



IFS Planning Timeline

1. Get started as soon as possible. Start by deciding the basic educational objectives for your field study.
2. Discuss proposal with school administration, department chairperson, or other authority; request permission, course credit, payment procedures, etc.
3. Call the IFS office to set trip dates for your trip to Forfar Field Station and fill out the [trip registration form](#).
4. Complete and send the IFS office a signed copy of the [Group Leader Agreement](#) and your \$200.00 trip-hold deposit to secure your dates in our schedule.
5. Select a co-leader, chaperones, or other instructors. Have them read the [Welcome to Forfar Field Station](#) guide and determine responsibilities for each leader.
6. Create the Educational Program
 - a. Based on educational objectives, plan the program including pre and post-trip activities, your itinerary at Forfar, and agenda. Refer to the [Sites and Sights](#) guide or the [IFS website](#) as you plan.
 - b. If your field study is being offered for credit, complete all necessary school documentation and requirements.
 - c. Organize references, equipment, and materials.
 - d. Give students suggested reading lists, pre-trip assignments, or other materials.
 - e. Conduct pre-trip classes or other activities with students.
 - f. Are you conducting research? If so, all visitors conducting scientific research in The Bahamas **must obtain a permit** from the Bahamian government, even if they are not planning to collect specimens.
7. Select Students - Determine the criteria for acceptance into the field study.
 - a. If you have a high volume of interest consider requiring references from other teachers, or prerequisites to make sure students who attend fit your goals for the trip.
 - b. If you need to recruit students, please know the IFS office is happy to help. You can use our [editable flyer](#) to advertise the program and our [PowerPoint presentation](#) if you host an informational meeting.
8. Determine how your group is getting to and from Nassau, Bahamas. Make travel arrangements in advance to reduce costs. Read our blog posts about tips [for booking group flights](#) and [finding travel insurance](#). All flights must land in Nassau (Lynden Pindling) by 1pm on arrival and depart anytime after 12pm on departure in order to catch the commuter flights from Nassau-Andros that the IFS office will book. If your departing flight leaves after 3pm, we can schedule you a [Tour of Nassau](#) during your layover.
9. Review the payment schedule on the next page. Determine if any surcharges need added to trip fees; salaries, supplies, miscellaneous expenses, etc. Set up a fee collection schedule to collect trip fees from participants. Note: all invoices will be emailed 1-month in advance of their due date. Complete payment by mailing checks to IFS, 1550 Old Henderson Road, Suite E268, Columbus, OH 43220.
10. Ensure all students [complete all three required forms](#) at least 1-month prior to the trip. The IFS office will share a google document link with you informing you who has turned in which of the online forms. The third form is a paper Medical Consent form that requires all US citizens to get a notary. Please collect these all at once from the participants and email a scanned document of all forms to the IFS office no later than 1-month prior to the trip.
11. Additionally, ensure all students and other participants receive necessary information:
 - a. General objectives, orientation, and trip overview
 - b. Academic, social and cultural expectations
 - c. Trip policies and regulations
 - d. Trip fees and payment deadlines
 - e. [Packing list](#)
12. Review IFS Policies in the [Welcome to Forfar Guide](#)
13. Supply parents with a packet of general information, [Forfar Parent Overview sheet](#), emergency contacts and numbers, and departure and return details.
14. Conduct a quick post-trip call with the IFS office once you return to review the trip and plan for future trips.



Due upon Registration:

- \$200 Non-refundable, non-transferable **Trip-Hold Deposit**
- [Group Leader Agreement](#)
- Projected number of total participants (students, chaperones/group leaders)

Due 3 months before trip:

- \$300 per student **Participant Hold Deposit** non-refundable (but transferable to a different student)
- [Group Roster](#) of all participants attending
- Email students link to [participant forms](#) and the [packing list](#)

Due 1 month before trip:

- **Final Trip Invoice** (total trip cost minus the Trip Hold and Participant Hold deposits)
- [Group Data Sheet](#)
- [ALL online and paper participant forms](#)

Additional 1 month before trip procedures:

- You'll be required to carry copies of the Medical History Forms and Medical Consent Forms for each individual in the group. We will email you a folder containing the Medical History forms collected from the online form to print out.
- Make sure all participants have snorkel gear. Snorkel equipment cannot be rented on Andros and Forfar has a limited number of backup sets. Some groups have pool sessions to practice snorkeling before the trip.
- Put together a first aid kit as described in the Health and Safety section of the [Welcome to Forfar Guide](#).
- Participants should bring cash in the form of small bills. US currency is accepted and used interchangeably with the Bahamian dollar. \$18-25 is needed for Thursday's dinner out and possibly \$10 for optional Basket Weaving.
- Double check all paperwork: passports, printed forms you'll carry with you, and any SCUBA forms.
- Make sure you have research/collection permits if applicable.
- The commuter flights from Nassau-Andros the IFS office schedules for each group has specific weight limits for luggage. All participants are allowed 40 lbs total for their checked baggage or they will be subject to \$1.80 per pound. Carry-on bags cannot weigh more than 15 lbs and must be 12"H x 6"W x 14"L.
- The IFS office will email you the Nassau-Andros commuter flight itinerary along with pre-departure details.
- Notify the Columbus office immediately if there are changes in your group!

After your trip:

- Consider a "Wrap Party" to retell island tales, show photos, and share memories.
- Share information on our 6-week [Forfar Marine Science Program](#) or our [Forfar Summer Dive Program](#) with students wishing to return to Forfar.
- Select a date for next year's trip and call the Columbus office to get tentatively on the calendar. Note: your dates will not be secured until a \$200 deposit is received. Dates around January, spring breaks, and May fill quickly and are typically scheduled 1-2 years in advance.
- Researchers, colleges, and universities, please forward copies of research papers to the Columbus office.
- Tell your friends! If you [refer a new group](#) to IFS that visits Forfar with 10+ students, you will receive a \$500 check and the group leader you referred will also receive a \$500 check.