



Organization for Tropical Studies

Will you be conducting academic research with your educational course?

The Costa Rican government, through the Ministry of the Environment (MINAE) and specifically through the National System of Conservation Areas (SINAC), has adopted a proactive policy to uphold two important laws in Costa Rica, the Biodiversity Law and the Conservation of Wildlife Law, when research in the country involves wild species of flora or fauna.

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When you are planning an educational trip to Costa Rica with an academic group, it is necessary to take into consideration whether you will need an academic research permit and an academic collection license. These academic permits and academic licenses are not intended for scientific research. If you will be collecting scientific data or be working with any genetic or biochemical resources, you will need different permits (Please see the OTS Research Permits section for this information).

If the leaders or students of the course will be conducting academic research at any place in Costa Rica, please refer to these categories. Once you let OTS know if you will be conducting academic research on your course, we can assist throughout the permit process, including a review/approval process at the OTS station(s) where you will be working. With approval, OTS provides a support letter to SINAC. OTS facilitation of your academic course permit or licenses has associated fees.

A) Observation

If your course conducts observational academic research without manipulating or altering habitat or collecting organisms, then SINAC requires only an academic research permit.

B) Manipulation

If your course will conduct any type of academic research that involves capturing, handling, or otherwise manipulating species of flora or fauna or their habitat, then SINAC requires both an academic research permit and academic collecting license. It is called an academic collecting license for manipulation even if you will be capturing and releasing species, in this case for a temporary academic collection. If you will be collecting species of flora or fauna that will not be returned to their habitat, then this is called a scientific collection and will need a different type of scientific research permit and collecting license (Please see the OTS Research Permits section).

C) Exportation

Export of specimens is not allowed with an academic research permit or academic collecting permit. If your course will also require the export of species, you will need a scientific research permit, scientific collecting license, and scientific export permit (please see the OTS Research Permits section).



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D) Genetic or biochemical resources

Working with genetic or biochemical specimens is not allowed with academic permits or academic collecting licenses. If your course includes the collection of genetic or molecular material, then Costa Rica requires an authorization from CONAGEBIO. Please contact us for more information to determine costs, length of time to obtain the authorization, additional documentation that will be required for the specific project.

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Please contact Enrique Castro about your course permit: Enrique.castro@tropicalstudies.org