

<b>POLICY NAME</b>	<b>POLICY ON STUDENT SAFETY ABROAD</b>
<b>Approving Body</b>	Senate Board of Governors
<b>Initial Approval Date</b>	Senate (May 8, 2024) Board of Governors (May 16, 2024)
<b>Date of Last Review</b>	n/a
<b>Next Review Date:</b>	May 2029
<b>Executive Sponsor</b>	Deputy Provost, Student Life and Learning
<b>Related Documents</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Student Safety Abroad Procedures</li> <li>• Student Acceptance Form – Acknowledgment and Consent</li> <li>• International Field Studies Safety Plan Template</li> <li>• McGill Risk Rating System</li> <li>• Travel Exemption Procedure</li> </ul>

**PART I – PURPOSE**

McGill University is committed to providing students with a 21st century education by increasing the number of and access to international experiential learning opportunities (“University sanctioned international activities”), such as internships, field courses and studies, exchanges, performances and competitions, amongst others. The University further encourages students to include an international experiential learning activity as part of their studies.

The University employs best practices to provide students as well as academic and administrative staff with the information needed for safe international travel and study. However, the University cannot account for all potential risks, inconveniences, and/or incidents that a Student Traveller might experience during a University sanctioned international activity, and shall in no way be held liable for any health and/or safety issues that arise for a Student Traveller or their accompanying academic or administrative staff.

This Policy on Student Safety Abroad (“the Policy”) clarifies the roles and responsibilities of a Student Traveller and McGill academic and administrative staff related to University sanctioned international activities and aims to establish formal University-wide standards and resources for these activities.

## SCOPE

This Policy applies to Student Travellers on a University sanctioned international activity travelling outside of Canada and to the academic and/or administrative staff approving, sponsoring, organizing or accompanying them.

Students who travel abroad for a purpose other than a University sanctioned international activity are considered to be travelling as private citizens and are solely responsible for making their own decisions regarding personal safety.

## PART II – CONTENT

### 1. Definitions

**“Activity Sponsor”**: means the McGill academic and/or administrative staff member(s) who actively approve(s), organize(s), coordinate(s), sponsor(s), give(s) credit for, accompany(ies) or supervise(s) a Student Traveller on a University sanctioned international activity; or if there is no such person(s), the Head of Unit.

**“Exchange Partner”**: means a university with which McGill has established a student exchange program agreement.

**“Global Affairs Canada (GAC) Travel Advisories”**: means the official travel information and advice issued by the Government of Canada.

**“Head of Unit”**: means the head of the academic or administrative unit that approves, sponsors or gives credit for a University sanctioned international activity.

**“International Student Mobility Advisory Committee”**: means the University committee responsible for international undergraduate student mobility strategies, in accordance with its Terms of Reference.

**“McGill Abroad – ODPSLL”**: means McGill’s central team in the Office of the Deputy Provost, Student Life and Learning (ODPSLL) that oversees international student mobility opportunities, protocols and procedures.

**“Student”**: means (i) any person registered in the University for a course, courses or research, whether or not a candidate for degree, diploma, or certificate; (ii) persons once registered in the University under (i) above who are on leave (iii) persons registered during any preceding term and who have not since that time fulfilled all the requirements for the degree, diploma or certificate for which they were registered; (iv) postdoctoral fellows, who are not employees of the University.

**“Student Traveller”**: means any student participating in a University sanctioned international activity.

**“University Sanctioned International Activity”**: means curricular activities (i.e., credit or non-credit course work, exchange programs, field work, music performances and research) and co-curricular activities (e.g. University funded internships, varsity sports) that are officially approved or endorsed by

McGill and for which international travel is an essential part of the activity, whether or not the student is pursuing the activity for academic credit or recognition, or receives University or third-party funding.

University sanctioned international activities exclude:

- Activities sponsored or organized by student clubs or associations,
- Activities organized solely by a student or group of students.

## 2. Safety and Travel Planning and Responsibilities

### 2.1. McGill Abroad – ODPSLL:

- 2.1.1. oversees the implementation and administration of this Policy;
- 2.1.2. informs Student Travellers about health and safety issues related to travel abroad;
- 2.1.3. acts as the University resource for safety abroad and provides expert advice on global safety and security to University leadership, committees, students, Student Travellers, Activity Sponsors and Heads of Units;

Without limiting the generality of the foregoing, McGill Abroad – ODPSLL also:

- 2.1.4. stays informed of changing conditions in the GAC Travel Advisories, communicates these changes to Student Travellers and relevant University units, and implements appropriate protocols in accordance with this Policy and associated Procedures;
- 2.1.5. administers the McGill Student Travel Registry;
- 2.1.6. supports crisis management;
- 2.1.7. develops and delivers safety abroad information, training (e.g., Pre-Departure Orientation) and outreach for Student Travellers;
- 2.1.8. oversees the administrative procedure for travel exemptions;
- 2.1.9. oversees the development of policies and procedures pursuant to University sanctioned international activities and travel;
- 2.1.10. maintains a registry of emergency and contingency plans for University sanctioned international activities; and
- 2.1.11. evaluates and approves site and host selection for all Exchange partners upon the recommendation of the International Student Mobility Advisory Committee.

### 2.2. A Student Traveller:

- 2.2.1. educates themselves in advance of international travel by researching and assessing the general and personal risks related to their planned trip to ensure their physically and mentally readiness for travel;
- 2.2.2. conducts themselves in a manner that prioritizes their safety while travelling;
- 2.2.3. considers information relevant to the nature of their University sanctioned international activity (e.g., location) and the associated risks;
- 2.2.4. prior to participating in a University sanctioned international activity, and in accordance with the Procedures associated with this Policy:
  - a. registers with the [McGill Student Travel Registry](#) at least 10 working days prior to their departure date;
  - b. completes the [Pre-Departure Orientation](#) offered by McGill Abroad – ODPSLL, unless exempt;
  - c. purchases appropriate and sufficient travel and medical insurance; and

- d. obtains any authorizations to travel and take part in the University sanctioned international activity that are required.
- 2.2.5. Failure to complete requirements 2.2.4.a. and 2.2.4.b. of this Policy shall lead to the cancellation of the University sanctioned international activity and/or the activity being deemed as Unauthorized Travel, as defined in Section 6.
- 2.3. Activity Sponsor(s):
  - 2.3.1. consults with McGill Abroad – ODPSLL when planning a new University sanctioned international activity;
  - 2.3.2. reviews and authorizes applications to participate in a University sanctioned international activity.

### **3. Evaluation and Approval of University Sanctioned International Activities**

- 3.1. Student Travellers shall not be compelled to travel to a location where they feel their safety may be compromised in order to participate in a University sanctioned international activity. Student Travellers may request to opt out of an activity by writing to the Activity Sponsor(s) or Head of Unit providing justification for the request and requesting an accommodation.
- 3.2. For a University sanctioned international activity in which a Student Traveller is accompanied by Activity Sponsor(s), the Activity Sponsor(s) is responsible for:
  - 3.2.1. evaluating and approving the University sanctioned international activity, including travel plans, safety plans and site selection in accordance with this Policy and accompanying Procedures. The Activity Sponsor must consult the GAC Travel Advisory at the time of the approval to confirm that travel to the proposed destination is allowed pursuant to this Policy.
  - 3.2.2. preparing and submitting a safety plan for each University sanctioned international activity to McGill Abroad – ODPSLL at least two months before the beginning of the activity or the departure, whichever comes first. The Head of the Unit or their delegate shall also record the safety plans prepared by Activity Sponsors.
  - 3.2.3. informing the Student Traveller of the mandatory requirements including those listed in 2.2.4 and ensuring their compliance with 2.2.4.a. and 2.2.4.b.
  - 3.2.4. Cancelling a University sanctioned activity for Student Travellers who do not comply with 2.2.4.a and 2.2.4.b.
- 3.3. For a University sanctioned international activity in which a Student Traveller is unaccompanied by Activity Sponsor(s), the Activity Sponsor(s) is responsible for:
  - 3.3.1. evaluating and approving the University sanctioned international, including site and host selection in accordance with this Policy. The Activity Sponsor must consult the GAC Travel Advisory at the time of the approval to confirm that travel to the proposed destination is allowed pursuant to this Policy.
  - 3.3.2. informing the Student Traveller of the mandatory requirements including those listed in 2.2.4. and ensuring their compliance with 2.2.4.a and 2.2.4.b.
  - 3.3.3. Cancelling a University sanctioned activity for Student Travellers who do not comply with 2.2.4.a and 2.2.4.b.

#### **4. Travel Advisories and Risk Assessment**

- 4.1. The University relies on GAC Travel Advisories to determine whether a location is safe for a University sanctioned international activity.
- 4.2. GAC Risk Levels indicate a level of risk associated with travel to a location and these are mapped to University descriptions of the risk and internal ratings. See Annex A for McGill Risk Rating System.
- 4.3. To participate in a University sanctioned international activity, travel to or through a location with a Level 1 or 2 University Risk Rating is permitted.
- 4.4. To participate in a University sanctioned international activity, travel to or through a location with a Level 3 University Risk Rating may be permitted in exceptional circumstances and requires the approval of the Deputy Provost (Student Life and Learning). In most instances, the Activity Sponsor and Head of Unit will be responsible for identifying an alternate destination.
- 4.5. The University does not authorize travel to or through a location with a Level 4 University Risk Rating.

#### **5. Revocation of Authorization**

The Deputy Provost (Student Life and Learning) may revoke authorization for a University sanctioned international activity as a result of safety concerns. Such decision must be made in writing and sent to the Dean of the relevant faculty, the Head of Unit, Activity Sponsor(s) and the Student Traveller.

#### **6. Unauthorized Travel**

- 6.1. Students who undertake travel without University authorization, or Student Travellers who remain in a location after authorization has been revoked, are considered to be travelling as a private citizen.
- 6.2. University resources or sponsorship will not be provided for unauthorized travel. In the event the University becomes aware of unauthorized travel, the Deputy Provost (Student Life and Learning), in consultation with the Dean of the relevant faculty, shall take corrective measures.

#### **7. Requirements to report a problem**

- 7.1. The Activity Sponsor(s) is required to report major health and safety issue(s) affecting a Student Traveller to the Dean of Students upon being made aware of the issue(s).
- 7.2. Student Travellers should report major health and safety issues or concerns to the Activity Sponsor(s) and to the Dean of Students as soon as possible.

### **PART III – AUTHORITY TO APPROVE PROCEDURES**

The Deputy Provost (Student Life and Learning) is the final authority for the approval of Procedures or other secondary documents related to this Policy.

### **PART IV – REVIEW**

This Policy shall be reviewed as needed and no less than every five years.



**Legislative History:**

Approved:

Senate  
Board of Governors

May 8, 2024  
May 16, 2024

Minute IIB3  
Minute 11.1.1