

Guide for Developing Field-based Activities Protocols during COVID-19¹

Instructors of record or activity leaders should develop careful protocols for off-campus courses, student clubs, research work, or other experiences. These guidelines help to ensure the safety and well-being of the Rice community while supporting the successful completion of meaningful, high-quality internships, off-campus research, practicum, and clinical activities (field-based activities, or FBA).

All decisions about FBAs should be consistent with campus, local, state, and national guidelines.

Overview

Guidelines for FBAs should reflect four priorities:

- Protect the health, safety and wellbeing of every member of our community, and contribute to the local and national efforts to reduce community transmission rates.
- Conform to guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.
- Safety is a priority for all field activities: Faculty and students should openly discuss any safety concerns and if necessary, include department chairs or deans.
- Reflect Rice values of responsibility, integrity, community, and excellence.

FBA leaders can use the questions outlined below as a template for developing best practices. FBA leaders should provide guidelines to their students, for example as succinct paragraphs for insertion into course syllabi or a separate document to be disseminated with the FBA.

Decision-making and Communication

- Who has authority over decisions about FBA arrangements (e.g. report to work, alternative experience)? For courses, this might be the instructor of record, but there might also be FBA supervisors or club sponsors.
- Which parties (internal, external, university, students) need to be consulted as decisions are made about the FBA arrangements? This may depend on answers to the questions below.
- Is the FBA a course or program requirement?
- What would trigger legal review/approval? (e.g., signed documents, other communications)

¹ Modified from the University of Maryland Internship Guidance During COVID-19

Safety Measures for Field-based Activities During COVID-19

If field-based activities are done in person, what are the required safety measures? Examples include:

- PPE, Social distancing, Physical space modifications

If the field-based activity must be done virtually, what are the approved options for students? Examples include:

- Field-based simulations, Video analysis, Virtual practitioner/professional shadowing

What additional training and expectations might be required for students?

- Safety training
- Technology training (new technology skills, ethical use standards)
- Travel restrictions
- Daily health reporting
- Measures to mitigate risk to self and others
- Students should conform to the safety regulations of the destination organization

Additional Considerations for Virtual Field-based Activities

- What additional equipment and resources are needed for every student in the class or the FBA experience to participate?
- What are the standards for secure and ethical use of technology?