

Student Safety Abroad Policy

1. Purpose

- 1.1 This policy sets out standards to ensure safer experiences for University of Lethbridge students who travel internationally as part of a university program or activity. The policy and accompanying procedures assist in managing the risks associated with university sanctioned international travel programs and activities, and provide consistent processes to undertake the following:
- (a) Authorization of student travel abroad for university activities or programs;
 - (b) Risk assessment of travel locations, regions and/or countries students will travel to, or via;
 - (c) Centralized and accessible risk management resources to enable university student travelers to be informed of and manage the risks associated with travelling abroad.

2. Application and Scope

- 2.1 This policy applies to any University of Lethbridge student traveling outside of Canada in connection with a university activity.
- 2.2 Faculty and staff are frequently approached by individual students or groups of students for advice regarding planned international travel. Faculty or staff providing advice to such students should clarify with the students at the outset whether or not such travel is for a university activity and if so, inform the students of their obligations pursuant to this policy.
- 2.3 If there is uncertainty as to whether or not contemplated travel is considered to be a university activity pursuant to this policy, the Unit Head should be consulted for a determination.
- 2.4 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, obtaining their own out-of-country medical health insurance coverage for their travel, and making their own decisions regarding personal safety.

Approval Authority	Responsible Office	Effective Date	Date Last Revised
Board of Governors	Campus Safety	June 12, 2015	Not applicable

3. Definitions

For the purposes of this policy and the accompanying procedures:

- 3.1 **Activity Sponsor** means the University of Lethbridge faculty or staff member who has actively organized or coordinated a university activity, or if there is no such person, the Unit Head.
- 3.2 **Student** means an individual enrolled in a program of study or registered in credit or non-credit undergraduate or graduate courses and/or program at the University.
- 3.3 **Unit Head** is the head of the academic department or the administrative unit that approves the university activity, sponsors the university activity, or gives academic credit for the university activity. Particular instances include:
- (a) In the case of travel sponsored through the University's Pronghorn athletic programs, the Unit Head is the Executive Director of Sports and Recreation Services;
 - (b) In the case of a graduate student enrolled in the School of Graduate Studies:
 - (i) when the university activity is related to a particular university course, the Unit Head is the Dean of the faculty offering the course;
 - (ii) when the university activity is non-course related, the Unit Head is the Dean of the School of Graduate Studies;
 - (c) In the case of an undergraduate student, the Unit Head is the Dean of the faculty offering the course.
- 3.4 **University Activity** means any international university sanctioned activity:
- (a) Undertaken by a student to fulfill a requirement for academic progress at the University; or
 - (b) Officially organized by the University; or
 - (c) Paid for in whole or in part from university funds, including without limitation, third party research or other funds administered by the University.

University activities include:

- Credit courses
- Research projects
- Exchange programs
- Practica
- Internships
- Co-op placements
- Organized training and sport competitions through the University's Pronghorn athletic programs

University activities do not include activities organized by a student or group of students, or activities sponsored or organized by the University of Lethbridge Graduate Students' Association, the University of Lethbridge Students' Union, or student clubs of the University of Lethbridge Students' Union unless they otherwise meet the definition of University activities.

4. Travel Planning and Responsibilities

- 4.1 Campus Safety provides resources and support services aimed at facilitating safe travel experiences for student travelers, which includes maintaining a Travel Abroad Registry to record student travel details and emergency contact information. Campus Safety also supports Activity Sponsors, Unit Heads, and student travelers 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 student travel will be problem free or account for all the potential health and safety risks that students might experience while out of country.
- 4.2 All student travelers retain primary responsibility to prepare themselves in advance of international travel, to research and be aware of the risks involved in their planned trip, to ensure that they are physically and mentally prepared for the travel, to ensure they have appropriate medical and other insurance for the travel, to conduct themselves in a safe manner while travelling, and to bring any concerns they may have to the attention of the senior University of Lethbridge official at the place of travel (if any), as well as to Campus Safety as soon as possible after the concern arises.
- 4.3 Prior to participating in a university activity outside of Canada, students must register their travel plans with the University through the Campus Safety Travel Abroad Registry and obtain the required authorizations to travel as set out in the accompanying procedures.
- 4.4 Where required by the procedures, Activity Sponsors must consult with Campus Safety regarding university activities outside of Canada and comply with the directions provided.
- 4.5 Each Unit Head must consider applications for authorization to travel for students participating in university activities in accordance with this policy and any accompanying procedures.
- 4.6 The University has no control over external and international events, and will not be responsible to refund 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:
 - (a) Authorization for travel is revoked pursuant to this policy;
 - (b) The student does not travel because of concerns for personal safety;
 - (c) The student is denied entry into, or timely exit from, any country associated with the travel for any reason whatsoever, including issues arising from the student's travel documentation (passport or visa) and/or border security matters; or
 - (d) The student is returned to Canada as a result of the student's actions or behaviour.
- 4.7 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.

1. Authorization for University Activities

- 1.1 It is the responsibility of the Activity Sponsor and/or Unit Head to consult with Campus Safety before authorizing University Activities involving student travel outside of Canada to ensure compliance with DFAIT (the Canadian Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade) Travel Advisories and to receive other material information regarding student safety.

2. Risk Rating System

- 2.1. The University relies upon the risk rating system established by DFAIT to assess whether or not students should engage in University Activities in various regions of the world. The table below lists the DFAIT Ratings and the recommendations of DFAIT associated with them as well the level assigned to them when referred to in this policy.

The Risk Rating System is generated and maintained by DFAIT and other outside agencies. The DFAIT website (<http://travel.gc.ca/travelling/advisories>) provides a link of all current advisories. The University is not responsible for the accuracy and content of the travel information provided by DFAIT.

DFAIT Rating	Definitions	University Risk Rating
Exercise Normal Security Precautions	There are no significant security concerns. DFAIT advises to exercise normal security precautions in this country or region.	Level 1
Exercise High Degree of Caution	There are identifiable security concerns, and travelers should be alert and vigilant to their surroundings. DFAIT advises to exercise a high degree of caution in this country – or in specified regions of this country.	Level 2
Avoid Non-Essential Travel	There is a specific security concern, and travelers should reconsider their need to travel at this time. DFAIT advises against non- essential travel to this country – or specified regions of this country. Travelers without essential reasons to be in this country or specified regions should leave.	Level 3
Avoid All Travel	There is an extreme risk to personal safety, and Canadians should not travel at this time. DFAIT advises against all travel to this country - or specified regions of this country. Canadians in this country or specified regions should leave.	Level 4

3. Travel to Level 1 or Level 2 Destinations

- 3.1 The University will normally authorize student travel for university activities to destinations with a DFAIT Travel Advisory of Level 1 or Level 2 provided that the students have complied with the requirements set out in Article 7 of these procedures. Students who do not fulfill these requirements will not be permitted to participate in the relevant university activity.

4. Travel to Level 3 or Level 4 Destinations

- 4.1 Travel to destinations under this category is strongly discouraged, and no student will be penalized academically or in any other way by making a decision NOT to travel to such a location. The University will not authorize student travel for university activities to destinations with a DFAIT Travel Advisory of Level 3 or a Level 4 unless exceptional circumstances exist. A Student may apply for special authorization as outlined below.
- 4.2 Applications for special authorization under Article 4.1 of these procedures are to be made by the student to his/her Unit Head following the process, and within the timeframes, stipulated by Campus Safety.
- 4.3 The University's insurance coverage for students does NOT extend to travel to locations with a DFAIT Travel Advisory of Level 3 or a Level 4. As such, any student intending to seek special authorization must obtain out-of-country medical health insurance and record the policy number into the University's Travel Abroad Registry. The insurance must provide coverage for the full duration of travel, and include coverage for medical evacuation and repatriation.
- 4.4 The Unit Head will review the application for special authorization in consultation with Campus Safety and at a minimum be satisfied that:
- (a) If the travel is to a destination with a DFAIT Level 3 Travel Advisory, the travel has the written support of the Activity Sponsor and the Executive Director, Campus Safety;
 - (b) If the travel is to a destination with a DFAIT Level 4 Travel Advisory, the travel has the written support of the Executive Director, Campus Safety and the Provost & Vice-President (Academic); and
 - (b) For a student under the age of 18 years, the travel has the written support of the student's parent(s) or legal guardian(s); and
 - (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; and
 - (d) The Activity Sponsor or the student has submitted a risk assessment and emergency planning document, which has been developed in consultation with Campus Safety and which is deemed by Campus Safety as satisfactory; and
 - (e) The Activity Sponsor or the 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. In making this assessment the Unit Head should

consider the student's experience and background in the region, whether a university faculty or staff member 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; and

- (f) The student has provided satisfactory verification to Campus Safety that the out-of-country medical health insurance stipulated in Article 4.3 has been obtained.

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

5. Changes to Risk Ratings

5.1 Should the DFAIT Travel Advisory for a destination be increased prior to a student's travel abroad in connection with a University Activity, Campus Safety will inform the appropriate Activity Sponsor and/or Unit Head and the student, and advise on appropriate guidelines for the new risk level. This may include suspending a program or the possibility of a student opting out.

5.2 Should the DFAIT Travel Advisory for a location be increased while a student is abroad, Campus Safety will inform the appropriate Activity Sponsor and/or Unit Head and, following consultation with the Activity Sponsor and/or Unit Head, advise the student on appropriate guidelines for the new risk level, which may include the University revoking the student's authorization for continued travel. In such situations, students are required to follow the instructions of the Activity Sponsor and/or Unit Head. Students who refuse to follow the instruction of the Activity Sponsor and/or Unit Head will be considered to be on unauthorized travel for the purpose of this policy.

6. Unauthorized Travel

6.1 Where a student is on unauthorized travel abroad, or otherwise undertakes travel outside of Canada for a university activity that has not been authorized by the University under these procedures, then the student will be considered to be travelling as a private citizen and may not hold himself/herself out as travelling under the auspices of the University. The University's insurance does not extend to students on unauthorized travel.

6.2 In the event the Unit Head becomes aware of such unauthorized travel, or otherwise becomes aware that the requirements of these procedures have not been met by the student, the Unit Head has the authority to disallow the student's participation in programs and activities covered under this policy in addition to any other remedies available to the University in regards to the student's conduct.

7. General Procedure Requirements for Student Travel Abroad

7.1 All students who receive authorization to travel outside of Canada for a university activity are required to:

- (a) Register in the University's Travel Abroad Registry;
- (b) Comply with any requirements issued by Campus Safety in respect of the travel;
- (c) Comply with any requirements issued by his/her Activity Sponsor and/or Unit Head;

- (d) If the destination is a Level 1 or Level 2, complete the online pre-departure travel risk management session or attend an in-person pre-departure international travel risk management session provided by Campus Safety;
 - (e) If the destination is a Level 3 or Level 4, complete an in-person pre-departure international travel risk management session and work with Campus Safety to complete a satisfactory Safety Planning Record and Emergency Plan.
- 7.2 Students with Canadian citizenship are also required to register in the DFAIT “Registry of Canadians Abroad” system prior to undertaking travel outside of Canada for a university activity. Students with non-Canadian citizenship or students who hold permanent residency status may still be able to register in this system, and may also wish to register with the consulate of their home country.
- 7.3 Campus Safety will maintain an electronic copy of all student travel authorizations granted and denied by Unit Heads, as well as the risk assessment and emergency planning documents developed for each student traveler. Campus Safety will retain these records in accordance with the University Record Management Policy.