

THE CHINESE UNIVERSITY OF HONG KONG

Guidelines for Monitoring and Supporting Activities for Students

Introduction

1. The Chinese University of Hong Kong is committed to the whole-person development of its students, and a wide range of experiential learning activities are offered to students by different units on a continual basis. These activities include a variety of student activities held both in and outside Hong Kong. This paper lays down a set of general procedures for better monitoring the activities organised by different units/departments of the University, reporting information on outbound activities as well as providing enhanced support to students, especially in cases of emergency.

Coverage of the Guidelines

2. All units/departments of the University including colleges, faculties, departments, academic programmes, centres, institutes, graduate divisions, administrative units, etc. must observe these guidelines. In this context, a teacher is also required to follow the relevant procedures when organising activities such as academic trips for students.
3. The arrangements as outlined in this paper do not cover students who join the University's formal credit-bearing student exchange programmes centrally administered by the Office of Academic Links (OAL) and those organised by the colleges. The OAL and respective colleges already have a well-established system to take care of the related activities and possible emergency situations.
4. Moreover, activities organised by individual students or student organisations are not covered by this set of guidelines. The University, mainly through the Office of Student Affairs (OSA) and the colleges, does provide them with relevant guidelines/information, guidance, training and support in this area.

Organising Activities for Students

5. For all activities involving students held in and outside Hong Kong, the ultimate goal is the learning and development of the students. To achieve these educational goals, the contents of the activities have to be well-planned and maintained at a high standard. At the same time, all activities must accord with sound safety principles. If appropriate, the organising unit has to ensure that proper insurance cover has been arranged for the students.
6. The organising unit should make sure that students understand all essential aspects of the activities. All organisers are expected to provide participants with appropriate guidance, support and advice both before and during the activities.

7. For activities held outside Hong Kong, the organising unit must pay attention to the Outbound Travel Alert (OTA) System. Pre-departure briefing sessions should be arranged for the participants. The unit concerned should advise the participants to respect local culture and not to violate the law and cultural taboos of the destination country/city. In particular, topics like dealing with emergency and insurance arrangements must be clearly explained to the participants. It is essential for the organising unit to collect emergency contact information from all participants and keep it on record for necessary use. On the other hand, the organising unit must provide all relevant contact information, including the information of the staff-in-charge of the activities, to all participants for their reference.

Roles of Heads of Units/Departments

8. The University owes a duty of care towards its students under common law. Heads of units/departments are ultimately responsible for all activities held in the unit/ department. As such, it is essential that the heads of units/ departments are involved in the planning and monitoring of all activities concerning students and should be accountable for all such activities in terms of overall management and the provision of relevant support to the students.
9. In principle, the head of the unit/ department should be responsible for approving all activities organised by the unit/ department concerned, whether held locally or overseas. Under the University's insurance policy, students are protected, especially while overseas, if they are participating in activities approved by the University. It has to be pointed out that for activities which the heads of units/departments are not aware of, it is arguable if the activities are considered as having approved by the University. "Unapproved" activities may pose a problem when insurance issues come up.

Reporting and Supporting Outbound Student Activities

10. Different units of the University organise a variety of outside-Hong Kong activities for students, such as short-term student exchange, cultural and language tours, service learning activities, outward-bound training, etc. At present, while the organising units will keep records of such outbound activities on their own, there are no procedures for the units to report details of the activities to a central database. As such, there may not be readily-available information at the central level in cases of emergency. This may affect the immediate and effective management of the crises if so emerge.
11. It is proposed that the following arrangements be adopted for all outbound activities:
 - a. For outbound student activities, the organising units are required to report all necessary information to the OSA before departure, including the name of the activity, the destination and period of the trip, as well as the number of participants. In order to facilitate such reporting, an online template (link : <https://cloud.itsc.cuhk.edu.hk/webform/view.php?id=13678874>) is provided for

- easy data input.
- b. The unit concerned must draw up contingency plans in advance in case emergency situations arise.
 - c. In case of emergency, the head of the organising unit is responsible for taking immediate actions in accordance with the contingency plan and reporting the case to the University Dean of Students.
 - d. If necessary, the University Dean of Students will coordinate efforts and measures concerning the emergency situation. Serious cases may be referred to the crisis management team proposed below.
12. This notification mechanism facilitates a smooth and bi-directional exchange of information between the organising units and the central. With a good grasp of the records kept by the OSA, the University will have an overview of all official outbound student activities and could hence achieve better coordination in the event of emergency.

Establishment of a Crisis Management Team

13. A primary concern of the University for outside-Hong Kong student activities is the safety of the students while away from Hong Kong, as the University is responsible for protecting its students from hazard and risks and for providing the necessary support when accidents or emergency situations arise. At present, each emergency case is tackled on an ad hoc manner. It is considered that it would be better to set up a standing crisis management team for handling serious emergency cases involving students away from Hong Kong as referred to it by the University Dean of Students.
14. The crisis management team would assess the emergency situations, provide appropriate advice to the organising units, make appropriate decisions and coordinate efforts and actions of all relevant units in the University, with a view to providing the best support to our students and minimising the impact of the emergency on the University. The team would convene urgent meetings on critical cases or serious emergency situations upon receipt of relevant information.
15. It is suggested that the following colleagues would form the crisis management team:
- Associate Vice-President (Student Experience) (Convenor)
 - University Dean of Students
 - Registrar
 - Director of Academic Links
 - Director of Communications and Public Relations
 - Director of Student Affairs
 - A representative of the Finance Office
 - Secretary (appointed by the Convenor)
 - Other relevant colleagues to be invited on an ad hoc basis

Participation of Minors in Activities

16. As some students may be of age under 18, the organising units/ departments are reminded to take precautions when accepting these students for activities (both local and outbound). Despite their “non-adult” status, these students are expected to participate in activities as other students, and the University normally will not give them special treatment. However, parental responsibility and authority remain with the parents/legal guardians.
17. There is no specific legislation in Hong Kong requiring parental consent for minors before allowing them to take part in extracurricular activities. However, as mentioned above, the University owes a duty of care towards its students under common law. It has to exercise reasonable care in providing or organising activities for its students. Therefore, it is desirable to obtain prior consent from parents or legal guardians for students under 18 to take part in student activities. According to legal advice, a general consent should be sufficient for most extracurricular activities. However, for more dangerous activities or activities held outside Hong Kong, parents and legal guardians must be informed of the nature and the associated risk. Prior specific consent must also be obtained from them for such activities.
18. Also, these students should be reminded that there are events which they are forbidden by law or not encouraged to participate in:
 - a. alcoholic drinks;
 - b. cigarettes or tobacco products;
 - c. indecent articles restricted by the Control of Obscene and Indecent Articles Ordinance;
 - d. films classified as category III;
 - e. being the signatories and/or office-bearers of student associations for activities.

Guidelines for Organising Student Activities

19. The key arrangements as outlined above are summarised in the General Guidelines on Organising Activities for Students. There are also other relevant documents for the general reference of all organising units. The following relevant information is attached:
 - a. General Guidelines on Organising Activities for Students
 - b. Checklist for Organising Activities for Students
 - c. Flowchart for Organising Outbound Activities for Students

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General Guidelines on Organising Activities for Students

This document serves as a set of general guidelines for University units on the organisation of activities for students.

A. General Arrangements

1. All activities organised/ co-organised/ coordinated by any University unit must obtain prior endorsement from the unit head.
2. Activities should hold educational purposes, and the contents of activities must not imply elements of inappropriate behaviours.
3. All activities must accord with sound safety principles.
4. The unit concerned should provide participants with guidance support and advice both before and during the activities.
5. The unit concerned should go through the “Checklist for Organising Activities for Students” and the “Flowchart for Organising Outbound Activities for Students”.

B. Activities Outside Hong Kong

1. The unit concerned should make sure that students are well briefed about all essential aspects of the activities.
2. The unit concerned should remind participants of the importance of cross cultural sensitivity and understanding, and the necessity of self-adjustment.
3. The unit concerned should warn the participants not to violate the law and cultural taboos of the destination country/ city.
4. The unit concerned must draw up contingency plans in advance in case emergency situations arise.
5. All relevant information of the overseas student trips organised/co-organised/coordinated by the unit must be reported to the Office of Student Affairs (OSA) through an online template (link : <https://cloud.itsc.cuhk.edu.hk/webform/view.php?id=13678874>) prior to departure for record purpose.
6. The information submitted by the unit concerned should be correct and updated. Any change of details in the submitted information must be reported to the OSA as soon as possible.

C. Host Institutions/Organisations

1. For outside-Hong Kong activities, the unit concerned must ensure that the host institutions/ organisations, if any, are proper and recognised organisations in the destination country/ city.
2. The unit concerned must communicate with the host institution/ organisation regarding the responsibilities of both parties and reach prior agreement before the activity begins.
3. The unit concerned should obtain and keep the contact information of the person-in-charge of the host institution for any update.
4. The participants should be reminded to observe all rules and regulations of the host institutions/ organisations.

D. Insurance

1. The unit concerned is required to provide participants with the information about CUHK Group Travel Insurance including the coverage, benefits, exclusions and claim procedures, etc.
2. The unit concerned should remind participants to study the details of the CUHK Group Travel Insurance on the website of Finance Office.
3. The unit concerned must remind participants to bring along with them the document of the CUHK Group Travel Insurance, the policy number and the number of the 24-hour SOS hotline.
4. The unit concerned must remind participants to take out additional insurance on their own if they think the coverage of the CUHK Group Travel Insurance is inadequate.

E. Safety

1. The unit concerned should remind participants of the importance of being alert in public areas.
2. The unit concerned must pay attention to the Outbound Travel Alert (OTA) System. All official student trips are advised to be cancelled for the sake of participants' safety when Black OTA is issued by the Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region.
3. The unit concerned is responsible for providing support and assistance to the participants in the country/ city with Black OTA.
4. The unit concerned should remind participants to take vaccine with reference to the destination before departure.
5. The unit concerned should remind participants to bring travel medicine pack/ first aid kit and necessary protective equipment, e.g. surgical masks, alcohol-based handrub and adhesive plaster.

F. Contact Information

1. The unit concerned is required to collect emergency contact information from all participants and keep it on record for necessary use.
2. The unit concerned must provide the contact information of the staff-in-charge of the outbound activities to participant for their reference.
3. The unit concerned must obtain the offshore contact details of the participants after they have arrived at the destination.

G. Participation of Minors in Activities

1. For outbound/ high risk student activities, the unit concerned must inform parents or legal guardians of students under 18 about the nature of the activities and the associated risks.
2. On top of the general parental consent obtained by the University for extracurricular activities, the unit concerned are required to obtain written consent from parents or legal guardians for students under 18 to take part in outbound/ high risk student activities.

H. Emergency Measures

1. In case of emergency, the unit concerned is required to report and provide necessary information to the University for suitable follow-up actions.
2. In case of emergency, the unit concerned should provide necessary assistance and support to the participants.
3. The unit concerned should pay attention to and follow the decision made by the University if the case has been put forwarded to the University management.
4. The unit concerned should not disclose uncertain information to the media, which should be centrally handled by the relevant central unit.

Useful Links

Centre for Health Protection, Department of Health, HKSAR

<http://www.chp.gov.hk/>

Centre of Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)

<http://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/destinations/list.htm>

Group Travel Insurance, Finance Office, CUHK

<https://www.bur.cuhk.edu.hk/insurance/group-travel-2/>

Immigration Department, HKSAR

<https://www.immd.gov.hk/eng/index.html>

Security Bureau, HKSAR

<https://www.sb.gov.hk/eng/ota/>

Travel Health Service, Department of Health, HKSAR

<http://www.travelhealth.gov.hk/>

University Health Service, CUHK

<http://www.cuhk.edu.hk/uhs>

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Checklist for Organising Activities for Students

General

- Endorsement for the activities from the unit head
- Emergency contact information of the participants
- Health assessment/ declaration of the participants
- Prior specific parental consent (in writing) for students under 18 to participate in outbound/
high-risk activities

Activities Outside Hong Kong

- Contact information of the host institutions
- Copy of the travel documents and visas of the participants
- Insurance for the participants
- Policy number of the CUHK Group Travel Insurance and the 24-hour SOS hotline
- Vaccination, if necessary
- First aid kit, medicine pack and necessary protective equipment, if necessary
- Briefing session for the participants or equivalent arrangement
- Checking of the Outbound Travel Alert (OTA) System
- Contingency plans for emergency situation
- Offshore contact details of the participants
- Online submission of “Reporting Outbound Student Activities” to Office of Student
Affairs

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Flowchart for Organising Outbound Activities for Students

