

UNIVERSITY-RELATED INTERNATIONAL TRAVEL ACTIVITY BY STUDENTS AND UNIVERSITY STAFF ACCOMPANYING THEM

I. PREAMBLE

A commitment to student mobility was included in *Strengths & Aspirations* (http://www.mcgill.ca/files/provost/Strengths_and_Aspirations_June_2006.pdf):

Action II.2.3: *The University will expand the range of international experience available to its students.*

One of the features of an international university is “student mobility”. McGill supports student exchanges that are accessible to undergraduate students. ... McGill will seek to enhance the international experience of all students by expanding opportunities to participate in study abroad including international exchanges, field study programs, and formal internships, all of which bring our students into first-hand contact with people, problems, and issues from other cultures and backgrounds. (Strengths & Aspirations, p. 19)

The University is intent on enabling students to gain international experience and conduct research on the international stage. However, the University is committed to the safety of community members. The strategic plan states:

McGill will ensure that safety of all individuals—students, staff and visitors...is not compromised in the pursuit of excellence in research and teaching. Safety is an essential component of all activities and is a shared commitment of all members of the University community. (Strengths & Aspirations, p. 41)

McGill encourages students to include an international educational experience as part of their studies. Specific programs of study, internship placements, and research activities are initiated at various levels, in some cases by individual professors or students. However, the University will not approve student travel to all countries or regions of countries, as the safety of students is of primary importance. Rather, the University will adopt best practices to provide students with access to the information that they need for safe and successful educational experiences while, they engage in academic activities abroad.

This will be achieved by:

- evaluating travel activities for suitability and safety;
- instructing University staff, including professors, who travel with students to be well-informed and plan appropriately;
- informing students about the risks inherent in a particular activity; and
- providing students relevant information and instruction in safe practices before they engage in the activity.

II. PURPOSE

These guidelines are intended to provide information and University-wide standards for the approval of international travel activities, and to support consistency by providing a single set of rules for this growing and important area of academic activities.

III. SCOPE

The following shall apply to all University-related curricular activities (i.e., credit or non-credit course work, exchange programs, field work, and research) and co-curricular activities (e.g., University-sponsored internships), where international travel forms an essential part of the activity, whether or not the student is pursuing the activity for academic credit or recognition and whether or not the student receives University or third-party funding.

Such activities shall be referred to collectively as “**University-Related International Travel Activity**”

IV. PROCEDURES

1. Evaluation and Approval of University-Related International Travel Activities

1.1 Evaluation and Approval

The Dean of each Faculty, or his or her delegate, shall evaluate and approve **University-Related International Travel Activities** in his or her Faculty, including the travel plans and site selection. The Dean shall record the emergency and contingency plans prepared by staff members, program directors, or academic supervisors. The International Education Office in the Office of the Deputy Provost (Student Life and Learning) shall evaluate and approve the sites for Exchanges.

The evaluation and approval of **University-Related International Travel Activities** by the Dean will not be required for travel by students to attend international conferences or formally organized workshops held in countries listed by the Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development (DFATD) at the following risk levels: “Exercise normal security precautions” or “Exercise a high degree of caution”(<http://www.voyage.gc.ca/index-eng.asp>).

1.2 Risk Assessment

The University shall take all reasonable precautions to organize and conduct the **University-Related International Travel Activity** with due consideration for the safety and security of our students and staff.

In planning a **University-Related International Travel Activity**, staff members and students are to consider information relevant to the nature of the activity and the associated risks, as well as the location, specifically consulting the country profile on the Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development (DFATD) website http://www.voyage.gc.ca/countries_pays/menu-eng.asp.

The DFATD website also provides Country Travel Advice and Advisories regarding travel abroad. Country Travel Advice and Advisories provide the Government of Canada’s official advice regarding travel to a specific country or region, based on an overall assessment of the security risk and communicated in terms of the following four levels:

1. Exercise normal security precautions
2. Exercise high degree of caution
3. AVOID NON-ESSENTIAL TRAVEL
4. AVOID ALL TRAVEL

The staff member responsible for the academic activity shall be guided by DFATD and avoid

international activities or travel to locations for which **DFATD has issued a Travel Advisory (i.e., “AVOID NON-ESSENTIAL TRAVEL” or “AVOID ALL TRAVEL”)**. In cases where such advisories are limited to specific regions in a country, the University will be guided by the travel restriction described to the region only and shall take appropriate action in confirming or modifying travel plans.

In the event that travel is discouraged and/or prohibited to the planned country or region, the staff member shall discuss with the Dean of the Faculty the possibility of an alternate destination.

All participants in international activities are required to continue to monitor DFATD travel reports until departure and while abroad.

2. Register of University-Related International Travel Activities

2.1. Faculty-Based Register

The **Office of the Dean of the Faculty** shall oversee the creation and maintenance of a Register of (i) all faculty-based curricular activities (i.e., credit or non-credit course work, field work, and research) and (ii) co-curricular activities (e.g., faculty-based University sponsored internships) administered by the Faculty involving international travel by students, clinical fellows, residents and such. This Register shall contain, at a minimum, such basic information as:

- Nature of the activity and, where relevant, the course number
- Name of the program administrator or academic supervisor
- Name and address of primary host organization
- Period of travel
- Up-to-date itinerary (including multiple destinations)
- Emergency and contingency plans as appropriate
- Name of supervising academic staff, if any, traveling with the students
- Student’s name, program and year
- Emergency contact information for both staff and students

For Exchanges, the Student Exchange and Study Abroad Office will create and maintain the Register.

The Register of activities by the Dean will not be required for travel by students attending international conferences or formally organized workshops held in countries listed by DFATD at Level-1 or Level-2.

2.2 Registration with the University by Students

Every student participating in a **University-Related International Travel Activity** shall register their travel, providing the full itinerary, including multiple destinations; basic personal information, such as passport number, date and place of issue and expiry date; emergency contact information at home and abroad; program information, including contact information of the program administrator or academic supervisor; and in-country contact information (DRAFT of Registration Form appears in Appendix A). Students are required to register all University-Related International Travel Activities, even including travel to international conferences and formally organized workshops held in countries listed by DFATD at the following risk levels:

“Exercise normal security precautions” and “Exercise high degree of caution”.

2.3 Registration with the Foreign Affairs Office before leaving Canada

All students, and professors or staff members who are accompanying students on **University-Related International Travel Activity**, must register with the foreign office of their country of citizenship before leaving Canada, except in the case of travel to any country listed by the Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development (DFATD) at the following risk levels: “Exercise normal security precautions” and “Exercise high degree of caution” (<http://www.voyage.gc.ca/index-eng.asp>), where registration is optional.

For Canadian citizens and permanent residents of Canada, the Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development provides an online registry service at: <http://travel.gc.ca/travelling/registration>.

All Faculty or staff accompanying students on international travel activities must register their travel with the Department of Human Resources <http://www.mcgill.ca/hr/app/travel>.

3. Student Preparedness and Orientation Process

At appropriate times during the academic year, the Office of the Dean of each Faculty shall host **Student Preparedness and Orientation Sessions** for students in the Faculty. The sessions shall provide basic information for travel abroad as well as specific information on travel, safety and customs for the particular destination(s) of the students.

Students participating in **University-Related International Travel Activity** will be required to attend a **Student Preparedness and Orientation Session**.

University staff members accompanying students on **University-Related International Travel Activity** are required to be familiar with the material presented in Student Preparedness and Orientation Session and are encouraged to attend a session.

Participating students shall remain subject to the rights and responsibilities, and associated policies, contained in the McGill Handbook of Student Rights and Responsibilities.

3.1 Student Registration and Acceptance Forms

Following attendance at the **Student Preparedness and Orientation Session**, and before leaving on an **University-Related International Travel Activity**, every participating student shall complete the **Student Acceptance Form** (draft appears in Appendix B).

3.2 Insurance

All participating students will be required to show proof of sufficient insurance, valid for the duration of their travel, which shall include personal property and health insurance, as well as coverage for emergency hospital and medical coverage abroad, and emergency evacuation coverage.

Loss of personal property is not covered by the University’s insurance policy.

3.3 Staff Members Accompanying Students on University-Related International Travel Activity

Staff members accompanying students on University-related travel shall register their travel plans with the Office of the Dean. They shall also register with the foreign office of their country of citizenship and with the McGill Department of Human Resources, and are required to be familiar with the material presented in Student Preparedness and Orientation Sessions or to attend a session. Staff members will be provided with an **Information Package** for their use.

Staff members shall help the students understand the risk involved in living and working in the area and shall review with the students, instructions regarding safety and culturally sensitive conduct and emergency and incident procedures.

Whether within or outside class time, their behaviour as McGill professors and staff must be appropriate at all times. They remain subject to McGill policies and regulations.

4. Request for Exemptions

These guidelines are not meant to affect, or in any way restrict, travel by a student or staff member to any country for personal reasons unconnected with the University.

Where the **University-Related International Travel Activity** forms part of the curriculum or the program of study, students shall not be compelled to travel to a particular country or region should they feel their safety may be compromised. In such cases, students may request to opt out by writing to the Dean of the Faculty, or his or her delegate, providing the reasons for the request to opt out of the planned activity and proposing an alternative activity for consideration as replacement. Unless the reason for the request is a change in circumstances beyond the student's control, withdrawal and refund deadlines will apply.

Where the student deems the travel to a country or region with a **DFATD Travel Advisory of "AVOID NON-ESSENTIAL TRAVEL"** to be **essential**, the student shall request an exemption by writing to the Dean of the Faculty. The student's request shall be evaluated by the Chair/Director of the Department/School, or where applicable, the Program Director, who shall confirm to the Dean the rationale for the planned activity, the **necessity** for the travel to that country or region, the factors, experience, and measures undertaken to mitigate the risks, and the absence of a suitable alternative activity. The Dean shall consider the request for exemption by the student and shall provide the Deputy Provost with a recommendation. The Deputy Provost shall communicate his reply and any conditions that may apply, within a reasonable delay.

It is understood that all programs of research may only be exercised consistent with the conditions and requirements of external agencies, such as the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA). Should the conditions of funding prohibit travel in certain countries or regions for whatever reason, including, for example, the existence of DFATD Travel Advisories, such provisions shall operate and take precedence over these guidelines.

APPENDIX A

Minerva Travel Registry

APPENDIX B French translation to be made available

Student Acceptance Form Acknowledgment and Consent

I have chosen to participate in the following **UNIVERSITY-RELATED INTERNATIONAL TRAVEL ACTIVITY**:

taking place in _____ from _____

A complete itinerary (including multiple destinations) is attached.

1. I confirm that I have attended the **Student Preparedness and Orientation Session**.
2. I understand that the International Activity may involve physically and mentally strenuous activities in an area removed from primary medical care or hospitals.
3. I will behave in such a way as to minimize risk to myself and other participants at all times. I have familiarized myself with and will observe the local laws and customs, and will at all times behave responsibly and within the laws of my destination country and will do nothing to bring discredit to McGill University.
4. I understand that participation in the International Activity involves risks, dangers, and hazards, including but not limited to those outlined in DFATD Country Travel Advice and Advisories page for my destination country. I have reviewed the current Country Travel Advice page and understand the risks outlined therein.
5. I have registered my travel with the International Activity with the DFATD registration service or with a similar agency in my home country and will monitor DFATD Travel Advice and Advisories until the date of departure and while abroad.
6. I understand I am not required to take part in the International Activity to complete a McGill degree and acknowledge that my participation in the activity is wholly voluntary.
7. I will undertake such functions and responsibilities consistent with the student-training program approved by McGill and which McGill may specify from time to time, and will promptly and fully comply with the directions I may receive from the McGill Faculty and staff members.
8. I understand that as a student of McGill I remain subject to the rules, regulations, and policies of McGill, including but not limited to, those contained in the **Handbook of Student Rights and Responsibilities**.

9. If necessary, I will undergo a medical examination and receive appropriate immunization prior to the start of the International Activity, and will provide McGill with an attestation to this effect if requested.
10. I will carry sufficient accident and health insurance, including coverage for emergency evacuation, during my International Activity. I understand that loss of personal property is not covered by the University's insurance policy.
11. I will travel with a valid passport, visa, immunization booklet, and return air ticket.
12. Unless my expenses are to be covered by my supervisor or my research grant, I will be personally responsible for all my expenses and declare that I am financially capable of meeting such expenses incurred on my behalf. I will not cause McGill to incur any expense, including but not limited to telephone, telecommunications, and transportation, and will promptly and fully reimburse McGill for any expenses as applicable.
13. Unless I hold the necessary authorization to do so, I will not engage in any occupation or trade, whether paid or unpaid, while abroad.
14. I hold McGill harmless from any claims, demands or actions of any kind, and shall indemnify McGill from any loss or expenses incurred, and accept full responsibility for my participation in the International Activity.
15. I agree that McGill may terminate my participation in the International Activity and require me to return to Canada forthwith for any reason whatsoever.
16. I authorize McGill to contact the person I have named as a contact in case of emergency at their discretion, releasing such information as McGill deems necessary.
17. I authorize McGill to release such personal information about me as is required by government bodies or McGill's partners for the purpose of identifying me and registering me as a participant in the program.
18. I have requested that the present document be drafted in the English language. *J'ai demandé que le présent document soit rédigé dans la langue anglaise.*

Signed: _____

In Montreal _____ **this** _____ **day of** _____ **20**_____