

A1.3

Inclusion at the University of Worcester



Design inclusively Being inclusive in Fieldtrips

What?

Be clear about learning outcomes.

How?

Think carefully about how the learning outcomes are being met by the field work and what aspects of field work could be changed without impacting on the learning outcomes. Which learning outcomes can only be met by experiencing field work?

Why?

Consideration of learning outcomes informs the field work experience and any alterations/modifications that need to be made to it to accommodate students, for example those with disabilities, transgender students or students with autism spectrum conditions. Learning outcomes affect the assessment of the field work, including alternative experiences/assessment.¹

Disseminate information.

Ensure pre-trip briefings and handouts are accessible to all, and build in flexibility for individual or small group meetings with students who have additional requirements on a field trip.

Providing clear and detailed information on what will happen on field work is vital. For any student, but particularly for disabled or transgender students, or those with autism spectrum conditions, it is important to feel in control of their situation when away from familiar environments and support mechanisms²

Think about food.

Ensure that catering facilities can accommodate any special dietary requirements.

This may be a source of anxiety for some students with allergies and intolerances and it is best to reduce any requirement for students to bring their own food if catering facilities are provided for the majority of the group. Students may also have religious reasons for abstaining from certain sorts of food or for requiring food preparation to be carried out in a particular way.

What?

Check representation of the field work in course literature.

How?

Be aware of how the field work is portrayed in photographs and descriptions in prospectuses.

Why?

Portrayals of field work in prospectuses and promotional material can overly focus on the male, white and heroic aspects.³ This may lead to some students feeling that they will not fit in within this discipline

Consider accommodation arrangements.

Ideally all students are in the same accommodation; however, given the constraints on the destination of field work, sometimes it is more appropriate to have separate accommodation available nearby to meet the needs of all students, such as quiet single rooms for some students and prayer/religious observance spaces.

Try to ensure the accommodation is accessible at all times during the trip.

Choose accommodation where there are quiet rooms and places to socialise.

Some students need quiet environments for example, those with anxiety, autism spectrum conditions or medical conditions (e.g. epilepsy) which mean they require a full night's sleep to manage their conditions. This may also apply to students who are pregnant, or to transgender students.

This may be necessary if a student needs to remain behind for a day or return early from the field.

This encourages students who don't want to be in loud environments in the evenings to socialise and not just sit in their rooms.

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What?

Consider issues of inclusivity specific to the locality and activities to be undertaken.

How?

Be aware of religious/cultural sensibilities in localities visited.

Build in flexibility for students to work in pairs if the work will involve talking to or interviewing people.

Inform students of any potential allergens e.g. pollen, in the environment so they can take appropriate medication.

Why?

For example, many Muslim students may be uncomfortable entering a place where alcohol is served. This is also a reason to discourage pubs and bars being the default places for socialising on the field trip.

This is potentially challenging for students on the autism spectrum and mental-health conditions, but working in groups or pairs could help to overcome this.

This will help students with medical conditions prepare in advance and limits the chance of this adversely affecting them on the field trip.

Think about how the location might impact on teaching methods.

Try to choose a quiet location for delivering teaching. If this is not possible, hold the introduction and debrief in quieter locations.

Supplement verbal information with written information to limit the amount of note-taking that is required from verbal instructions.

Allow flexibility for students to move between localities before starting teaching.

This will impact students with both hearing difficulties and conditions such as dyslexia which make note-taking difficult and time consuming.

Listening and note-taking simultaneously are particularly difficult for some students.

This particularly impacts students with limited mobility who may arrive later than everyone else.

What?

Check whether equipment might pose any barriers for certain students.

How?

Consider whether there may be any safety issues around clothing students need or are required to wear for health or religious reasons and whether this will limit their participation in the activity.

Why?

In these cases you can discuss this with students ahead of the trip and work out the best solution. This will avoid embarrassment and disappointment on the trip and help the student to understand the rationale behind any restrictions implied.

Think about how time keeping might impact on certain groups.

Wherever possible, have clearly defined rest breaks, meal times and finish times, and let students know when these are.

Consider how much time will be spent in the field each day and whether it is possible to have flexible working hours. Could students have control over the hours they work?

This enables those who need to control their diets, energy levels and/or have control over their environment to take the necessary action.

Field work is tiring – for a disabled student, even more so.

¹Healey, M., Jenkins, A., Leach, J. and Roberts, C. 2001. 'Issues providing learning support for disabled students undertaking fieldwork and related activities.' Cheltenham and Gloucester College of Higher Education, Geography Discipline Network (GDN). [Online]. [Accessed 20 August 2018]. Available from: <https://gdn.glos.ac.uk/disabil/overview/overview.pdf>

² Hall, T. and Healey, M. (2006) in Adams, M. and Brown, S. (eds) Towards Inclusive Learning in Higher Education: Developing Curricula for Disabled Students London: RoutledgeFalmer [Accessed April 2021]. Available from: <https://www.taylorfrancis.com/books/edit/10.4324/9780203088623/towards-inclusive-learning-higher-education-mike-adams-sally-brown>

³ Hall, T., Healey, M. and Harrison, M. 2004. Fieldwork and disabled students: discourses of exclusion and inclusion. *Journal of Geography in Higher Education*, 28(2), pp.255-280.

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<https://inclusiveteaching.leeds.ac.uk/>; <https://www.plymouth.ac.uk/your-university/teaching-and-learning/inclusivity>.

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