



1. INTRODUCTION

This document provides a summary of procedures and guidelines to support College Policy No. 8621 –Education Abroad (the “Policy”).

2. SCOPE / LIMITS

This policy applies to all College-approved international education abroad experiences designed, delivered, or organized by members of the College community.

Where international educational activities are sponsored or the responsibility or shared responsibility of other institutions, activities must also meet these institutions study abroad policy and required agreements.

3. APPROVAL CRITERIA FOR EDUCATION ABROAD PROGRAMS

The following outlines the critical issues that underlie a decision to approve or not approve an international education-abroad experience, project or program. Not all the following issues will apply in each case, but these are the types of requirements that should be addressed.

- Program Approval Criteria (Appendix N)

4. APPROVAL PROCESS FOR NEW EDUCATION ABROAD PROGRAMS

Instructors and staff planning to initiate new education abroad experiences must complete the following forms and submit them to the school chair or department head and dean or manager as well as to Selkirk International for review and approval:

- Proposal worksheet for New Education Abroad Programs (Appendix A)
- Risk Assessment Template (Appendix C)
- Emergency Response Plan (Appendix D)

Original copies of signed forms must be retained by Selkirk International in a secure location for a period of no less than ten (10) years. If a partner institution is involved, originals may be held by them and copies held by Selkirk International if required.

5. APPROVAL PROCESS FOR ONGOING (PREVIOUSLY APPROVED) EDUCATION ABROAD PROGRAMS

Program leaders of ongoing, continuing programs that have been previously approved should complete and submit the following forms and submit them to the school chair or department head and dean or manager as well as to Selkirk International for review and approval every four years:

- Proposal worksheet for Previously Approved Education Abroad Programs (Appendix B)
- Risk Assessment Template (Appendix C)
- Emergency Response Plan (Appendix D)

Original copies of signed forms must be retained by Selkirk International in a secure location for a period of no less than ten (10) years. If a partner institution is involved, originals may be held by them and copies held by Selkirk International if required.

6. ASSESSING THE DESTINATION AND RISK

The program leader is responsible for assessing the proposed destination and / or organization where and education abroad experience will take place. This should be done before applying for approval in order to reduce potential risks.

Program leaders are responsible for assessing the risk associated with the specific activities and countries of travel. They must make informed decisions based on careful consideration of available risk information. Program leaders are encouraged to involve colleagues, Selkirk International and their supervisors in this analysis and decision.

When a significant health or safety concern is raised concerning an approved or proposed education-abroad experience, the decision to suspend or cancel the activity lies with the dean or manager, in collaboration with the program leader, the school chair or department head, VP Education and Students and Selkirk International.

6.1 ASSESSING THE DESTINATION AND RISK INCLUDES:

- Conducting an initial site visit to assess the destination (if possible).
- Monitoring Foreign Affairs Canada (FAC) country travel reports and warnings, and subscribing to their free travel update service to obtain information on current travel and safety concerns related to specific countries.
 - Country Travel Reports and Warnings: http://www.voyage.gc.ca/countries_pays/menu-eng.asp
 - Travel Updates: http://www.voyage.gc.ca/countries_pays/updates_mise-a-jour-eng.asp#ctr
- Seeking additional advice from instructors, staff and other sources that have knowledge of the specific location.
 - Interview staff or instructors at the destination organization.
 - Consult with others who have completed projects in the same location.

- Considering multiple risk factors, including, but not limited to:
 - capacity of the host organization,
 - current political conditions in the country, including political turmoil or instability,
 - environmental conditions, including weather, wildlife and likelihood of natural disasters,
 - health issues, including common diseases or parasites,
 - access to medical care, preferably with service available in English,
 - cultural differences, including unsafe work or institutional practices,
 - crime, including the crime rate in the area and also the types of common crimes,
 - transportation conditions, including conditions of roads, or other infrastructure,
 - foreign policy issues, and internal country laws that might be significantly different than those in Canada
- Consulting other online resources that provide information on destination risk assessment for education-abroad programs, including but not limited to:
 - SAFETI- Safety Abroad First - Educational Travel Information, The Centre for Global Education online: <http://globaled.us/safeti/>
 - Canadian Bureau for International Education (CBIE), online: <http://www.cbie.ca/>
 - Queen’s University International Centre, online: <http://quic.queensu.ca/>
- Consulting with Selkirk College departments and schools available to assist program leaders with risk assessment and planning, including:
 - Your school chair or department head
 - Selkirk International
 - Selkirk Trauma Assistance Team (STAT)
<http://selkirk.ca/services/sas/selkirktraumaassistanceteam/>

The risk assessment process should not end after the planning process, and plans should be updated as needed to reflect changes that may occur after the filing of the original project proposal worksheet.

6.2 SUSPENSION OF AN EDUCATIONAL ABROAD EXPERIENCE

It is the responsibility of the program leader to monitor international news and events on a daily basis prior to and during the education abroad-period. Health and safety concerns such as a flood, earthquake or outbreak of political violence will be assessed immediately as to whether there are possible effects on participants.

At a minimum, activities shall not be permitted to be conducted in locations for which Foreign Affairs Canada has issued an advisory warning against travel. For the purposes of the policy, students shall be deemed to fall within the tourist category for Foreign Affairs Canada travel warnings.

In the event that Foreign Affairs Canada issues a travel warning for a location wherein a program is in progress, the warning must be reviewed by the dean or manager, in collaboration with the program leader, the school chair or department head, VP Education and Students and Selkirk International, to determine appropriate response and action.

7. EMERGENCY RESPONSE PLAN PROCEDURES:

Selkirk College's Education Abroad policy requires deans or managers and school chairs or department heads, along with Selkirk International, ensure that program leaders prepare the following site-specific emergency plans for each education abroad experience:

- Emergency Response Plan (Appendix D)

Program leaders are required to develop and maintain emergency protocol and procedures that interface with applicable College policies and emergency procedures.

Emergency and contingency plans for education abroad experiences should consider the following scenarios:

- ✓ Natural disasters
- ✓ War and civil unrest
- ✓ Terrorism, kidnap and hostage situations
- ✓ Injury, death and medical emergencies
- ✓ Incapacitation of the program leader
- ✓ Criteria for evacuation versus "stay-put" strategies.

The following checklist for planning is provided:

- Emergency and Contingency Planning for International Programs (Appendix E)

7.1 GENERAL PROCEDURES IN THE CASE OF EMERGENCY:

These procedures outline the specific procedures for any emergency or crisis involving Selkirk College students or staff and are meant first and foremost to ensure the safety and well-being of those involved.

The following describes Selkirk College's International Emergency Procedures:

- International Emergency Procedures (Appendix P)

7.2 EMERGENCY PHONE CALLS

The Emergency Response Plan (Appendix D) requires project leaders to designate a Selkirk College emergency contact. The person or people selected should be employees of Selkirk College and should be reachable 24 hours a day.

Project leaders will ensure they have a 24-hour emergency contact card with phone numbers for senior members of the Selkirk College administration. This card will be provided by the Selkirk Trauma Assistance Team (STAT) and Selkirk International.

In the case of an international emergency, the project leader will call their designated contact person or people and report the incident.

7.3 RECEIVING AN INTERNATIONAL EMERGENCY CALL

Selkirk College should always accept collect calls relating to an international emergency / crisis involving Selkirk College students, instructors or staff.

The person who receives the phone call should utilize the following procedure and checklist to ensure all required information is collected:

- Emergency Response: Receiving an International Emergency Call (Appendix M)

8. PARTICIPANTS

The program leader and supporting team, if present, will initiate the participant selection process and will make recommendations to the appropriate school chair or department head who will approve the list of participants. The dean or manager, school chair or department head, in collaboration with the program leader, Selkirk International and the VP Education and Students have the authority to disallow student participation in an education-abroad experience.

8.1 SELECTION OF PARTICIPANTS

Program instructors and staff may wish to design team-led processes for participant selection. In these cases, applications would be viewed by the program leader and designated team. Clear criteria must be utilized when selecting participants. If necessary, follow-up with individual candidates regarding their participation will be scheduled by the program leader, in collaboration with Selkirk International if required. Specific health and other concerns related to participants will be addressed on a case by case basis.

It is recommended that program leaders use the following checklist when developing their participant selection process and criteria.

- Participant Selection Process Template (Appendix O)

The program leader must submit the following forms to Selkirk International as well as the relevant dean or manager and school chair or department head, for each selected participant.

- General Application (Appendix F)
- Prospective Participant Destination and Risk Assessment (Appendix J)
- Confirmation of Supplementary Health Insurance (Appendix I)
- Release of Liability, Waiver of Claims, Assumption of Risks and Indemnity Agreement (Appendix G)
- Acknowledgement of Responsibility and Liability Waiver (Appendix H)

Original copies of signed forms must be retained by Selkirk International in a secure location for a period of no less than ten (10) years. If a partner institution is involved, originals may be held by them and copies held by Selkirk International if required.

8.2 INDIVIDUAL RISK ASSESSMENT

Participation in programs or activities in an international setting provides unique and valuable learning opportunities. However, even the best efforts of everyone involved cannot eliminate the risks involved with international travel, work or learning. The management of the associated risks is a shared responsibility between the College and all participants in education-abroad programs, and all parties must accept and share responsibility for understanding, assuming and reducing the associated risks.

All parties involved in education abroad programs must share the responsibility to familiarize themselves with the risks of the specific activities and countries of travel and to make informed decisions concerning their participation. Ultimately each person must decide whether or not they are willing to accept the risks involved with international travel and participation in the program or activity.

In addition to the destination and risk assessment resources detailed in section 6, prospective participants should research the destination in order to make informed decisions concerning their participation using the following:

- Prospective Participant Destination and Risk Assessment (Appendix J)

9. INSURANCE

All students and participants are required by Selkirk College's Education Abroad policy (#8621) to provide evidence of valid out-of-country medical health insurance to the program leader and Selkirk International prior to travel using the following form:

- Confirmation of Supplementary Health Insurance (Appendix I)

The insurance must provide coverage for the full duration of travel, and include coverage for medical evacuation and repatriation.

It is the responsibility of each traveler to assess his / her insurance policy and ensure that the coverage is adequate to meet his/ her needs. Selkirk College is not responsible to verify the adequacy of insurance policies or coverage. The College requests evidence simply to determine that the traveler has placed a medical health insurance policy for the duration of travel with coverage for medical evacuation and repatriation.

10. WAIVERS AND RELEASES:

All students and participants are required to sign the following waivers, releases and indemnification agreements form prior to international travel:

- Release of Liability, Waiver of Claims, Assumption of Risks and Indemnity Agreement (Appendix G)
- Acknowledgement of Responsibility and Liability Waiver (Appendix H)

11. COMMUNICATION

The program leader, with support from Selkirk International, must provide information, pre-departure orientation, and debriefing sessions to all participants.

A full itinerary with contact information must be filed with the school chair or department head and Selkirk International.

The program leader will determine the means and frequency of communication with all participants. Active and reliable ongoing communication protocols will be established and discussed in the pre-departure orientation. Possible modes of communication include ongoing email correspondence, a group listserv, telephone contact, and field visits.

24-Hour emergency contact information and emergency procedures must be clearly explained and provided in written form to all participants prior to departure.

Attendance of all pre-departure and orientation sessions is mandatory for participants.

In the case of an emergency, the college's Communications Coordinator will serve as the official college representative to the media.

12. FUNDRAISING AND PUBLICITY

Project leaders and participants should consult with marketing and communications before launching any fundraising campaign that involves publicity or press releases. Contacting the Communications Coordinator will ensure your message is in sync with other College publications and will provide you with professional expertise.

Be aware that major funders may already support Selkirk College through established channels. Encourage participants to reach out through their networks and connections for funding support.

Scholarships exist to support student participation in education abroad experiences, ask Selkirk International about eligibility and requirements.

13. MANDATORY PRE-DEPARTURE ORIENTATION

All participants must attend a pre-departure orientation. A written record of all attendees should be kept for all formal orientation sessions, with date, location, participant names and a sign-in sheet. Copies of all handouts, manuals, checklists and other documents, as well as any agendas and scripts should be retained on file as part of the due diligence process.

Orientation may be provided in a variety of formats, depending on the nature of the activity. The format may be different for larger groups in comparison to smaller groups or a single student. Regardless of the format, all orientation sessions must cover both the academic and risk and responsibility content, and it can be delivered together in a single orientation session.

Suggested content for the pre-departure orientation session is detailed here:

- Suggested Content for Orientation and Debriefing Sessions (Appendix K)

Do not hesitate to contact Selkirk International for support.

13.1 Academic Orientation Session

The academic orientation session is the responsibility of the sponsoring department or program leader. It should cover academic matters relative to the program or activity, such as site-specific information on risks and cultural issues. Program-specific rules of conduct and consequences of non-compliance should also be covered.

Program leaders may wish to develop a program manual, handbook or set of handouts addressing key issues for distribution to participants.

13.2 Risk and responsibility Orientation Session

Selkirk International will provide the risk and responsibility orientation session in cooperation with the department and program leader. Program leaders should request and arrange the session with Selkirk International well in advance of departure.

Selkirk International will draw on specialized support from the Selkirk Trauma Assistance Team (STAT) Coordinator where needed.

The risk and responsibility session may be combined with the academic orientation session.

14. DEBRIEFING SESSION

Upon return the program leader must organize a post program debriefing session to review learning outcomes and reflect upon the experience.

Suggested content for the post program debriefing session is detailed here:

- Suggested Content for Orientation and Debriefing Sessions (Appendix K)