should consider alternatives for the individual, or the whole group.
  - d) Staff may need to organise company for any participants left behind.

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<sup>2</sup> *Restricted-participation field courses* are defined here as those courses where participation of students is restricted because students have to meet certain (non-academic) requirements, such as, for example, fitness, mountaineering experience or a diving licence.



- e) Days lost because of injury, illness, or attendance of fellow participants are normally not deducted from the accredited field days, if the persons involved are not at fault.
  - f) When a person is clearly at fault for the days lost, these field days may be deducted. Reasons could be:
    - i) injury due to reckless behaviour or activities that were forbidden (e.g. rock climbing);
    - ii) abuse of alcohol or illicit substances;
    - iii) absence without leave.
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## **B. Clarity and Respect**

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### ***B.1. Clarity and planning***

- 1) Uncertainty among participants about rules, procedures and the programme can lead to delays, confusion and annoyances, which can seriously disrupt a field course. It is therefore helpful if:
  - a) The overall programme of the field trip, as well as the programme of each coming day(s) is clearly conveyed to all participants. This includes times of meals, departure, arrival, leisure time, etc. Obviously, staff should themselves stick to the programme and avoid changing the schedule without prior announcement.
  - b) What to expect and what to take, in terms of clothing, footwear, food, field equipment, etc. is announced well in advance.
  - c) During car travel, but especially in the field, staff should announce in advance if access to toilets is limited and if so, provide toilet breaks or opportunities.
  - d) Adequate opportunity for shopping is provided. Where shopping is not possible during leisure hours, staff should announce in advance when and where shopping can be done.
  - e) The do's and don'ts in the field, but also in the accommodation, are clear. This includes setting a time (typically 10 PM) after which any noise and disturbances should be avoided. Where possible assign a place where participants can stay up longer if they wish. Inform the participants of any special local rules and regulations (e.g. in youth hostels), especially when these are signposted in a foreign language.
  - f) Where duties (cooking, cleaning, vehicle maintenance, etc.) are shared by the participants, staff makes these duties and the rosters absolutely clear.
- 2) It is at the discretion of staff to decide which potentially dangerous activities are allowed or not during leisure time (e.g. rock climbing, swimming), and clearly announce this.

### ***B.2. Fairness and respect for each other***

- 1) Field teaching usually has a very non-private nature, where all participants can see and hear the performance of each other. It is particularly important that staff is perceived inclusive, equitable and fair. Therefore:
  - a) Staff should treat all participants with respect and avoid rude, derogative or insulting language or behaviour.
  - b) Staff should never publicly ridicule or disgrace a student or fellow staff member for whatever reason.
  - c) Staff should avoid any perception of bias of preference towards participants. This can be avoided, for example, by consistent use of either the "Du" or "Sie" form for all participants.
  - d) Staff should not admit students to their field course if a personal relationship exists with a student.
  - e) Staff should not share the same bedroom or tent with students, except when necessary in large dormitory-style accommodation.
  - f) University policies concerning sexual harassment, bullying, and discrimination are applicable while on field trips and will not be tolerated under any circumstances. Staff

should inform students that instances of unacceptable behaviour, including harassment, bullying, or discrimination, should be reported to the Department *Gleichstellungsbeauftragte*. or other appropriate University offices or persons.



### ***B.3. Respect for the environment***

- 1) Do not damage outcrops. Hammering and sampling should be restricted to the scientifically/educationally necessary minimum. Many classical outcrops are visited every year and maybe by multiple universities.
- 2) Reduce damage to the environment and vegetation to a minimum, by, for example, staying on paths and tracks where possible.
- 3) Observe any laws and regulations, especially in nature reserves or sensitive areas.
- 4) Respect private property, access laws and restrictions. Staff may never encourage or force others to enter prohibited or no-access areas.
- 5) Avoid starting a fire. Smoking should be avoided in fire-risk areas and is totally forbidden during fire bans or in any high-fire risk area.
- 6) Do not pollute. Make sure any garbage is cleared and taken away.
- 7) Staff ensures that all necessary permits for field work are obtained.

### ***B.4. Grading and disciplinary action***

- 1) Field courses may be graded or not, depending on the course type and requirements. Grading is at the discretion of staff according to general university rules and regulations. Ungraded field courses require a simple "pass", which is equivalent to "equal or better than the grade 4.0" ("*ausreichend*").
- 2) Staff should clearly and in advance state the assignments and requirements for grading or achieving a pass. In exceptional cases, these may be changed due to unforeseen circumstances (e.g. change of programme due to weather conditions). Retrospective changes in assignment or requirements are not permissible.
- 3) Staff should consider whether the required workload is acceptable. A general rule is that one ECTS point equals about  $\leq 30$  hours of work for an average student. It should be noted that this includes travel time<sup>3</sup>.
- 4) Days lost due to external factors, such as bad weather, strikes, vehicle breakdown, etc., are not deducted (as students cannot return home, the time away still counts).
- 5) Days lost due to illness and injury should normally not be deducted from accredited field days. However, if the number of days lost are significant, such that the learning goals cannot be reached at all, alternative solutions (e.g. attending the same or alternative course the next occasion), should be discussed with the person(s) involved and, if necessary, with the relevant module coordinator or *Prüfungsausschuss*. Days lost may be deducted if a student is clearly at fault.

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<sup>3</sup> For the Geoscience excursion modules, one field day counts for 1/3 ECTS point, i.e. 10 hours of work, again, including travel.



- 6) Staff may be required to take disciplinary action due to behaviour that endangers others or severely disturbs the field course, such as, but not limited to:
    - a) Insubordination and disobedience of rules set for the field course or by, for example, providers of accommodation or travel (ferries, airline companies, etc.).
    - b) Reckless or dangerous behaviour.
    - c) Behaviour that may endanger future access to field areas or accommodation.
    - d) Excessive alcohol consumption or drug abuse.
    - e) Unlawful actions or behaviour.
  - 7) Staff should address and warn any person who is guilty of the above behaviour. Disciplinary action can only be taken after repeated warnings. Such action may be:
    - a) Exclusion from field course activities, leading to deduction of field days.
    - b) Exclusion from the field course (i.e. sending home and therefore not passing the (whole) course).
  - 8) Punitive assignments, whether academic (such as additional reports) or otherwise (such as dishwashing duty) are not acceptable.
  - 9) Group punishment for the misbehaviour of one or more individuals is never acceptable and any semblance of such punishment should be avoided.
  - 10) Staff should be aware of their duty of care under all circumstances. This should be considered when leaving students alone in the accommodation and especially when sending students home during an excursion. The latter can only be done with mutual agreement of all persons involved and staff must ensure that safe travel arrangements are in place.
  - 11) Disciplinary action that leads to deduction of field days or failing a field course must reported be the relevant *Prüfungsausschuss*, including reason for the deduction (as far as privacy regulations allow). Affected students can appeal within the time period set by the *Prüfungsordnung*.
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## C. Implementation

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### ***C.1. Status of the Code of Conduct and Safety Instructions***

- 1) The Code of Conduct and Safety Instructions
  - a) will take effect on .01/02/2023
  - b) apply to all field courses carried out under the responsibility of the Department of Geosciences and to all staff carrying out these courses, including external personnel.
  - c) must be signed by staff to be permitted to lead or be an instructor of a field course.
  - d) will form part of the regular and compulsory safety instructions.
- 2) Although this document is written for field courses it also provides the guiding principles for field-based research.

### ***C.2. First-aid courses***

- 1) To ensure that there are always enough first-aiders present, the Department will endeavour to ensure that every student attends a first-aid course.

### ***C.3. Safety equipment, instruction materials, forms and responsibilities***

- 1) The Department will provide a set of 'field-safety kits' for field courses. These will contain items such as:
    - a) A first-aid kit
    - b) First-aid instructions
    - c) A multilingual dictionary for medical terms and phrases
    - d) Forms and instructions for reporting accidents and injuries
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- 2) Each student receives a 'welcome/safety package' upon enrolment. This will contain items such as:
  - a) A small hikers' first-aid kit
  - b) Safety goggles suitable for outdoor work
  - c) One safety vest
  - d) A first-aid leaflet
  - e) A copy of the Code of Conduct and Safety Instructions
- 3) The Department will provide all other necessary safety equipment (e.g. helmets) and storage.
- 4) The Department will provide the necessary instruction sheets and forms/templates:
  - a) Work accident and injury
  - b) Field risk assessment
  - c) Equipment risk assessment
  - d) Student duties and responsibilities document
  - e) Registration of field trips and application for limited-access field courses when applicable
- 5) Registration and travel applications for field courses must be submitted to the Department. After assessment the Department will forward the documents to the relevant university offices.
  - a) The registration must include:
    - i) The budget
    - ii) The field risk assessment form
    - iii) A list of participating students
  - b) By registering a field course, all staff agree to adhere to the Code of Conduct and Safety Instructions. This will be confirmed by a signature of each staff member.
- 6) The Department will appoint and announce persons:
  - a) To organise and maintain safety equipment, such as helmets, field safety kits, safety packages for students, etc.
  - b) In charge of editing and updating the Code of Conduct and Safety Instructions, as well as the accompanying forms, when the need arises.
  - c) To organise first-aid courses for all students
  - d) Who will be the first point of contact in case of disagreements and complaints
  - e) Who will assess applications for limited-access field courses



