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**5.H-2018 Safety Policy Involving Off-Campus Activities with Students**

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**1. Overview**

St. Mary's University (University) strongly believes in the benefits of a national and international approach to learning, research, scholarship and citizenship. Off-campus activities and travel allows members of the University community to broaden their experiences, expand and share their knowledge and encourages innovation and collaboration in support of the University's mission. The University has cultivated a variety of national and international programs and partnerships that offer unique programs for faculty and students and enhances the research and teaching aspects of the University's mandate. Not only do these activities benefit the members of the University community by creating a vibrant learning and research environment, they also allow members of the University community to bring their knowledge and expertise to others and help the University build a strong international reputation.

As with on-campus activities, off-campus activities and travel can incur some level of risk. The University is committed to supporting its travelers in planning and participating in safe and enjoyable travel experiences.

This policy does not address the procedure used for the reimbursement of business travel expenditures or expense reimbursement procedures for goods and services. These procedures can be accessed through the Related Links section below.

**2. Purpose**

The Off-Campus Activity Safety Policy is intended to state the University's position on off-campus activities and travel and to provide direction and tools for planning safe travel experiences in a way that:

- Recognizes the importance of travel
- Balances independence and academic freedom with managing risks

Approval Authority	Responsible Office	Effective Date	Date Last Revisited	Review Frequency
Board of Governors	Enrolment & Student Experience	June 25, 2018	June 25, 2018	Every 5 years

- Recognizes the independence of faculty and staff
- Reduces liability to organizers/leaders by assisting them in assessing and managing risks
- Is consistent with existing practices across campus including those of Experiential Learning, Travel Study, Campus Safety and Risk Services, and those of individual Faculty Members and Academic Areas.

### **3. Scope**

#### **3.1 Participants**

This Policy applies to all members of the University community involved in off-campus activities with students and related to the mandate of the University for curricular or non-curricular activities. Examples of activities covered by this Policy include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Field research
- All off-campus activities that are part of university courses and programs, conferences, and business meetings
- Varsity athletic programs
- Travel to attend any off-campus activity
- All approved international travel

#### **3.2 Location**

This policy **does not apply** to activities within the same municipality as the campus (e.g., meetings, conferences and other activities within Calgary).

#### **3.3 Excluded Activities**

This Policy does not cover activities over which the University exercises no control and for which it can therefore take no responsibility. Examples of activities not covered by this Policy include, but are not limited to:

- external activities undertaken by faculty, staff or students that are not part of the individual's employment, duties and responsibilities, or studies
- activities organized exclusively by students or student groups without expressed approval, sanction or funding from the University, which may include faculty societies or student clubs

- activities organized by the Students' Association of St. Mary's University, including clubs and bodies ratified by the Students' Association
- travel or activities of any person who is not a member of the St. Mary's University community

If unsure whether this Policy applies to specific off-campus activities and travel, members of the University community should contact the Office of Insurance and Risk Assessment for clarification.

#### **4. Governing Principles**

##### **4.1 Reasonable Steps**

The University will take reasonable steps to support and promote the health, safety and security of participants in off-campus activities and travel. Academic Areas, departments, units and individual travelers share responsibility with the University to assess and manage the risk of off-campus activities and travel, particularly when students are involved.

##### **4.2 Risk Assessment, Safety Planning and Approvals**

All University off-campus activities and travel involving students require a risk assessment with appropriate documented safety planning and final approval from the approval level associated with the activity's risk level before commencing with the activity. Guidelines for assessing and documenting the risks and safety planning are contained in the Off-Campus Activity Involving Students Procedure.

##### **4.3 Incident Response**

Should a significant incident occur that affects the safety of participants, such as a natural disaster, political uprising or terrorist activity, the University will assist in arranging return travel and may assist in covering the associated costs. Any applicable insurance coverage will be used before any University funds are used. Given the unique and unpredictable nature of these types of situations, they will be dealt with on a case-by-case basis. The President has the final authority in determining appropriate actions and whether University funds will be used.

The University Emergency Response Team may be activated to assess the implications of significant incidents, determine how to handle the situation and

make recommendations for either managing the increased risks or assisting travelers in removing themselves from the situation. In such situations, the Experiential Learning Coordinator will be part of the Emergency Response Team. Should individuals choose to return early for personal reasons, the University is not responsible for arranging return travel or any of the associated costs.

Should an individual be required to return for disciplinary or behavioural reasons, the University may help with making the travel arrangements, but the cost will be borne by the individual, as stated in the Student Conduct Agreement, Statement of Responsibility, and Liability Release Agreement.

**4.4 Personal Choice**

Every participant has the right to refuse to participate in any off-campus activity that they feel may endanger their health or safety or that of another person.

**5. Emergency Health and Personal Travel Coverage when Traveling outside Canada**

**5.1 Recommended insurance coverage**

Any member of the University community who is engaged in off-campus activities and travel should have appropriate emergency health coverage. It is recommended that they also have appropriate personal travel insurance.

- Full-time Faculty and staff have comprehensive emergency health coverage through their benefits plan
- Students may have emergency health coverage through their personal and/or family benefits programs
- Personal travel insurance is not generally provided to faculty or staff through their respective benefits program

Note: Insurance coverage may be subject to exclusions or limitations such as travel to locations where the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade has issued a travel warning, the performance of certain activities or the presence of pre-existing medical conditions.

**5.2 Responsibility for insurance coverage**

It is the responsibility of individual travelers to review their emergency health coverage to determine if there are exclusions that are applicable. Should a traveler choose to undertake off-campus activities and travel where an exclusion is present, they are doing so at their own risk and the University assumes no liability or responsibility for emergency health care or related costs should they arise. Further information and resources on emergency health insurance can be found on the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade website.

## **6. Travel Involving Only Faculty and/or Staff**

### **6.1 Individual Responsibility**

The University respects the independence of faculty and staff in planning and undertaking their own off-campus and travel activities. These individuals are responsible for informing themselves of the risks associated with their travel and managing them accordingly.

### **6.2 University Assessments and Recommendations**

The appropriate Director/Supervisor, Chair, Dean or Vice-President may recommend that faculty and/or staff travelers cancel any off-campus activity or travel if, after careful consideration of the situation, it is believed the risks are unacceptable or unwarranted and cannot be reasonably managed.

The appropriate Vice-President may also recommend that faculty and/or staff travelers return from their off-campus activity or travel based on an assessment of the risk to their safety and health. Should a faculty and/or staff traveler choose not to cancel or return on the recommendation of an appropriate University official as outlined above, the University is under no obligation to provide assistance at a later date and assumes no liability. This does not apply to individuals who are unable to comply due to reasons beyond their control.

The decision to recommend cancellation or recall is a serious one that is not taken lightly and should be made in consultation with the Office of Insurance and Risk Assessment. If appropriate, the Emergency Response Team may also be consulted. The individual making the decision takes many factors into consideration such as federal travel warnings, the perspective of the traveler, and implications on the traveler's work and/or research. Appeals regarding a recommendation to cancel or

recall may be made to the appropriate Director/Supervisor, Chair, Dean or Vice-President. The President has the final authority.

## **7. Travel Involving Students**

The University owes a higher duty of care to its students and has a responsibility to address the health and safety of students who are traveling.

### **7.1 Responsibility to follow procedure**

All off-campus activities and travel involving students, including but not limited to faculty-led programs and individual student travel for University related purposes, must follow the risk assessment process as outlined in the Off-Campus Activity Involving Students Procedure.

If the off-campus activity and travel involves one individual, that individual is responsible for following the procedure. If the activity involves a group, the group leader is responsible for following the procedure, taking into consideration the group as a whole. Approval must be obtained if required and the actions identified to manage risks must be followed.

### **7.2 University Assessments and Authority to cancel travel**

When students are involved, the appropriate Director/Supervisor, Chair, Dean, Vice-President, or President may cancel any off-campus activity or travel if they believe the risks are unacceptable or unwarranted and cannot be reasonably managed. The appropriate Vice-President may also recall students from their off-campus activity or travel based on an assessment of the risk to their safety and health. Students who do not comply with a cancellation or recall of this nature will be considered to be on personal travel and will no longer have access to University assistance. This does not apply to students who are unable to comply due to reasons beyond their control.

The decision to cancel or recall is a serious one that is not taken lightly and should be made in consultation with the Office of Insurance and Risk Assessment. If appropriate, the Emergency Response Team may also be consulted. The individual making the decision takes many factors into consideration such as federal travel warnings, the perspective of the group traveling, and implications on the students' studies and/or research. A faculty member or the group leader supervising the travel

may appeal a decision to cancel to the appropriate Director/Supervisor, Chair, Dean or Vice-President. The President has the final authority.

## **8. Travel Involving Volunteers and Governors**

Volunteers and Governors of the University participating in off-campus activities and travel are responsible for informing themselves of the risks and completing an appropriate waiver form.

## **9. Compliance Expectations**

While undertaking off-campus activities and travel, the Campus Behaviour section of the University Calendar and other University policies and procedures continue to apply. Students participating in experiential learning opportunities such as Travel Study, Student Exchange, Internships or International Specialised Practica will be required to sign and adhere to the Student Conduct Agreement, Statement of Responsibility, and Liability Release Agreement. Participants must also obey the laws of the country in which they are travelling.

Instances where individuals do not follow the requirements set out in this policy and its related procedure and appendices may be addressed by the appropriate Director/Supervisor, Chair, Dean or Vice-President.

### **Roles and Responsibilities**

#### **9.1 Participants**

The University and all off-campus activity participants have a shared responsibility to:

- prepare for off-campus activities to ensure the safety and well-being of all who participate
- identify and address risks inherent in off-campus activities
- conduct themselves in a manner that first attends to overall safety and well-being of all participants and carry out activities in accordance with approved safety policies and standards and applicable legislation
- respond to and intervene as necessary to ensure the safety of all participants
- monitor and maintain a record of the planning and conduct of off-campus activities for future reference and to inform subsequent like activities

## **9.2 Risk Assessment Process**

If the off-campus activity and travel involves one individual, that individual is responsible for following the risk assessment process. If the activity involves a group, the group leader is responsible for following the risk assessment process, taking into consideration the group as a whole. In most cases, there will be a person of authority, such as a faculty or staff member, who is the group leader and assessor. In cases where there is not, one of the student participants will act as the leader and assessor.

The leader's responsibilities include a duty to:

- follow this policy and its related procedures
- consult and seek the expertise of others relevant to the nature of the activity being undertaken. This includes, but is not limited to, ensuring compliance to legislation and industry standards according to the location of the activities.
- monitor changes in risk factors for activities in progress and respond accordingly from the planning stages through the activity date

## **9.3 Review and Approval**

The Risk Level for off-campus activities shall be determined using the Risk Assessment Matrix for Off-Campus Travel Involving Students: Chart One. Activities with increased levels of assessed Risk will require increased levels of review and approval by the University.

### **Risk Level Approvers**

Assessed Risk Levels have an assigned Risk Level Approver as shown in the following table:

<b>Risk Level</b>	<b>Risk Level Approver</b>
Low-Risk	Director/Supervisor
Medium-Risk	Area VP
High-Risk	Area VP
Extreme-Risk	Area VP and President

## **9.4 Roles and Responsibilities**



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- 9.4.1 Based on the assessed Risk level, the Risk level approver is responsible to ensure that the required actions set out in Chart Two are completed and all necessary documentation retained.
- 9.4.2 Oversight Responsibility  
Under this policy, the Vice-President Academic is authorized to approve related and necessary off-campus safety procedures, forms, documents or processes required to implement this policy.

**10. Glossary of Terms**

Term	Definition
Off-Campus Activity	Activities and travel undertaken by a member of the University community that takes place away from the University's owned or leased properties for reasons related to the mandate of the University. This includes, but is not limited to, teaching programs, studies, practicum placements, research, exchanges, conferences, seminars, and extra-curricular activities that involve the formal representation of the University by student ambassadors, such as varsity athletics and disciplined-based competitions.
St. Mary's University Community	For the purpose of this document, the St. Mary's University community includes St. Mary's governors, faculty, staff, students and volunteers
University	St. Mary's University

**11. Related Policies, Procedures, Documents and Links (need to check these links)**

- [St. Mary's University Safety Policy \(3G-2005\)](#)
- [St. Mary's University Travel & Hospitality Policy \(3J-2-13\)](#)
- [St. Mary's University Campus Integrity and Human Rights Policy \(4B-2007\)](#)
- [St. Mary's University Policy for Activities requiring Waivers and/or Health Information \(5D-2012\)](#)
- [St. Mary's University Expense Reimbursement Handbook](#)

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- [St. Mary's University Emergency Response Plan](#)
- [StMU Standard Waiver Form](#)
- *St. Mary's University Off-Campus Activity Involving Students Procedure*
- *St. Mary's University Risk Assessment Matrix for Off-Campus Activity Involving Students: Charts One and Two*
- *St. Mary's University Off-Campus Activity Involving Students Risk Assessment Summary and Approval Form: FORM A*
- *St. Mary's University Off-Campus Activity Involving Students Risk Management Confirmation Form: FORM B*

### 12. Acknowledgements

It is gratefully acknowledged that this Policy is largely an adaptation of the [Off-Campus Activity and Travel Policy](#) of the University of Alberta. Research and use of various other policies and references include the following:

- [Managing the Risks: College and University International Education Programs](#) by Gallagher Higher Education Practice Group
- [Risk Management Guideline for the BC Public Sector](#), Province of British Columbia, 2012
- University of Calgary: [International Travel Policy](#)
- Mount Royal University: [Off Campus Activity Safety Policy](#)
- CURIE bulletin: [Managing International Travel Risks for Faculty, Staff and Students](#)
- CURIE Best Practices: [Best Practices for Students in International Travel Programs \(ITP\)](#)

### 13. Revision History

Date	Description of change	Sections	Person who entered revision (Position Title)	Person who Authorized the Revision (Position Title)