

# Bhutan

## SFS Program Manual

### Summer 2010

The School for Field Studies (SFS)



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PLEASE READ THIS MATERIAL CAREFULLY BEFORE LEAVING FOR THE PROGRAM. BRING IT WITH YOU TO THE FIELD AS IT CONTAINS IMPORTANT INFORMATION.

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*\*Note that as a condition for participation in an SFS program, you are required to document that you have read, understood and accepted all academic, safety, administrative and operational policies, rules and requirements by reading and signing the SFS Terms and Regulations Statement\**

## **OVERVIEW OF SFS PROGRAMS**

The School for Field Studies offers semester and summer programs at field centers around the world. Each field center is staffed by a director, three resident faculty, a student affairs manager, and a host of support staff. Because the Bhutan program is smaller than other programs, and since we are being hosted at a facility, the program differs slightly from this model. The program will have a single lead instructor assisted by several local instructors. The academically rigorous and interdisciplinary curriculum of each program is designed to allow students to actively discover and understand the complexities of local realities related to environmental, social and economic problems. Through teaching and research, SFS faculty and staff introduce students to field research methods, data collection and analysis, and promote student interactions and reciprocity with local communities. The curriculum and research projects are driven by local needs and interests. SFS programs integrate academic, research, social, and community activities in a holistic education model.

### **SFS programs contain the following unique elements:**

**The Center Five Year Research Plan (5YRP):** The 5YRP at each SFS field center is the overarching research directive that addresses local challenges and explores local solutions. The Plan is generated by our faculty, local stakeholders, and external research advisors. The purpose of the 5YRP is to define research priorities and projects that address critical local environmental problems. The 5YRP also provides the community and students with a framework for the program curriculum, defining how SFS courses, research, and outreach activities fit into the bigger picture of environmental conservation and development. In Bhutan, we will be addressing the priority research questions defined by our partner, the Ugyen Wangchuck Institute for Conservation and Environment.

**Case Studies:** For most summer programs, a case study question is developed to give students an interdisciplinary and holistic understanding of the background, context, and relevance of local environmental issues defined by the research direction. Case studies guide students through an analysis of an actual local environmental situation or dilemma. Faculty work to ensure that

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students understand the case study problem and can develop potential solutions and alternatives through research and critical thinking.

**Summer Research Projects:** Students in the summer programs assist our faculty in conducting research that addresses the research plans and supports the local community. In addition, students write reports and/or present their findings from their field exercises to class members, stakeholders, and/or other community members.

**Courses:** The SFS summer program, in Bhutan encompassing one six-credit course, is interdisciplinary, team taught, and participatory in nature, designed to stimulate student inquiry and active learning. The central program topic at each SFS field site varies based on the focus of the research plan and local needs. The program provides a mixture of lectures, field exercises, assignments, exams, and research.

**Field Experience:** An important component of the SFS learning model is hands-on field experience. Field lectures, exercises and research help students to: i) connect the conceptual material presented in the course to local realities; ii) learn field techniques; iii) collect and analyze field data; and develop holistic and critical thinking skills.

**Connecting with the Local Community:** Summer students engage in a variety of community service projects that are facilitated by the student affairs manager (SAM). The SAM works closely with the faculty, community groups, and students to identify and select projects that will help students become grounded in the local context of the issues they are researching, and give back to the community.

**Group Living:** SFS students live and work with other students and SFS staff. Residential life provides opportunities for students to develop and demonstrate leadership, good communication, teamwork, and other group-dynamics skills.

## **SFS AT LAMEY GOEMPA**

The program will be based at Lamey Goempa, a former palace and monastery of King Ugyen Wangchuck, built in the 1800s. The facility is now used as an international research and training center, focusing on environment and conservation, called the Ugyen Wangchuck Institute for Conservation and Environment. The center rests on a hillside above the town of Jakar at the foot of the Chokhor valley, surrounded by evergreen forests, offering students a field laboratory and experimental site as part of their academic program.

### **A BRIEF INTRODUCTION TO BHUTAN**

The Kingdom of Bhutan, referred to as the abode of the gods and home to immortals by Eastern classics and books of wisdom, is nestled in the remote and rugged mountains of the eastern Himalayan region. The culture and the traditional lifestyle of Bhutan are still richly intact and permeate all strands of modern day secular life.

The eastern Himalayan region is characterized by extensive and numerous mountains and valleys, hosting the world's highest peaks and a diversity of vegetation types ranging from subtropical broadleaf forests through subalpine conifer and alpine shrub and meadows. The country boasts a 70% forest cover and 26% of land area under formal conservation protection. Bhutan has been identified as one of the ten biodiversity hot spots in the world and is home to an estimated 770 species of birds and an astonishing diversity of plants and orchids. Takin, snow leopard, golden langur, blue sheep, tiger, water buffalo and elephant are among Bhutan's diverse wildlife. Six vegetation zones are found in the country, ranging from subtropical broadleaf forests in the south, through broadleaf forests, subalpine conifer forests, alpine shrub and meadows as one gains elevation. The highest elevations comprise rock and ice. In the temperate forests, trees are related to the North American conifer and broadleaf taxa, including pines, firs, maples, and birches.

A unique aspect of Bhutan is that progress is not purely defined by economic achievements as in most countries but is also based on the level of cultural and environmental preservation and development. In Bhutan, people have developed rich cultural traditions and social and political institutions that reflect Buddhist principles of The Middle Path, integrating people and nature, traditional knowledge and Western science. Sustainable management of natural resources, including soil, water, species and minerals, is critical for this country whose economy is largely based on these resources.

In early 2008, Bhutan's government shifted from a monarchy to a constitutional democracy, opening the door for devolution of authority over natural resources to regional governments and communities. Since the majority of the population resides in rural areas, sustainable management of natural resources is critical for achieving the dual goals of poverty alleviation and biodiversity conservation in this country where limited transportation routes and communication lines limit access to markets.

## **ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES AND RESEARCH PLAN**

Because the local and household economies depend considerably on natural resources, a critical area for research is in defining baseline assessments of biodiversity and ecosystem function throughout Bhutan. Those data are critical for planning for conservation and rural development. Also important is to identify the threats to rural livelihoods, specifically the human-wildlife conflicts that occur in and around agricultural areas.

SFS is partnering with the Ugyen Wangchuck Institute for Conservation and Environment, an international research and training facility in Bhutan. SFS students and faculty will help the Institute advance its research agenda in several priority areas, including community and private forest management, the role of non-timber forest products in rural livelihood, human-wildlife conflict in agricultural areas, and pollution of fields and waterways.

## **SUMMER COURSE DESCRIPTION**

Course Title	Credits	Contact Hours	Course number
Eastern Himalayan Forests and Rural Livelihood	6	80	EE (NS) 358

### **Eastern Himalayan Forests and Rural Livelihood, EE(NS) 358**

Eastern Himalayan Forests and Rural Livelihood is a six-week summer course that integrates education on the social and biophysical aspects of natural resource management and biodiversity conservation. In this interdisciplinary, field-based course, students will get to know a country in a region that is recognized worldwide for its dramatic mountain landscapes and rich flora and fauna. We will travel in Bhutan learning about culture, Buddhist philosophy, and environmental issues. Trekking across valleys and ridges and through villages students will gain an intimate

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knowledge of the local environments and rural livelihoods. Students will develop skills in assessing environmental problems, defining research questions, conducting field research, and communicating results. They will gain an appreciation for the complexity of identifying and addressing conservation issues in a rapidly developing region.

### **PLEASE NOTE**

Students will be presented with the course syllabi once they arrive at the Center. Students are also encouraged to check the website for updated materials.

In addition to learning field skills, you will learn about many different aspects of forest environments, resource management and rural livelihoods linked to natural resources. Below is a list of topics and field skills you can expect in the Bhutan program.

- Culture of Bhutan
- Rural development linked to natural resources
- Ecology of Eastern Himalaya forests
- Conservation and management
- Community forestry
- Appreciation of local knowledge
- Field identification of local flora and fauna
- Field research methods

### **FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQ)**

#### **Q: How much time do we learn outside?**

A: Many of our academic activities are field based. The actual amount will vary depending on the weather and other factors but you will spend time in the field during field lectures, field exercises, trekking, and botanical walks.

#### **Q: What is the structure of the program and how much free time will I have?**

A: Academic activities, including classroom lectures, field lectures, discussions, and field research, will occur six days a week. Students will have very few days off during the programs. The program is intensive and highly structured. One day a week we will organize recreational

and cultural activities for students. Students will not have the opportunity during the program to spend nights away from the center.

**Q: What is the basis for grading the course?**

A: Your grade will be assessed through a mixture of written exams, quizzes, readings, papers, and other assignments; the specifics are described in the course syllabus (which you receive at the center).

**Q: Can I choose my own research project?**

A: No. Students will work on projects identified by the center staff and developed and led by SFS faculty.

**Q: Is the research a group effort or individual work?**

A: Students collaborate on the field data collection and analysis, but papers and research reports are written individually, even if multiple students work on the same research topic.

**Q: Do we go on overnight field trips?**

A: Yes, there will be one multi-day trek (supported by pack animals). We will also start the program in the country's capital city of Thimphu.

**Q: How much will we interact with the local community?**

A: Community activities and hands-on work will occur during some classes and also outside of academic work. Exact content and amount are dependent on community group schedules during the session period.

## **ACADEMIC AFFAIRS**

### **ACADEMIC EXPECTATIONS**

The academic atmosphere we try to create at SFS is that of a community of learners. Students come from a wide range of colleges and universities as well as from a variety of academic backgrounds. There are language majors, ecology majors, pre-med students, economics majors, and in the summer programs, it is common to have a few high school seniors. We view this diversity as a strength and a learning opportunity. You will be able to challenge yourself intellectually in areas you are not familiar with and to act in a leadership role in those areas in

which you have expertise. Students are expected to critically analyze the drivers of local environmental, social and economic problems and to develop field research and communication skills with the goal of providing information to decision-makers who can address those problems.

## **ACADEMIC CREDIT**

All SFS courses are accredited through Boston University (BU), and students in SFS programs are automatically registered at BU unless they come from SFS Affiliated Universities (see below). Students registered through BU receive their grades, credit, and transcripts from BU. This is a requirement, not an option. There is a fee for the services involved in the registration process for which all students will be billed.

BU operates on a semester calendar and all SFS courses are accredited accordingly. SFS summer students will be registered in BU's summer program. Transcripts are not available until six to eight weeks after the close of BU's program period, so SFS summer students should expect grade reports and transcripts in late September.

### *Students from SFS-Affiliated Universities*

Students from schools that have affiliation status with SFS typically receive academic credit for their SFS participation directly through their home institution. Applicants should check with their home school advisor or registrar to determine if they attend an affiliate school. You may also check our website. At the end of each program SFS reports grades directly to the affiliate advisor of the affiliated home institutions. Each SFS course taken and grade received will appear on the student's regular transcript, which can be obtained through normal home institution procedures. Questions regarding these procedures or requests for information for use in acquiring approval at home institutions should be directed to the SFS admissions office.

### *Credit Transfer*

The amount and type (major, minor, elective) of credit students receive for coursework done on an SFS program is determined by their home institution. It is strongly recommended that each student keep copies of all completed tests, written papers, homework assignments, research papers, lecture notes, handouts, and reading assignments for the student's own future use, and for possible discussions with faculty advisors. SFS does not assume responsibility for providing copies of these after students depart a center, with the exception of a student's grades on course assessment items and their final grade.

SFS cannot guarantee that students will receive credit for their SFS courses from their home institutions. Students should not assume that a prior student's success with credit transfer is a guarantee that their credit will transfer as well. It is the responsibility of the student to arrange credit with their home school prior to SFS participation. Students intending to receive academic credit at their home institution should speak with their academic advisor about how to best proceed. Students should allow time to have their SFS program approved by their advisor and other appropriate personnel before the start of the program.

### **Why SFS Grades Matter!**

Students who do not receive academic credit at their home institution (or only receive Pass/Fail credit) are encouraged to perform at their highest capacity while at SFS. Future graduate or other academic programs, as well as certain employers, may request your SFS transcript. Your SFS transcript will have your actual SFS grade (A, B, C, ...), and if you do not perform well at SFS, your poor grade may affect your future admissions.

## **OBTAINING AN OFFICIAL TRANSCRIPT**

The following transcript procedures apply to all SFS students registered at BU for their SFS coursework (students from affiliated institutions should contact the director of admissions and institutional relations at SFS for information on obtaining an official transcript). Six to eight weeks following the conclusion of the summer students will receive one official transcript in the mail. This transcript is sent to the student's home (permanent) address and NOT to the student's home school registrar. Transfer of credit is the student's responsibility, and, as such, the student must deliver the official transcript to the appropriate person at her/his home institution.

Students should wait at least eight weeks after the end of the BU summer session before requesting additional transcripts. Students should plan accordingly when making transcript requests as they must be made in writing, and may take several weeks to process.

To obtain additional official transcripts, students should write to:

Transcript Office

Include the following:

Office of the University Registrar	- Your full name
Boston University	- Date of birth
881 Commonwealth Avenue, 2nd Fl	- Social Security number
Boston, MA 02215	- The course number and dates you attended
	- A check made payable to BU (transcript fee)
	- Your signature on the letter

Call the Transcript Office at (617) 353-3616 to confirm fees before writing your check!

## **POLICIES ON GRADING, INCOMPLETES, AND WITHDRAWAL FROM COURSES**

SFS courses are rigorous and challenging, and our approach mandates that students demonstrate their knowledge of theory and practice by applying such theory and practice to actual problems. Because SFS exams are based on application of knowledge, rather than rote memorization, the courses are generally thought of as difficult. Do not expect grading to be similar to your home institution—many students are surprised by how hard the professor's grade.

Courses may not be taken on a pass/fail or audit basis. Letter grades will be reported to BU and to SFS affiliate schools for every student. SFS does not "round-up" numerical grades (e.g., a final grade of 89.99% receives a letter grade of B+ and is not rounded up to 90.00, or A-).

*Incompletes:* Conventionally, an incomplete in college is a temporary status for students who have temporarily left an academic program with the intent of completing outstanding coursework by a predetermined date. SFS programs are foreign-based, field-orientated, and require fulltime on-site participation in all program activities; therefore, SFS does not grant incompletes.

*Early Departure:* In the case of a student making a permanent departure from an SFS program without completing outstanding coursework, the following will apply:

<b>Grade translations</b>		
<b>Letter scale</b>		<b>GPA</b>
A	= 92.50 - 100.00%	= 4.0
A-	= 90.00 - 92.49%	= 3.7
B+	= 87.50 - 89.99%	= 3.3
B	= 82.50 - 87.49%	= 3.0
B-	= 80.00 - 82.49%	= 2.7
C+	= 77.50 - 79.99	= 2.3
C	= 72.50 - 77.49	= 2.0
C-	= 70.00 - 72.49	= 1.7
D	= 60.00 - 69.99	= 1.0
F	= < 59.99	= 0

*Credit Policy:* SFS does not grant partial or incomplete credit. Due to the interdisciplinary nature of our programs, students must be present from the first day of orientation to the last day of wrap-up and presentations in order to receive credit for all courses. Any student who departs the program prior to completion will receive a “W” (“Withdrawn”) for the course.

*Student Responsibility:* It is the responsibility of the student to contact their parents as well as make necessary arrangements with their home school regarding financial and credit implications as a result of their early departure.

*Refund Policy:* If departure occurs after the start of the program students will receive a “W” (“Withdrawn”) and no refund.

## **REQUESTING REVIEW OF FINAL GRADES**

It is the responsibility of the faculty to articulate how grades are determined. It is the responsibility of students to consider these explanations and, if there is a lack of clarity, to request clarification immediately, in writing, rather than after receiving the official transcript.

Students who feel that a grading basis or a grade is unfair should explain their concerns first to the relevant faculty **IN WRITING** within 24 hours of receiving their grade. Their explanation must be **IN WRITING** and include both their reasons for believing the unfairness exists and their requests for specific changes. Faculty members have the obligation to respond fully, clearly, and promptly. Students must raise their concerns directly with faculty while in the program. If a satisfactory solution cannot be arranged between a student and her/his faculty, students may make a **WRITTEN** request for an explanation of the faculty member’s decision for presentation to the center director for further consideration. The Center Director will review the case with the faculty member, and if a resolution cannot be made, the petition for a grade change will be forwarded to the SFS Program Dean for review. The Dean's review will generally be limited to determining whether fair standards were set and followed.

After a student departs a program (i.e., when the student physically leaves the Center), the only grade changes SFS will consider are those which involve mathematical or transcription errors.

## **REQUESTING ACCOMMODATIONS FOR LEARNING AND PHYSICAL DISABILITIES**

Students requesting accommodations for disabilities are responsible for notifying the SFS safety director for physical disabilities and the SFS program dean for learning disabilities. Notification of this disability must be made in writing and submitted within one week of acceptance. This written notification is required to allow time for SFS to review the specific requests. The written notification must be submitted to the appropriate SFS office from the student's home institution (i.e., the office responsible for the provision of accommodations for disabilities). The letter must include (a) the student's specific disability, (b) a description of the functional limitations imposed by the disability, and (c) the recommended accommodations. Be sure to indicate your center, semester or summer session of study, and home institution on any correspondence or documentation! Please be aware that the level of accessibility, services, and accommodations to which you may have access at your home campus may not be available at our field stations.

Send physical disability requests to:  
SFS Safety Director

The School for Field Studies  
10 Federal Street, Suite 24  
Salem, MA 01970

Send learning accommodations requests to:

SFS Dean  
The School for Field Studies  
10 Federal Street, Suite 24  
Salem, MA 01970

## **ACADEMIC AND RESEARCH HONESTY POLICY**

SFS has adopted a zero-tolerance policy towards student cheating, plagiarism, data falsification, and any other form of dishonest academic and/or research practice or behavior (including but not limited to standards set by any college or institution with which the student is associated). As a result, any SFS student found by SFS to have engaged in or to have facilitated academic and/or research dishonesty will receive no credit (0%) for that particular activity. The faculty will use its best efforts to make it clear whenever joint efforts and collaboration between students in the preparation of work product are deemed acceptable and the extent of collaboration that is permissible.

In addition to the zero percent (0%) mark for the particular activity, SFS reserves the right, using its sole and unfettered judgment about the severity or repetition of any transgression, to expel a student from any program in which the student is participating. A student who is expelled from a program will receive a grade of "Withdrawn" for the course and a notation of "Academic Suspension." The expelled student will not be entitled to any financial refund from the program.

SFS considers it appropriate to report to a student's principal academic organization any behavior that reflects on the character, integrity and/or academic ability of a student. Therefore, when a final determination of guilt has been made, SFS will report the final decision, as well as the sanction imposed, to any college or institution with which the student is associated, as well as to BU, the accrediting institution. Through participation in an SFS program, each student shall be deemed to have expressly waived any right to prevent such disclosure that might otherwise exist in law or by contract. Nothing in this policy shall prevent any college or institution with which the student is associated from reviewing the violation and taking actions pursuant to its own policies on academic misconduct, including its policies on sanctions or the recording of an offense on a student's record.

## **SFS INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY, DATA AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT POLICIES**

SFS strongly recommends that students keep copies of completed tests, written papers, homework assignments, research reports, and other handouts from the faculty. The SFS office does not keep copies of these materials and cannot reconstruct paperwork after students return from the field. SFS encourages the pursuit of knowledge, research, data, and the creation of scholarly works as an integral part of its mission. SFS recognizes its obligation to transfer technology and useful discoveries to local communities, fellow researchers, and society. SFS also recognizes the benefits of student scholarly works such as student theses, conference presentations, and publications.

### *Data and Educational Materials Ownership*

SFS is the owner of all work products developed and research data collected by students while participating in an SFS program or through the use of facilities or funds provided by or through SFS. No student may utilize these data for any purpose other than scholarly works. This includes, but is not limited to, the production of i) required coursework outputs; ii) reports to approved SFS clients such as directed research papers and related products; iii) conference presentations; iv) scientific publications; and v) senior theses. The use of these data by students for undisclosed and unapproved personal benefit or commercial application, financially or professionally or in any other way is not permitted.

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Students who have collected data during their program period will have access to all of that specific data (and no other data) for a one year period after completion of their SFS program for the explicit purposes of developing senior theses or other scholarly works.

### *Scholarly Works*

SFS students are encouraged to publish their research work in the form of scholarly works. Scholarly work includes the publication of results such as a senior thesis paper, professional presentations, and scientific papers, among others. Since the interpretations and conclusions put forward in scholarly works reflect the opinion and intellectual property of the author/presenter and not that of SFS, such scholarly works are owned by the author.

In all scholarly works submitted for publication and based upon SFS data, the authors, whether currently or previously students at SFS, are required to acknowledge SFS, the center, and all SFS employees and students who were involved in the project. In addition, publications or presentations by SFS employees that are based on data obtained by students during the conduct of SFS program coursework will, at a minimum, give full acknowledgement to the students concerned. The inclusion of those students as co-authors is optional and will be based on merit, contribution, and relevance. There may be instances in which students may be employed by SFS faculty to create specific intellectual property as a work for hire, or hired to create intellectual property generally. Such students will be asked to review and sign a single-page acknowledgment to clarify ownership of the works they create.

### *Use of Data for Senior, Honors, or Graduate Thesis*

Students interested in developing some aspect of their SFS research work into a senior thesis project should begin reviewing this opportunity with the appropriate admissions counselor and program dean prior to departing for their program. SFS is able to support senior thesis work that falls within the framework and structure of our directed research projects only. Students who have collected data during their program period will have access to all of that specific data for a one year period, but will no longer have access to that data after that time. Students will also not have access to any other additional data once they have completed their SFS program.

### **SFS Acknowledgement Policy**

The appropriate acknowledgement of SFS is as follows:

“The Author gratefully acknowledge(s) the key [financial and/or field and/or logistical and/or other] support provided by The School for Field Studies (SFS) Center for [name and location of center e.g.: Center for Marine Resource Studies, South Caicos]”

NOTE: In the case of both author address and acknowledgement, “The School for Field Studies (SFS)” is always identified and always placed before the name of the center.

### **REQUESTING REFERENCES FROM SFS FACULTY**

Some students request references from their SFS professors for graduate study or fellowship applications. Faculty are not obligated to write a student a letter of recommendation, and the decision to write the letter will be based on the professor’s workload and student’s SFS performance. Students are responsible for maintaining contact information of their faculty and center directors. Since SFS faculty are frequently off in the field engaged in teaching or research, it may be difficult to contact them—expect a slow turnaround time and plan accordingly.

### **REPRESENTING SFS EXPERIENCE ON YOUR RÉSUMÉ**

Upon completing the SFS program you will have a number of skills and experiences that should serve you in your future studies and professional endeavors. SFS will have given you specific skills in intercultural competence, foreign language, field research, and data analysis that will make your résumé stand out. Thus, SFS encourages you to take full advantage of the SFS experience by representing your participation in the program on your résumé or curriculum vitae. See the box below for preliminary ideas, and study the materials provided in your closure packet upon your return stateside.

## **SFS on Your Résumé**

### Education

Study abroad, The School for Field Studies (SFS) [Name of course], [Name of SFS Center], [Location] (4 credits, Boston University), [Program date]

E.g. The School for Field Studies (SFS), Tropical Rainforest Studies, Centre for Rainforest Studies, Queensland, Australia (16 credits), Fall 2008.

### Field Experience

2008 “[Title of your DR project]”, [brief description of the skills you developed; e.g., field survey of birds in forests and roadsides, scientific presentation, July-Aug.

E.g. 2008, “Growth rate of *Calycophyllum spruceanum* in fields and forests,” experimental design, field data collection, scientific writing and oral communication, Sep-Dec.

## **SAFETY**

### **SAFETY PHILOSOPHY & STRATEGY**

Safety is never an absolute. The best approach is to strive with integrity towards an ideal safety potential. That means doing the necessary work to ensure safety. It means doing due diligence in identifying what the hazards are and weighing options to either reduce the exposure to the hazard, or to mitigate its effects. It also means planning how best to respond to incidents.

Together, we have worked with safety and risk managers, students, educators, travel experts, staff, students, medical professionals, lawyers, technology providers, insurance companies, regulatory and law enforcement agencies and our Board of Trustees to develop, implement, enforce and support all the elements of the SFS Safety Strategy.

We recognize that the location of our sites and the nature of our research activities may present greater and qualitatively different risks than those found on a college campus within the US. SFS is committed to managing these risks in order to meet the goals of our international, field based programs.

As part of our safety strategy, we require standards for behavior intended to maximize safety for our students, our staff, for the communities in which we work and for our school. No one

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approach to behavior management will work for everyone. Therefore it is important that you clearly understand the SFS standards before you choose to commit yourself to participation in our programs.

We understand that students over the age of 18 years are adults and are responsible for their own decisions and the resulting consequences. We recognize that these choices include deciding whether or not to participate in our programs. We work hard to ensure that programs and centers are safe, educational, stimulating, secure, fun, and dynamic environments where staff and students successfully work together. Therefore, we hold adult students accountable for following SFS policies, center-specific rules and for respecting the Operational Objectives. The decision to ignore or violate them or to endanger the safety or security of others will result in disciplinary action. The decision to support The Safety Matrix and work together will lay the foundation for tremendous experiences and world-changing possibilities.

Our safety strategy includes the following:

**The Safety Matrix:** Our school-wide program policies, center-specific rules and protocols, SFS Operational Objectives and the Safety Curriculum for our staff and students are a comprehensive effort to promote safety and mitigate unforeseen events.

**Safety Support Systems:** The technologies, documents, structures and procedures concerned with relevant safety information gathering/dissemination, communication, contingency plans, protocols, evaluation, improvement and review.

**Community Relationship:** It is important for SFS students and staff to be contributing, responsible members of, and have an excellent relationship with, the communities where our Centers are located.

**SFS-Wide Program Policies:** These are in effect at all times for everyone participating in or visiting any SFS program or location. Each Policy is discussed in more detail later in this document.

- Alcohol Policy
- Drug Policy
- Time Off Policy

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- Sign Out Policy
- Visitor Policy
- Early Program Departure Policy
- Motor Vehicle/Boating Policy
- Swimming Policy
- Policy on Local Laws
- Sexual Harassment Policy

## **CENTER RULES AND PROTOCOLS**

Additional rules and protocols pertaining to curfew, swimming, time off, *et cetera*, may be in place at each center. Briefing of the center Rules and Protocols, as well as discussion of local hazards, will be part of orientation upon arrival to the center.

## **OPERATIONAL OBJECTIVES**

These are the common-sense agendas designed to support our SFS teams' functioning safely and accomplishing our work. SFS works to empower students and requires them to manage their behavior in order to achieve the following objectives and aims:

- Safety and Security
- Academics
- Local Community Relations
- Legality
- Liability
- Ability of centers to Conduct Business
- Ability of SFS Headquarters to Conduct Business

These Operational Objectives have different implications at different centers. During the on-site orientation, each agenda will be clarified for each particular center.

## **DISCIPLINARY PROCEDURES**

Violations of any SFS-wide policies, center-specific rules and protocols and Operational Objectives may result in one or more of the following disciplinary actions:

- Verbal warnings
- Written warnings
- Probation
- Expulsion

All staff and students are expected to understand and to actively support the standards of behavior as presented in our written materials and in our on-site orientations. While all staff are responsible for understanding and enforcing our standards for behavior, all formal disciplinary measures for students are at the discretion of the Center Director (or lead faculty in Bhutan) in consultation with his or her staff and Headquarters, where appropriate. **GENERALLY** speaking, behavioral issues arising out of misunderstandings or that are not overly compromising to SFS Operational Objectives will be addressed with education, clarification and intermediate disciplinary measures (warnings/probation). However, any behavior that significantly compromises the Operational Objectives or any violation of SFS policy may be cause for immediate expulsion. SFS reserves the right to contact parents/guardians in the event of significant alcohol abuse, unsafe behavior, or any behavior that potentially compromises a student's ability to participate in our program. In the event that you are asked to leave the program, SFS will return you to the point of program departure at your own expense. At this time, any and all responsibility on the part of The School for Field Studies will cease. Students who are expelled or who depart early from the program will be withdrawn from all courses and receive no credit. All outstanding financial obligations to SFS remain in full effect.

## **SFS SCHOOL-WIDE PROGRAM POLICIES**

These are in effect during all programs and at every SFS site, including on field trips. By signing the School for Field Studies Terms and Regulations Contract, you agree that you have read and understand, and will abide by all SFS policies as documented in this Manual and admissions materials and as presented at the centers. Violation of any policy will result in disciplinary action.

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SFS reserves the right to interview, investigate, search for and confiscate evidence, contraband, alcohol, drugs or paraphernalia and to contact local authorities.

### *Alcohol Policy*

No possession or consumption of alcohol is permitted on SFS property including any SFS vehicles, common areas, student quarters, center grounds, field trip sites or during any program activities. Any use of alcohol that in any way compromises the Operational Objectives will be addressed and may include disciplinary action. The permissible drinking age is defined by the laws of the country that the center is located in.

Centers may have additional restrictions. Please check with the Student Affairs Manager or lead faculty regarding pertinent local laws.

### *Drug Policy*

Use or possession of any drugs, chemical or medications that are illegal or that interfere with the Operational Objectives of any SFS program or site, is prohibited. Illegal drugs are defined by United States and host-country laws. SFS reserves the right to interview, investigate, search for and confiscate any substances or paraphernalia in violation of this policy. SFS has a zero tolerance illegal drug policy – violation of this policy will result in expulsion. This policy is in force from the beginning to the end of the program including time designated as "time off."

### *Time Off Policy*

In most of our programs (except Kenya), time is divided into "Program Time" and "Time Off". Program Time is any time that a student is on SFS property or riding in SFS vehicles or engaged in a program related activity or traveling to or from a program related activity. During such time all School Policies and center rules are in effect. Consideration of the Operational Objectives is always in effect.

When not on SFS property, in an SFS vehicle, engaged in an SFS program related activity, etc., there may be time that is clearly designated "Time Off". During time off, students are solely responsible for their own safety and well being. During time off, SFS rules and policies, with the exception of the drug policy and local law policy, are not in effect. Consideration of the Operational Objectives is always in effect.

### *Sign Out Policy*

All students must sign themselves in and out of the center so that they can be located in case of an emergency.

### *Visitor Policy*

Aside from visiting professionals and guest lecturers, SFS does not allow visitors on site during the program because it is disruptive to the program schedule and the dynamics of the group. To minimize the impact on the program, SFS requests that all guests of students visit on the same day. The mid-semester break is an opportunity for students to visit with friends and family off-site. Typically, Visitors' Day is the day after the mid-semester break, but this date is scheduled each session on a center-by-center basis so please be sure to check with your Admissions Counselor to confirm the date. Make sure your friends and relatives are aware that all visits to the Center must be scheduled in advance. Those interested in visiting should contact SFS Headquarters at (978) 741-3544 after the start of the program. Overnight housing at the Center is not available, but there may be accessible accommodations nearby.

For security reasons, no local visitors are allowed on the center property without prior consent from the lead faculty. This policy increases students' and staff's safety, security, and sense of privacy. Note: There is no Visitors' Day during summer programs because they are too short and too tightly scheduled.

### *Motor Vehicle/Boating Policy*

SFS students may not operate SFS motor vehicles or motor boats. SFS students may not ride in an SFS motor vehicle or motor boat without an SFS-approved operator. Students may not ride in non-SFS motor vehicles or motor boats without prior lead faculty's approval. Seat belts must be worn in all motor vehicles, where available. SFS Centers that utilize motor boats have additional Center-specific protocols including maximum occupancy, approved seating, personal flotation devices, radio protocols, rescue and first aid equipment in compliance with all local regulations.

### *Local Laws Policy*

SFS supports and complies with all local laws. You will be briefed on local laws and expectations soon after arriving at the center. Any violation of a local law will result in SFS disciplinary procedures and in addition, may subject you to local penalties such as fines, arrest or deportation.

### *Swimming Policy*

SWIMMING IS ALWAYS AT YOUR OWN RISK. In all programs, swimming is always optional and you may terminate a swim at any time you deem it necessary. Where SFS maintains swimming pools or conducts recreational swimming during program time or on SFS property, protocols and guidelines will be presented. In TCI, where swimming is integral to the program, there will be a swim assessment and a presentation of guidelines.

### *Sexual Harassment Policy*

It is the policy of The School for Field Studies to respect the rights of students to work and study in an environment free from any type of sexual harassment and to investigate and resolve any reported cases of sexual harassment. Each administrator, faculty member and student is responsible for ensuring a work and learning environment free from sexual harassment. SFS policy specifically prohibits any faculty or staff member from having a sexual relationship with a student at any time while the student is enrolled in an SFS program. In addition, no SFS employee shall threaten, promise, or insinuate, either explicitly or implicitly, that any student's refusal to submit to sexual advances will adversely affect the student's status with SFS, including but not limited to influence on grades or recommendations.

Moreover as a part of its overall nondiscrimination policy, SFS prohibits all forms of harassment of others because of race, color, religion, sex, age, sexual preference, national origin, physical or mental disability, or veteran status. In particular, an atmosphere of tension created by disparaging racial, ethnic, sexual, or religious remarks does not belong in the SFS workplace or learning environment and will not be tolerated.

### *Communications and Information Systems Policy*

Introduction: The School for Field Studies is continually developing its technology infrastructure, providing exciting new possibilities for school-wide connectivity, research, and information

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sharing. The SFS IT director is responsible for the development and management of these systems. In order to maintain the integrity, reliability, and performance of this foundation, all students must follow the policies and procedures shown below.

### General Equipment Use:

- Always check with an SFS faculty member before attaching any personal (non SFS-owned) computers, laptops, printers, or other network devices to the network.
- Borrowed equipment, on and off premises, is the borrower's responsibility until returned.
- Students are expected to uphold the condition of any SFS IT equipment that he/she uses. Be careful not to expose equipment to food, liquids, excessive sunlight, heat, cold, humidity, or magnetic fields.

### Abuse of Systems:

Abuse of systems is defined as an intentional action that threatens the stability, functionality, or performance of any SFS or non-SFS system. These prohibited actions include, but are not limited to:

1. Downloading or storing music, video, or large quantities of pictures/photographs for personal use.
2. Installing or running any software applications or executable files that are not provided by SFS.
3. Moving, reconfiguring, disabling, or removing SFS-owned equipment or software.
4. Gaining unauthorized access to or abusing SFS systems or any remote Internet systems. This includes spamming, hacking, virus distribution, or taking actions that compromise the security of any network system.
5. Using SFS systems to perform any activities that are illegal in the country where the employee is located. This may include gambling, making illegal purchases, or copying/distributing copyrighted material,
6. Accessing, downloading, uploading, saving, receiving, or sending material that includes sexually explicit content or other material containing vulgar, sexist, racist, threatening, violent, or defamatory language.

7. Deleting or changing digital documents without the consent of the document creator or owner. If the document creator or owner is not known or is not available, obtain a faculty member's approval before proceeding.

Password Policies & Guidelines:

- Passwords are the keys to SFS resources and private student information.
- Do not disclose any passwords to other individuals.
- Do not e-mail passwords or record passwords where they may be easily obtained by others.
- When you are finished using a computer, always log out before leaving.

## **TERMS AND REGULATIONS CONTRACT**

Note that as a condition for participation in an SFS program, you are required to document that you have read, understood and accepted all academic, safety, administrative and operational policies, rules and requirements by reading and signing the SFS Terms and Regulations Statement.

## **STUDENT RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

### **SFS RIGHTS POLICY**

All members of The School for Field Studies community are entitled to certain basic rights. These rights include, but are not limited to, the right to live in an environment free from harassment based on race, religion, gender, handicap, ethnicity, sexual orientation, economic status, or national origin.

### **DISABILITIES**

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SFS is prohibited by law from making any inquiries about disabilities prior to an admissions decision. If a potential student voluntarily provides this information during the admissions process, it will be kept in strict confidence and will not affect admissions decisions. If you have a disability, please indicate it on your medical form. If you wish to request academic accommodation, notification must be in writing by a qualified professional and submitted prior to the start of the program. Please see the Academic Handbook for further information.

## **CONFIDENTIALITY OF STUDENT RECORDS**

### *Student Right of Access*

The School for Field Studies maintains confidential files on all SFS students. These files contain material submitted as admissions requirements, financial aid application material, all contracts, medical records, and academic grades.

SFS reserves the right to request updated transcripts from accepted students at any time. Unless otherwise detailed in the terms of your acceptance, you are expected to maintain the academic standing achieved at your home institution (as evidenced by enrollment status and GPA) at the time of acceptance. SFS may rescind offers of acceptance made to students whose academic standing changes.

You are free to take reasoned exception to data or views offered in any course of study and to reserve judgment about matters of opinion. You are responsible for learning the content of any course of study for which you are enrolled. You have protection through orderly procedures against prejudiced or capricious academic evaluation. At the same time, you are responsible for maintaining standards of academic performance established for each course in which you are enrolled, and for full participation in all aspects of the program.

### *Directory Information*

Certain information, known as "directory information," may be released by SFS. This information includes your name, address, phone number, place and date of birth, major field of

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study, participation in officially recognized activities and teams, dates of attendance, awards received, and other similar information. If you do not wish this information released to others, you must make written notification of this to the SFS Director of Admissions and Institutional Relations.

The Admissions Office will prepare a list of students on each program. This list, containing names, addresses, phone numbers and schools, will be sent to each student approximately one month prior to the start of the program. If you do not wish to have your address or phone number included on this list, you must contact the SFS Admissions Department no later than two months prior to program departure.

### *Third Party Access*

Except in the case of students who are 17 years of age and under, parents have no right of access to the records of students in post-secondary institutions.

Beyond the directory information mentioned above, only those faculty and employees of the educational institution who have a legitimate educational interest in your record may be permitted access to it. Information will not be released to any other parties without your written permission. In an emergency, information may be released if your health and safety is at stake, and if the person receiving the information is in a position to act on it.

If you wish to review your file, you must either make an appointment to do so with the Director of Admissions and Institutional Relations, or make a written request for a copy of specific information.

### *Evaluations*

The faculty will complete written evaluations of each student at the end of each program. These evaluations are used in evaluating candidates for SFS internships, and are not made accessible to students or outside parties.

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Questions regarding the above information should be directed to the Director Admissions and Institutional Relations.

## **CONTRACTUAL AND FINANCIAL OBLIGATIONS**

### **STATEMENT OF SFS RESPONSIBILITY**

In organizing and managing these programs, The School for Field Studies, its agents, employees, and staff give notice that they act solely on behalf of and for the benefit of the participants, on the express agreement that SFS shall not be liable, financially or otherwise, for non-performance or unsatisfactory service; for the injury to persons including death; for loss of, or damage to property; for accident or delay; and/or for expenses arising from strikes, weather, quarantine, sickness, government regulation, civil unrest or war, or from any act or omission of its agents or employees, and/or airline, railroad, bus company, automobile rental agency, hotel, or other supplier of service.

The School for Field Studies is a not-for-profit, 501(c) (3) corporation located in Salem, Massachusetts, U.S.A. All matters relating to or arising out of or involving in any way a student's relationship with SFS shall be governed by Massachusetts law and any legal dispute shall be determined by a Massachusetts court.

**SFS reserves the right to refuse any applicant admission to any program if s/he is deemed unsuited for the program for any reason.** All courses, fees, and dates are tentative until verified and confirmed in writing by The School for Field Studies.

The School for Field Studies admits students of any sex, religion, race, sexual orientation, color, national or ethnic origin to all the rights, privileges, programs, and activities generally accorded or made available to students of The School and does not discriminate on the basis of sex, religion, race, sexual orientation, color, national and ethnic origin in the administration of its educational policies, admissions policies, scholarship and loan programs, and other School-administered programs. SFS is an equal-opportunity institution.

## **PROGRAM CHANGES**

SFS programs are obviously different from a semester on your home campus, travel or adventure programs, and other study abroad programs. Each session is unique and often cannot be implemented exactly as planned for a variety of reasons. There are factors which, although closely monitored, are beyond the control of SFS. For example:

- Some programs take place in highly regulated and sensitive environments, usually requiring special permits, such as in Kenya and Mexico.
- Some projects depend on the goodwill and generosity of individuals and institutions which lend support.
- Tenuous weather situations or natural disasters or changes in political conditions may require last-minute changes or cancellation of specific activities.
- Faculty and staff changes occur due to health, personal matters, performance evaluations, and other factors.

SFS reserves the right to make changes before or during a program. Indeed, part of the challenge is in adapting to changing conditions and overcoming the obstacles they may present.

## **COURSE CANCELLATIONS**

In rare cases, circumstances make it necessary to cancel a proposed course or program. In the event of a course cancellation prior to course commencement, SFS will refund any tuition or deposit monies you have paid. SFS will not refund any monies if a cancellation occurs once a program is in session; therefore, it is highly recommended that you investigate trip cancellation insurance. Circumstances that might precipitate a cancellation include political unrest, weather-related problems, or a medical epidemic or emergency.

## **REFUND POLICIES**

Full tuition is due 60 days prior to program commencement.

Semester

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If you withdraw by notifying SFS in writing, the following amounts will be refunded:

- Withdrawal 61 days or more prior to the first day of the program = 100% refund of total program cost (less deposit).
- Withdrawal 60-31 days prior to the first day of the program = 50% refund of total program cost (less deposit and registration fee).
- Withdrawal 30 days prior - 14 days after the start of the program = 25% refund of total program cost (less deposit).
- Withdrawal 15 or more days after the start of the program, or if you are asked to leave the program = NO REFUND

The non-refundable deposit may be transferred to an SFS course within the next 12 months, subject to approval.

Financial aid candidates: deposits are refundable if withdrawal is less than 10 days following financial aid offer. (You must complete and return the financial aid application within 10 days of acceptance to qualify for refund status on the deposit).

Application fees are non-refundable.

### Summer

If you withdraw by notifying SFS in writing, the following amounts will be refunded:

- Withdrawal prior to 60 - 22 days before the start of the program = 100% refund of total program cost (less deposit).
- Withdrawal 21 - 0 days prior to the start of the program = 50% refund of total program cost (less deposit).
- Withdrawal after the program starts = NO REFUND

Financial aid candidates: deposits are refundable if withdrawal is less than 10 days following financial aid offer. (You must complete and return the financial aid application within 10 days of acceptance to qualify for refund status on the deposit).

Application fees are non-refundable.

## **LOAN REPAYMENT POLICIES**

Each year, approximately 30% of the SFS student body is assisted with loans from the Merck Family Student Revolving Loan Fund. The availability of loan monies is contingent upon the timely repayment of loans by previous borrowers to provide funding for new loan recipients. The repayment period for each loan is stipulated at the time the loan is made in the Loan Agreement. You are responsible for making monthly payments on your loans starting the month after your SFS program concludes.

Any loan for which payment is one month or more late will be considered in default. Grades will be withheld from any student considered to be in default and the student's co-signer will be expected to assume payment. SFS charges interest on overdue loan balances at the rate of 15% per year, compounded monthly.

If you are having temporary difficulty meeting your repayment obligation, you should contact the SFS Finance Department to arrange a mutually agreeable, revised payment schedule.

## **SCHOLARSHIP/LOAN STUDENT REPORTING REQUIREMENT**

If you receive a scholarship or loan for an SFS program, you are required as part of your award contract to write a three to five-page report to SFS and your scholarship sponsors within one month of program completion. This paper should detail reasons for joining the program and activities in which you participated, and should address the value of the program, personally and academically. Non-completion of this report shall be considered an abrogation of the aid contract and shall require a service charge of \$75, which may be in addition to other fees imposed for late payment on loans.

## **POLICY REGARDING OUTSTANDING TUITION BALANCES**

No student having an outstanding tuition balance will be allowed to participate in an SFS program unless the Director of Admissions and Institutional Relations has approved an exception due to late receipt of financial aid funds (for semester programs only). If funds due to you by your home school or through federal financial assistance are not available at the time the

program departs for the field, you may be permitted to go into the field if you sign a promissory statement accepting personal responsibility for all outstanding tuition monies, including expected federal funds, and committing that the balance will be paid by the end of the program. No grades will be awarded until all outstanding tuition monies are paid in full. Any payment received from a student with an outstanding tuition balance will be applied first to that balance.

## **POLICY REGARDING OTHER OUTSTANDING FEES**

You may occasionally incur expenses that are temporarily covered by the Center staff and/or faculty. This may include, but is not limited to, medical expenses, phone bills, and charges for damage done to SFS facilities and/or equipment. You must pay these expenses in full prior to your departure from the program. No grades will be awarded until all outstanding fees are paid in full.