



**Policy Title:** Student Safety Abroad Policy

**Issued by:** College Council

**Approved by:** Board of Trustees

**Effective Date:** March 3, 2015

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## 1. Purpose

This Policy sets standards to help ensure safe experiences for Brescia undergraduate and graduate students who travel internationally as part of a university activity. The policy is meant to offer assistance in managing the risks associated with University-sanctioned international programs and activities and to provide processes to undertake the following:

- a) Approval of student international travel for University sanctioned activities and programs.
- b) Risk assessment of travel locations, regions and/or countries.
- c) Centralized and accessible risk management resources to enable University travelers to be informed of and manage the risks associated with travelling abroad.

## 2. Definitions

- 2.1. "University" refers to Brescia University College. References related to the constituent university, Western University, or its Affiliated University Colleges (King's University College and Huron University College), are explicitly stated as such.
- 2.2. "Activity Sponsor" refers to the Brescia faculty or staff member who is actively organizing or coordinating the University Activity.
- 2.3. "Student" means an individual enrolled in a program of study or registered in credit or non-credit undergraduate or graduate program and/or courses at the University.
- 2.4. "University Activity" means any approved international activity:
  - 2.4.1. Undertaken by a student to fulfill a requirement for academic progress at the University; or
  - 2.4.2. Officially organized by the University; or
  - 2.4.3. Paid for in whole or in part from University funds, including without limitation, third party research or other funds administered by the University.

### 3. Scope and Application

- 3.1. This Policy applies to any activity undertaken outside of Canada by the University's students in connection with a University Activity.
- 3.2. University Activities include but are not limited to:
  - Credit Courses
  - Field trips
  - Community Service Learning
  - Research projects
  - Exchange programs
  - Study abroad
  - Letters of Permission
  - Practica
  - Internships
  - Co-op placements
  - Scholarly conferences
  - Other co-curricular activities
- 3.3. Activities sponsored or organized by the Brescia University College Student's Council or related clubs are not included unless they otherwise meet the definition of University Activities.
- 3.4. If there is uncertainty as to whether proposed travel is considered to be for a University Activity, the Vice-President, Students, and/or Vice-Principal and Academic Dean, should be consulted.
- 3.5. Students planning to travel abroad for a purpose other than a University Activity do so as private citizens. Such students are solely responsible for making their own travel arrangements and making their own decisions regarding personal safety.
- 3.6. Students engaged in activities sponsored by Western University, must comply with all policies outlined in the constituent University's guidelines and procedures. This policy will not supersede Western University policies for Western University-sponsored activities. Similarly, for King's University College and Huron University College-sponsored activities, the policies on those campuses will apply to Brescia registered students.

### 4. Travel Advice and Advisories Risk Levels

- 4.1. All University Activities must comply with the Government of Canada travel advice and advisories: <http://travel.gc.ca/travelling/advisories>. It is the responsibility of the Activity Sponsor to review this registry to determine compliance and to receive other relevant information prior to proposing approval of a University Activity that requires student international travel. The four levels of risk assessment include:
  - 4.1.1. **Exercise normal security precautions; there are no significant security concerns.**

- 4.1.2. **Exercise a high degree of caution**; *there are identifiable security concerns; travellers should be alert and vigilant to their surroundings.*
- 4.1.3. **AVOID NON-ESSENTIAL TRAVEL**; *there are specific security concerns; travellers should reconsider their need to travel at this time.*
- 4.1.4. **AVOID ALL TRAVEL**; *there is an extreme risk to personal safety; Canadians should not travel at this time.*
- 4.2. Travel to the destinations which fall under the first two levels (4.1.1. and 4.1.2.) will normally be authorized, subject to compliance with any recommendations outlined within the Government of Canada advisory site.
- 4.2.1. Travel to destinations with Travel Advisories under the AVOID TRAVEL categories (4.1.3. and 4.1.4.) are strongly discouraged and will not normally be authorized. Under exceptional circumstances, travel may be approved if all the following conditions apply:
- a) The travel has the written support of the Activity Sponsor, the VP Students, the Vice-Principal and Academic Dean, and the Principal;
  - b) For a student under the age of 18, the trip has the written support of the student's parents or legal guardians;
  - c) The travel is academically necessary for the student and if not carried out at the proposed location and time there will be serious negative consequences for the student's academic program;
  - d) The Activity Sponsor or Student has submitted a risk assessment and emergency planning document which has been developed in consultation with the VP Students; and,
  - e) The Activity Sponsor or Student can demonstrate that the Student has taken adequate steps to mitigate risks at the location and will have adequate support and guidance while in the region. The Student's experience and background in the region, whether a University employee is travelling with the Student and/or whether the Student is travelling with an established local organization with expertise in providing safe travel within the region should all be considered during the assessment.

Special authorization of this nature will only be granted in exceptional circumstances. Meeting the conditions listed above does not ensure authorization will be granted.

## 5. Travel Planning and Responsibilities

- 5.1. Brescia's Registrar's Office provides resources and support services aimed at facilitating safe travel for students. The office will support Activity Sponsors, departments and faculties to identify and take steps with respect to health and safety issues so that student travel is as safe

as possible. However, it must be clear that the University cannot ensure that all travel will be problem-free or account for all of the potential risks that might be experienced during international travel.

- 5.2. The Brescia Registrar's Office maintains a database of student contact information during their travel abroad. It is the students' responsibility to ensure that the most up-to-date information (i.e. telephone numbers, address information, emergency contact numbers) are supplied to the Registrar's Office prior to departure and during the international experience. In the event of an emergency domestically or abroad, the Registrar's Office will rely on this information to attempt to contact the student.
- 5.3. All student travelers retain primary responsibility for preparing themselves in advance of international travel, to research and be aware of the risks involved in their planned trip, to ensure they are physically and mentally prepared for the travel, to ensure they have appropriate medical and other insurance, to conduct themselves in a safe manner while travelling and to bring any concerns they may have to the attention of the Activity Sponsor or the Registrar's Office as soon as possible.
- 5.4. All Canadian citizens engaged in international travel related to University-sanctioned activities are required to register their travels through the Canadian Abroad Travel service maintained through Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development Canada;  
<http://travel.gc.ca/travelling/registration>
  - 5.4.1. The Registration of Canadians Abroad is a service intended for Canadian citizens. Under existing agreements, the Government of Canada will also register Australian, Israeli and Jamaican citizens.
- 5.5. The University has no control over international events. In the event of unforeseen political or military changes or natural or other disasters that may have impact on safety considerations, the University will not be responsible for the refund of any costs or losses, including the loss of timely academic progress, associated with student travel or the cancellation of student travel. This will be the case regardless of whether:
  - 5.5.1. Authorization for travel is revoked pursuant to this policy. The University will endeavour to communicate with the student in a timely basis, and assist, where possible, with any arrangements that may be required; or
  - 5.5.2. The Student does not travel due to concerns for personal safety.
- 5.6. The University bears no responsibility for students who undertake travel without the university's authorization, whether or not it is in pursuit of an approved University Activity.