

Safety Guide for Students Engaged in Overseas Fieldwork

This safety guide provides information about the precautions that must be taken when engaging in overseas fieldwork. Please read this guide before traveling abroad for fieldwork and be sure to seek advice and follow the instructions of your department, laboratory, and supervisor regarding the necessary precautions required. In order to minimize risks at the fieldwork site, please refer to the university's Safe Travel Abroad leaflet as well as the safety materials provided by individual university departments (listed the end of this guide).

Definition of Fieldwork

Fieldwork conducted by faculty members and students as part of their education and research activities at Kyoto University is defined broadly as an academic activity at a site where the physical or living subjects of the education or research (including human beings) can be found.

Examples of fieldwork include: weather observation, oceanographic surveys, observation of living organisms or minerals, the collection of materials and samples, the investigation of a disaster site, participation in and observation of local community activities, interviews, taking photographs or videos (including the use of drones), and the acquisition of documents and materials.



Before traveling abroad

1. Create a research plan



Understand the necessary procedures for the fieldwork required by your department and create a detailed **research plan** with your supervisor well in advance. The research plan must be feasible and give due consideration to the circumstances at the site, including safety and security. Share the research plan with your family members, friends, and other relevant parties.

2. Purchase overseas travel insurance with unlimited coverage for medical treatment and rescue expenses. (For further details, please see item 4 in the Safe Travel Abroad leaflet)



Overseas fieldwork can entail many different types of risk. Be sure to enroll in **overseas travel insurance with unlimited coverage for medical treatment and rescue expenses**, so that you can engage in your research without unnecessary worry. Depending on the content of the fieldwork, some cases may not be covered by the insurance (for example, if you need to climb mountains using picks, climbing irons, and other climbing equipment). Before purchasing insurance, please confirm that **the policy covers all of the risks that you may face during the fieldwork**.

3. Be prepared for an emergency. Keep your Emergency contact list and emergency card with you at all times. (For further details, please see items 3 and 10 of the Safe Travel Abroad leaflet)



- Before traveling abroad, make a list of **emergency contacts** in Japan and abroad, and share the list with your supervisor, department, family members, friends, and other relevant parties.
- In the event of an emergency, prioritize taking the necessary action to **ensure your own safety**. Once you are in a safe situation, contact the local police, embassy, consulate general, your supervisor, family members, and other relevant parties to ask for help.
- **Familiarize yourself with local laws and regulations before departure** to ensure that you do not violate them in any way. If you are arrested or detained, contact the appropriate embassy or consulate general. Please be aware, however, that provided the local authorities have followed the appropriate legal procedures, even an embassy or consulate general cannot demand your release, appeal for a penalty reduction, or request other special treatment.



4. Practice good health management (preventive care, vaccination, and medicines)

(For further details, please see item 5 and 9 of the Safe Travel Abroad leaflet)



- Confirm if there are any infectious or endemic diseases in the destination area, and receive appropriate **vaccinations** against them. As some vaccines require more than one dose to be administered at intervals, arrange for vaccinations well in advance.
- Prepare sufficient **medicines and sanitary goods** for your trip. Be aware, however, that some medicines may be prohibited in the destination country, or the amount of medicine that you are allowed to bring in may be restricted. Please confirm such information in advance. If you are planning to purchase preventive medicine for infectious diseases endemic to the region after arrival, purchase them immediately after arriving there as it may be difficult to purchase such items outside of major cities.
- In the event of an international infectious disease risk, please follow the guidelines in item 9 of the Safe Travel Abroad leaflet.

5. Obtain the necessary research permits and visas (follow the procedures required by the local law)



It may be necessary to complete certain procedures required by local law or local authority regulations to obtain a **research permit** or a **visa** for the destination country. Confirm the necessary procedures before traveling and prepare well in advance.

6. Be sure to prepare the necessary research equipment and other necessary items. Be sure to take appropriate clothing in consideration of local culture and customs



- **Research equipment** and **other items** that you will need on-site varies depending on the purpose and nature of the fieldwork and local environment at the destination, including factors such as climate. Be sure to prepare adequate equipment, including spare items, in compliance with the local regulations on the use of such equipment. If the Japanese regulations are more stringent, please be sure to comply with the Japanese regulations as well.
- **The cultures and customs** of different countries vary greatly. In some countries you are required to avoid wearing revealing clothes (regardless of gender). Be sure to check what kind of clothes local people wear, and wear suitable clothes in consideration of local culture and customs. Please note that the appropriate clothing may be different for different circumstances and situations, such while doing research on-site, when visiting a public institution, when staying at your accommodation, and when meeting with local people.

While traveling abroad

7. Communicate with the parties concerned and ensure that you always have a means of communication



- After arriving at the destination, **promptly report your arrival to your supervisor, family members, and other relevant parties**. Please maintain communication with these people on a regular basis during the fieldwork period.
- In some countries, you will be able to use the same mobile phone that you are using in Japan. However, it is dangerous to rely solely on a mobile phone. Please ensure that you also have other means of communication, such as a transceiver or satellite telephone, so that you **can communicate any time**.

8. Dealing with on-site emergencies (For further details, please see item 10 of the Safe Travel Abroad leaflet)



In the event of an emergency, prioritize taking the necessary action to **ensure your own safety**. Referring to the emergency contact list prepared before your departure, ask for assistance from the local police, the appropriate embassy or consulate general, your insurance company, IR&C*, your family, and other relevant parties. Once you have secured your safety, be sure to report the situation to your department and supervisor.

(* The IR&C emergency support service for overseas travel can only be utilized if you are registered.)

9. Modify your research plan if necessary



When staying in an unfamiliar place with different customs and an unfamiliar environment, it is not unusual to suffer from nervousness, stress, and physical exhaustion. If you feel that your health is being affected, ease off on your work and consider **modifying your research plan** appropriately. Poor concentration can cause accidents and other problems. Be sure to get enough sleep and rest. In some circumstances, you may also need to modify your research plan due to certain local circumstances, such as traffic conditions, weather, and security issues. **If you need to change your research plan, please report it to your supervisor, family members, friends, and other relevant parties.**

10. Obtain information on safety concerns and safety measures

(For further details, please see item 2 of the Safe Travel Abroad leaflet)



Confirm the **safety information for the destination** via reliable sources in Japan and abroad, such as the Ministry of Foreign Affairs' Overseas Travel Safety Information website (available in Japanese only), and be sure to take appropriate safety measures.

11. Transportation (driving a car/using public transport)



- To the extent possible, **avoid the use of public transport at night**. If you need to go out at night, please use a safe mode of transportation. If you need to drive a car, be sure to drive with utmost care after ensuring that you understand the local traffic regulation and signage. Keep in mind that you are in unfamiliar surroundings, and that road conditions may be different from those in Japan.
- Accidents and other incidents tend to occur at places where many people gather, such as airports and railway stations. Avoid such places as much as possible, and when you need to go to such places, be sure to pay the utmost attention to your surroundings.

12. The handling of research materials (historical documents, archeological remains, animals, plants, minerals, soils, etc.)



When **collecting or handling research materials**, be sure to confirm and comply with the local legal regulations and prohibitions, as well as those of Japan. Confirm any unclear points with your supervisor, rather than using your own judgement.

13. Taking photographs, videos (including the use of drones)



In some countries, it is **prohibited for security reasons to take photographs or videos (including the use of drones)** in and around government, military and religious facilities, stations, bridges, ports, and other areas. If you are unaware of the regulations and take photographs in a prohibited area, your camera may be confiscated, or you may be arrested or detained. In some countries, taking photographs or videos of people can cause trouble due to local customs and culture. Before taking photographs of people, facilities, or other subjects, please obtain advance permission from the individuals themselves, or the owner or manager of the facility etc.

14. Communication



Please be aware that different countries have different customs and culture with regards to speech and behavior. Before traveling to a foreign country, **gather information to gain an understanding of its culture and customs** in advance. This will help you in forming good relationships with local residents. Try to learn the country's official language, and, if possible, any **indigenous languages** as well.

After traveling abroad

15. Health management



- Symptoms of infectious or other diseases may emerge after you return from fieldwork, even if you do not experience any while you are abroad. After returning home, please **pay attention to any emerging symptoms, and consult with a healthcare practitioner** if necessary.
- You have a responsibility to protect yourself from infectious diseases and to prevent their spread.

16. Report your return



When you return to Japan, **report** to your supervisor, family members, and other relevant parties. Remember to thank those who assisted you in undertaking the fieldwork.



Essential information

Safe Travel Abroad

- The Safe Travel Abroad leaflet provides information on the necessary precautions to ensure your safety when you travel abroad. Please read it before your trip, and also take it with you for reference.

<https://www.kyoto-u.ac.jp/ja/about/public/issue/anzen-guide>
(in Japanese and English)



Safe Travel
Abroad

Useful reference materials

Useful reference materials regarding fieldwork and safety provided by Kyoto University departments

- **Kyoto University Safety and Occupational Health Reference Manual 2018 (Agency for Health, Safety and Environment)**

Section 11, "Outdoor Activities" (pp.86-87) includes information on the precautions necessary while engaging in fieldwork at a distant location.

<https://u.kyoto-u.jp/0avol> (in Japanese only)



Safety and Occupational Health
Reference Manual

- **Safety Guide (Graduate School of Science; GSS)**

Chapter 13, "Fieldwork," includes information on the precautions necessary while engaging in fieldwork in Japan and abroad.

<https://www.sci.kyoto-u.ac.jp/ja/inuniv/safety/file/safety.pdf> (in Japanese only)



Safety Guide (GSS)

- **Safety Guide (Graduate School of Agriculture; GSA)**

Chapter 12, "Fieldwork," includes information on the precautions necessary while engaging in fieldwork in mountain areas, coastal areas (including use of ships, and underwater survey diving), and outside of Japan.

<https://www.kais.kyoto-u.ac.jp/japanese/procedures/info/safety-guide/> (in Japanese and English)



Safety Guide (GSA)

- **Safety Guide (Field Science Education and Research Center; FSERC)**

Chapter 11, "Fieldwork," includes information on the precautions necessary when engaging in fieldwork in mountain areas, coastal areas (including use of ships, and underwater survey diving), and outside of Japan.

https://fserc.kyoto-u.ac.jp/main/safety/fserc_SafetyGuide_201804.pdf (in Japanese only)



Safety Guide (FSERC)

- **Guidance on Safety when Undertaking Fieldwork in Africa (Tanzania, Cameroon, Ethiopia, and Uganda Editions) (Center for African Area Studies; CAAS)**

These brochures provide basic information on each country, the procedures required to obtain a research permit and visa, infectious diseases and vaccinations, and of precautions to ensure fieldwork is conducted safely (in Japanese only).

Tanzania: <https://www.africa.kyoto-u.ac.jp/book/086.html>

Cameroon: <https://www.africa.kyoto-u.ac.jp/book/092.html>

Ethiopia: <https://www.africa.kyoto-u.ac.jp/book/108.html>

Uganda: <https://www.africa.kyoto-u.ac.jp/archives/publication/114>



Tanzania



Cameroon



Ethiopia



Uganda

If you wish to obtain any of the above brochures, please contact the Center for African Area Studies:

The Center for African Area Studies

Address: 46 Yoshida-Shimoadachi, Sakyo, Kyoto, 606-8501

Inamori Foundation Memorial Hall, Kyoto University

Tel: 075-753-7803 Fax: 075-753-7810

E-mail: caas [at] jambo.africa.kyoto-u.ac.jp (Please replace [at] with @.)



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Stay Safe!

Emergency Contact List & Emergency Card

Fill out the necessary information and keep the emergency contact list and emergency card handy in your purse, wallet, or passport case.
Give a copy of the emergency contact list to your family.





Emergency Contact List

Contact Details	Name	Telephone No.	E-mail address
Family members/relatives			
Department of affiliation at Kyoto University			
Travel insurance help desk			
24-hour emergency support desk (if registered)			
Contacting address (abroad)			
Host university/ institute			
Embassy/ consulate general			
Police			
Fire department			
Ambulance			
Insurance company help desk			



Emergency Card

Personal Details		Emergency Contacts	
Name (as in passport)		Embassy/ consulate general Tel.	
Name (in Japanese and/or local language at destination)		Address	
Date of birth		Host university/ institute Tel.	
Nationality		Local contact (name & relation) Tel.	
Passport number			
Student ID number			
Medical information		Family member (name & relationship) Tel.	
Blood type	A B O AB (Rh + -)		+
Allergies		Contact at Kyoto University Department (name & relationship) Tel.	
Medical condition(s)			+81-
Current medication		E-mail	
Other			
KYOTO UNIVERSITY, JAPAN 		https://www.kyoto-u.ac.jp/en/ 	



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Stay Safe!

[Please affix your department's emergency contact list, etc., in this space]



Online version of this leaflet

<https://www.kyoto-u.ac.jp/en/about/publications/overseas-fieldwork>



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