

Risk Management Guidelines for Service Learning: STUDENTS

The point of departure that guides this section of the risk management document of the University of the Free State (UFS) is that each and every service learning (SL) student has to take co-responsibility to ensure his/her own safety by keeping to safety measures and procedures throughout his/her participation in SL. Through this aspect of the SL experience, students are afforded an opportunity to better prepare themselves for the world of work where you might be required to venture into new territories.

1. General Guidelines for Students

All SL students are required to adhere to the following:

- 1.1 Participate in orientation, training, and ongoing supervision for the SL experience.
- 1.2 Be punctual and responsible in completing your commitment regarding time and task to the service provider/community.
- 1.3 Be sure to sign the attendance register for the day on which the risk management guidelines are discussed in class.
- 1.4 Follow the appropriate dress code.
- 1.5 Always identify yourself when engaging with community members in order to ensure that the community knows that you represent the UFS as service learning students and that the community understands what the purpose of your involvement is.
- 1.6 Inform a staff member or the service provider if you know you will be late or not able to make it at all – this is not only professional courtesy, but indicates your whereabouts.
- 1.7 Keep confidential all information about clients you work with.
- 1.8 Show respect for the supervisor, staff and clients at the placement site.
- 1.9 Be aware that you serve as ambassador of goodwill and are representing your University.
- 1.10 Talk to your lecturer or another appropriate staff member if you experience any problem or become aware of safety risks at the placement site.

- 1.11 Sign in at the placement site (if required) every time you are there and record your service hours on your time-record form. This will not only ensure that you receive credit for the hours you have served, but will help to allocate responsibility.
- 1.12 If you are uncomfortable with the placement site, you may request an alternative one. You should, however, not just change it by yourself.
- 1.13 Refrain from smoking when engaged in SL activities, especially where children are around.
- 1.14 DO NOT engage in any type of business with clients for the duration of your SL.
- 1.15 DO NOT give advice to clients that could have financial implications for them. Always consult with lecturers if such a temptation arises.
- 1.16 Ensure that you act within the scope of the set outcomes of your SL assignment and remain within your current level of competency. If in doubt, consult a lecturer or site supervisor.
- 1.17 Know that the University has limited insurance coverage (i.e. professional indemnity and liability coverage), which may make provision for your actions, depending on the specific circumstances, and provided that you act within the scope of your SL duties as outlined in your study guide.
- 1.18 Keep in mind that the UFS is not liable for any injuries and/or damages a student may suffer through his/her own doing. It is recommended that students discuss this matter with their own insurers.

2. Guidelines for Students Entering an Unfamiliar Community

When you embark on your service learning activities in an unfamiliar community, you should adhere to the following guidelines, which will enhance your learning experience:

- 2.1 Make an effort to get to know your site supervisor. Ask him/her questions about the area. Solicit his/her advice on what precautions you need to take to avoid hazardous situations.
- 2.2 Familiarise yourself with the area. Get to know the location of phones, 24-hour stores, police stations, agency staff, other service agencies in the area, and local businesses.
- 2.3 Be familiar with the rules of the site. These rules are in place to ensure the most efficient functioning of the operation. Rules about training requirements such as background checks, confidentiality pledges or immunisations are intended to protect both you and the people with whom you are working.
- 2.4 Be accessible. Provide the phone number of your service site and a schedule of your hours to a relative or friend before leaving to do community service.
- 2.5 Work in pairs. Try not to be alone with clients without adequate supervision within close proximity.
- 2.6 Stay informed. Stay in touch with your fellow community workers and/or service agency workers and keep up to date with incidents and issues affecting the area in which you serve.
- 2.7 Trust your instincts. Sometimes the only indication you will have about impending problems is your “gut feeling”. These feelings are enough of a signal to take precautions or simply suspend your activity, but be sure to explain them to your supervisor.

- 2.8 Do what feels right. If you do not feel comfortable or safe participating in a certain activity, do not hesitate to share your feelings with your site supervisor or another appropriate person. You are not required to participate in any activity that makes you feel uncomfortable or unsafe.

3. Safety Guidelines for Students

In addition to the above guidelines, also take note of the following:

- 3.1 Make sure that you know who to ask for help at the University and the placement site in encountering any kind of SL problems, or when in doubt, or in case of an emergency.
- 3.2 Make sure that you know how to handle emergencies or where to obtain help on your way to or exiting from the placement site.
- 3.3 Again: Visit the placement site in pairs and trios – never alone.
- 3.4 When you embark on SL excursions, ensure that the lecturers always know exactly where you are. Deviations from the programme should be communicated to the staff member.
- 3.5 DO NOT report to your placement site under the influence of drugs or alcohol.
- 3.6 DO NOT give or loan your client money or other personal belongings to anyone.
- 3.7 DO NOT make promises or commitments to a client that you cannot keep.
- 3.8 DO NOT tolerate or engage in a verbal exchange of a sexual or discriminatory nature or engage in behaviour that might be perceived as sexual or discriminating with a client or service provider.
- 3.9 DO NOT enter into a personal relationship with a client or service provider during the SL placement.
- 3.10 DO NOT wear or carry conspicuous jewellery and other expensive items. Conceal cell phones.
- 3.11 Act promptly if subjected to severe medical risks or infectious diseases at the placement site.
- 3.12 Should any problem arise while you are working in the community, you should immediately contact the nearest police station and enquire about the safest/recommended route to leave the area.
- 3.13 Report any incidents with your lecturer and/or site supervisor as soon as possible.

4. Arrangements for Travelling and Transport

Since SL students almost always engage in off-campus activities, the following arrangements for travelling and transport should be followed:

- 4.1 The driver of a vehicle transporting SL students should have a valid driver's licence, which is older than two years, and should be over the age of 20.
- 4.2 Students (and staff members) who transport more than 12 persons at a time are required to have a professional (endorsed) public driver's licence.
- 4.3 The driver of the vehicle should check it thoroughly (fuel/brakes/tyres/spare tyre) before departing on a SL trip.

- 4.4 Always maintain a positive attitude towards other road users, especially pedestrians.
- 4.5 Know the route and prescribed time schedules to the placement site. Be familiar with alternative escape routes.
- 4.6 Avoid high-risk crime and trouble areas *en route*.
- 4.7 Always go to the placement site during the day.
- 4.8 DO NOT travel alone in a car to the placement site.
- 4.9 Keep the vehicle's doors locked whilst travelling and windows preferably closed (or slightly open). Lock and immobilise (activate the alarm system/gear lock) when the vehicle is parked.
- 4.10 Park in well-illuminated parking areas if parking indoors.
- 4.11 Make sure of approved parking on the premises of the placement site.
- 4.12 DO NOT leave valuables/equipment in the parked vehicle.
- 4.13 Obey traffic rules at all times (don't speed or overload).
- 4.14 DO NOT give a client, service provider, or stranger a lift in your own or a rented vehicle.
- 4.15 DO NOT drive under the influence of drugs and/or alcohol.
- 4.16 Go directly to the placement site without unnecessary stops (e.g. to buy refreshments at a shop). If absolutely necessary, stop only at safe and well-frequented parking areas.
- 4.17 Take refreshments along to the placement site to inhibit unscheduled travelling in the vicinity of the placement site.
- 4.18 Be very cautious at unusual roadblocks and accident scenes, and if flagged down by police or traffic officers, request identification without opening doors and windows.
- 4.19 Be aware of risks (like hijacking) involved in travelling by road. Be as calm as possible under stressful circumstances. Try to remember particulars of the hijackers and your escape vehicle and convey these particulars to the police and contact person as soon as it is possible.
- 4.20 The University has insurance coverage against claims that may arise from accidents and/or injuries during **scheduled and officially approved** trips to and from SL centres at community sites when a lecturer or student has been the driver of a vehicle (either your own **authorised** or a rented vehicle). This means that you will be insured whether you are the passenger or the driver of such a vehicle.
- 4.21 Remember that a trip in your own vehicle will only be regarded as formally approved if you have written permission to claim for such a trip and have kept record of the kilometres travelled. Take note: If you make use of your own vehicle without such permission, please ensure that your vehicle will be covered by your own insurance.
- 4.22 Please note that the University's insurance cover does not include transport in a taxi.
- 4.23 If you have a breakdown or your vehicle is involved in an accident, gather all information and call in for help (if necessary). Inform your lecturer immediately and report the accident at the nearest police station.

5. Communication and Contact Information

Each group of students must be in possession of a cell phone. Where applicable, the following telephone numbers must be available to the students and must be stored on your cell phones:

The relevant UFS lecturer, supervisor or facilitator: _____	
Flying Squad (SAPS):	051 10111
Report incidents at the nearest police station: _____	
Ambulance service:	051 10177
Emergency services: Discovery	086 0999 911
ER 24	082 951 3009
Medi-Clinic Emergency Unit (Contracted by UFS):	0800 051 051
Emergency services by air: AeroCare:	082 555 8222
Community contract person(s): _____	
Service sector contact person(s): _____	
Fellow students: _____	
Reporting an incident for insurance purposes (via your lecturer): Chief Officer: Finance (UFS) – Mr Hentie Cilliers (Timeframe: Within 2 hours for accidents and within 24 hours in cases of theft)	051 401 3131 083 644 9405
Trauma Counselling (Up to three consultations) is covered by UFS insurance (accessed via Mr Hentie Cilliers) – provided by Europ Assistance:	083 1999
The following on-campus emergency services are available to students:	
Protection Services (Make a statement ASAP and provide Mr Cilliers with a copy)	051 401 2911
Medical Emergency Services (Kovsie Health)	051 401 2603
“If things are getting too much for me” – Contact a Counsellor at Kovsie Counselling (Social worker)	073 182 3048
Source: <i>UFS Student Portal / Student Life / General</i> – Where can I get help?	