



## Policy on Travel and Field Safety; Risk Assessment and Planning

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### Introduction

In carrying out the mission of Brock University, many employees and students travel both domestically and abroad. While these trips can be life enriching opportunities, they also bring with them their own unique set of risks. This Policy document offers a set of guidelines for ensuring that risk assessment tools are developed and used and all foreseeable risks are avoided or mitigated through the development of a Trip Risk and Emergency Management Plan (TREMP)

The University's Policy for Travel and Field Safety: Risk Assessment and Planning addresses health and safety responsibilities for faculty, staff and students engaged in local travel, including remote areas of the campus and between campuses, and field research/academic activities beyond the geographical boundaries of the University. Key elements include risk identification and assessment; elimination or mitigation during planning and implementation; plus approval and post-trip review.

Participants in different categories (*e.g.*, faculty researchers in contrast to undergraduate students; conference travel in contrast to guided field trips and individual study abroad programs) have a range of experience, knowledge and judgment that bear on safety in off-campus activities. This planning should recognize that the University has a greater duty of care for those members of its community who have little or no experience and knowledge of risks associated with the relevant activities.

All members of the University community are expected to demonstrate their commitment towards a safe and healthy work and study environment by acting in compliance with this Policy.

## PURPOSE

The Brock University Policy for Travel and Field Safety; Risk Assessment and Planning, herein after referred to as the Travel and Field Safety Policy, has been created to achieve the goals of:

- a. organizing and delivering healthy, safe, productive, stimulating and educational field experiences;
- b. minimizing harm or loss to participants, planners or the University;
- c. meeting the University's obligations, both legal and moral, with respect to the health, safety and security of all members of its community, plus protection of the environment, when participating in University-sanctioned activities where any travel is required;
- d. increasing the level of awareness and respect for safety issues and the preparedness of individuals who are participating in travel related activities, and;
- e. exercising consistent and reasonable due diligence in identifying and managing the risks inherent in travel related activities.

The fundamental premise of this Travel and Field Safety Policy is that from the initial stages of planning, off-campus activities must be evaluated from a safety perspective. The Policy recognizes that most off-campus activities entail risks that are no greater than the participants would face in every day life and can be safely carried out with minimal planning and preparation. However, in the case of an activity that entails risks higher than this, appropriate advance planning, preparation, and training must be carried out so that the foreseeable risks are appropriately managed, and an activity risk management plan must be approved before the activity takes place. In circumstances where it is concluded that the risks are unmanageable, the activity should not be carried out.

The Policy recognizes that planning and preparation, including risk assessment, for any travel activity should be carried out by the organizer(s) – normally at the Department/Centre level – who, it is understood, will have specific relevant knowledge. When hazards falling outside local expertise are identified, the Policy requires that planners/organizers consult appropriate experts for advice (preferably local to the area of travel). As part of the preparation for an activity, participants must be provided with appropriate training and orientation delivered by persons with the requisite expertise (the Principal Investigator or Responsible Authority).

The Policy defines the responsibilities of participants and those in the chain of responsibility with respect to safety during any Brock University related travel. Additional information about resources that will assist planners in meeting the requirements of the Policy is provided in the supporting information Trip Risk and Emergency Management Plan (Appendix 1) and Travel and Field Safety Manual (Appendix 2)).

## Acknowledgements

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## DEFINITIONS:

**Academic Study Placement:** co-op placements, courses/study abroad, practicum, internships, or local data gathering in schools and homes for research purposes.

**Critical Incident:** an incident that could be classed as an emergency, including but not limited to serious illness or injury, fatal accidents, sudden deaths, suicide, hate crimes, assaults (including sexual assault) or other violent occurrences, political or civil unrest, and natural or environmental disasters, or any other event on the basis of which an individual's or group's participation in an off-campus activity could terminate or be terminated.

**Elective Placement:** A privately organized work or travel experience which is not organized or sanctioned by the University.

**Fieldtrip:** any activity conducted for the purpose of augmenting the classroom experience of a given subject, authorized by the university which is conducted by faculty, staff, graduate or undergraduate students or authorized volunteers at any on or off-campus location.

**Fieldwork:** any activity conducted for the purpose of research or teaching authorized by the University which is conducted by faculty, staff, graduate or undergraduate students or authorized volunteers beyond the geographical boundaries of University property. Where research within the geographical boundaries of the University property (eg. University-owned, leased or managed field stations, the Niagara Escarpment or Lake Gibson) pose risks to participants the requirements for due diligence contained in this policy shall be enforced.

**Hazard:** a situation or a circumstance that is judged to be potentially dangerous or damaging to life, limb, property, the environment or could potentially disrupt the regular operations of the University.

**Higher-Risk Activity:** an activity that has the potential to expose participants to hazards that are significantly greater than those likely to be encountered in their everyday lives.

**Low-Risk Activity:** an activity that entails hazards no greater than those encountered by the participants in their everyday lives.

**Non-Critical Incident:** an event occurring or a circumstance arising during an off-campus activity that damages or has the potential to damage the health, safety or property of one or more of the activity participants, but that is judged not sufficiently serious that it jeopardizes continued participation in the off-campus activity nor requires immediate reporting to the Person in Authority or the Departmental contact.

**Off-campus experience-based learning activities:** various activities which may be identified by a variety of names and constructs: programs for academic credit, such as internships, cooperative education, field work, field placements, field experience, field trips, practica, professional practice; service-learning or community service components of courses; or they may be non-academic activities such as community volunteer work by student organizations or community-based financial aid work study positions.

**Remote Activity:** Remote activities are those conducted at any location where it would be difficult to summon help and/or where emergency assistance would be an hour or more away.

**Risk:** the likelihood of encountering an identified hazard times the gravity of the consequences of such an encounter. (probability X severity)

**Team:** – ‘team’ as in Team Leader or Team Member is used to identify the individual(s) participating in the activity, whether as part of a research team or a program participant for non-research activities.

## SCOPE

The Board, the President and all levels of Administration will work in consultation and cooperation with University employees, health and safety committees, students, contractors and visitors to ensure that the requirements of the Occupational Health and Safety Act and its regulations, other applicable legislation, and the University's Environment, Health and Safety Program are fully implemented and integrated into all University work and study activities.

This Travel and Field Safety Policy expressly covers off-campus activities that are organized or sanctioned (including by the commitment of resources) by the University, such as:

- field research conducted by faculty, post-doctoral fellows, graduate and undergraduate students, staff and authorized volunteers (including travel to and from the site(s) of the field research), provided that the research falls within Brock's employment responsibilities or academic program of the participant;
- all off-campus activities that are part of Brock University's academic (for-credit) courses and programs (including travel to and from the site(s) of the activity); eg. co-op placements, internships, professional placements, etc.
- non-credit program components; eg. IELP, course practica, concerts, art gallery or museum visits
- travel by faculty, staff, post-doctoral fellows, graduate and undergraduate students to attend conferences and other academic meetings;
- travel by faculty and staff on Brock University business;
- road trips by Brock's Varsity athletic teams and University-supported athletic clubs, and all off-campus athletic activities involving such groups, and
- other extra-curricular off-campus activities that are organized, sanctioned or funded in whole or in part by the University (including, for example, Orientation Week or

Community Connections) and activities that, while organized by students in residence, are expressly approved by the University.

It should be noted that if a student-organized extra-curricular activity receives University sanction or funding (which brings it under the Policy), the University official who provides the sanction or authorizes the financial contribution assumes the responsibilities of Responsible Authority.

This Policy does **not** cover activities over which the University exercises no control and for which it can therefore take no responsibility. Specifically, among others, it does not cover:

- external activities (including consulting) undertaken by faculty, staff or students that are not part of the individual's employment responsibilities or academic program at Brock;
- activities organized exclusively by students or student groups (including but not limited to the BUSU, GSA, and student clubs) without expressed approval, sanction or funding from the University. Such activities would be subject to the Student Event Risk Management Policy; or
- travel or activities of any person who is not a member of the University community as defined below (*e.g.*, a person accompanying a member of the University community traveling to attend a conference would not be considered an authorized volunteer because the accompanying individual is not traveling for the purpose of participating in the off-campus activity – the conference).

## GENERAL RESPONSIBILITY:

Trip planning includes understanding and acknowledging that travel related activities are to be carried out in accord with approved safety policies and standards and applicable legislation; that potential deficiencies in planning and preparation are to be identified and addressed; and that appropriate intervention is to occur during the conduct of an activity when circumstances warrant.

All participants (including students) have a responsibility to prepare themselves in advance of off-campus activities, and to conduct themselves in a healthy, safe and responsible manner throughout the duration of the trip or activity.

The primary responsibility and accountability for safety and risk management in off-campus activities is delegated to those in positions of authority closest to the activity, but with an approval process based on risk. Different levels of oversight may be deemed appropriate for various activities and communities of participants within the University depending on scope, experience, relative risk etc.

Travel activity planners, leaders and participants also have a duty to consult and seek the expertise of others to address risks associated with the activity that fall outside their own areas of understanding.

The University and its members have a responsibility to monitor and maintain a record of the planning and conduct of off-campus activities undertaken by members.

Experience is valuable and the travel and field safety system should include a system for fostering the sharing of positive and negative lessons from past participants and leaders.

## **Risk Assessment**

Off-campus activities can pose varying levels of risk to the participants; such levels are categorized as either **manageable** (including **low-risk** and **higher-risk** activities) or **unmanageable**. For each new field research activity or academic/extra-curricular off-campus activity, the Principal Investigator/Responsible Authority (PI/RA) and the Chair/Director (Person in Authority) must undertake a risk assessment and develop an appropriate TREMP. In the case of solitary field research/academic or extra-curricular activity such as a student engaged in study/work/travel abroad, or study on exchange or on a Letter of Permission, it is the solitary participant who carries out the initial risk assessment, subject to approval.

Risk assessment requires the exercise of good judgment, based on expertise and experience, and, where necessary, consultation with suitably qualified individuals. Risk assessment is a process that involves:

- a. identifying hazards associated with the activity;
- b. analyzing the risk related to the probability, severity and ability to manage each of the hazards; and
- c. determining how to prevent or mitigate the risks effectively.

The extent of advance planning, preparation and approvals required prior to embarking on an off-campus activity is commensurate with the level of risk associated with the activity and the category and experience of the participants. Repetition of an activity in the same or a similar locality may require a lower level of detail in the advance planning, but the level of detail needed in the briefing and training should take into account the experience of the participants (*e.g.*, by the *n*th running of a specific course field trip, the hazards are likely to be well known and the safety plan well developed; nevertheless, the trip and its hazards are new to each successive group of student participants).

In general, Risk Assessments are required for trips or activities that involve:

- 1) students or inexperienced participants
- 2) any international travel
- 3) travel to areas where there exists an elevated risk of environmental or activity based hazard that may impact on the participants or the success of the trip
- 4) travel in excess of 250 km (one way) within Canada

## **Manageable Risk**

### **Low Risk**

An activity is deemed to be of low risk if it entails hazards no greater than those encountered by the participants in their everyday lives. Planning and preparation required for such activities is simple and straightforward, involving 5 key areas: Security; Transportation; Accommodation; Food; Communication/Emergency Response as shown on the TREMP (Appendix 1).

The Principal Investigator or Responsible Authority (PI/RA) is responsible and accountable for making the judgment that an activity falls into the low-risk category as defined here. When in doubt, the PI/RA should consult with the Chair/Director (Person in Authority) and/or seek advice from appropriate experts.

Under normal circumstances, travel within Canada for conferences, seminars, meetings, visits to academic or related institutions (*e.g.*, accredited universities or hospitals, museums, galleries and theatres), local field trips of short duration in an urban setting, clinical placements at accredited institutions in Canada, and domestic travel by varsity athletic teams and athletic clubs are considered activities of low risk and appropriate planning and preparation by the leader(s) and participants is required. The PI/RA completes the TREMP for such activities.

Travel by faculty, staff, post-doctoral fellows, graduate and undergraduate students to the United States for activities of the types listed above normally entails low risk but can be complicated by customs & immigration, legal, security, and medical challenges which warrant greater attention and advance planning.

Travel by members of the above groups to other countries should be evaluated to determine whether it entails low or higher risk. In particular, travel through or to a country or region where unusual conditions such as political instability, medical conditions or a natural disaster are known to exist prior to departure or for which a travel advisory is in effect is deemed to entail higher risk and requires the associated level of advance planning and approval.

For low-risk activities the following should be noted:

- Planning and risk-assessment documentation (*i.e.*, TREMP Appendix 1) must be completed and approved prior to departure.
- The Travel and Field Safety Review Committee (TFSRC) will establish criteria that will assist PI/RA with Chairs/Directors in determining which of the unit's routine off-campus activities are normally considered to entail low risk.
- Advance briefing of participants is required for group activities. The scope and timing of such briefings are expected to reflect the nature of the activity and the experience of the participants. For example, a Department/Centre may determine that it is adequate to have an overview briefing at the beginning of an academic program or course that involves a number of similar field trips, provided that an additional briefing relating to specific activities is given prior to departure on each trip.
- Even though an international activity may be deemed to entail low risk, issues such as supplementary international health insurance, visas, special preparations for participants with disabilities or medical conditions, immunizations prior to departure, and emergency evacuation and communication plans for the activity location should be considered by the PI/RA and all participants.

- Students in all international activities must register with the Office of International Services and participate in the “Up and Away Program” prior to departure.
- Participants should be given the opportunity for an informal debriefing at the conclusion of the activity. At the option of the PI/RA, participants may be asked to complete Feedback/Evaluation Forms. Any participant has the option of completing the form even if all members of the group are not being asked to do so.
- Off-Campus Activity Leaders are required to inform their Department/Centre and OEHS immediately of any critical or non-critical incidents which occur by notifying them by phone (Campus Security after-hours) and completion of the Brock University Injury/Incident report form.
- Off-Campus Activity Leaders must complete a Post-Activity Incident Report upon return from the activity if any critical or non-critical incident occurred.

### **Higher Risk**

An activity is deemed to be of higher risk if it has the potential to expose participants to hazards that are significantly greater than those likely to be encountered in their everyday lives. Planning, preparation, documentation and approvals are required in advance of such activities. Approval may be contingent on additional planning and/or training. NOTE: In light of review of the TREMP, it may transpire that an activity is deemed to entail risks that are unmanageable.

Higher-risk activities cover a wide range. Potential risks may be associated with the activity itself or with ancillary activities such as travel to the site, as well as environmental and health risks that are characteristic of the site. Examples include research or study at industrial or medical facilities which pose health or safety risks; working/traveling in remote regions or regions with natural hazards such as rugged terrain or the potential for avalanches; working/traveling in politically unstable countries or war zones; and travel to countries where additional immunizations and vaccines are required. Any activity that involves travel through or to a country or region for which a travel or health advisory is in effect is deemed to be a higher-risk activity; in some circumstances the risk may be evaluated as unmanageable.

The presence of alcohol presents a number of health, safety, security and legal risks to be managed which may or may not elevate an off-campus event to be classified as higher risk. All trips and events hosted or facilitated by the University must at minimum comply with local laws and regulations and the University Alcohol Policy and be consistent with the supervision levels and other controls in the Student Event Risk Management Policy.

The nationality and/or citizenship of a participant may make travel to or through certain countries of higher risk for that individual. Activity planners (PI/RA) and participants must take this factor into account.

All international activities involving student participants are deemed to fall into the higher-risk category. A full risk assessment and safety planning process must be undertaken for such activities, and undergraduate participants must register with the Office of International Services and participate in the “Up and Away Program” prior to departure.

For higher-risk activities, the following should be noted:



- Planning and risk-assessment documentation (*i.e.*, TRESP Appendix 1) must be completed and approved prior to departure.
- The PI/RA must consult other sources of expertise concerning hazards beyond his/her own knowledge.
- Advance briefing of participants is required for group activities. The scope and timing of such briefings are expected to reflect the nature of the activity and the experience of the participants. Briefing relating to specific activities should be given sufficiently in advance of departure to allow participants to reflect, consult with medical and other advisers and withdraw if warranted.
- Even though an international activity may be deemed to entail low risk, issues such as supplementary international health insurance, visas, special preparations for participants with disabilities or medical conditions, immunizations prior to departure, and emergency evacuation and communication plans for the activity location should be considered by the PI/RA and all participants.
- Undergraduate students participating in international activities must register with the Office of International Services and participate in the “Up and Away Program” prior to departure. Other participants in such activities are encouraged to do so.
- Participants should be given the opportunity for informal debriefing at the conclusion of the activity. At the option of the PI/RA, participants may be asked to complete Feedback/Evaluation Forms. Any participant has the option of completing the form even if all members of the group are not being asked to do so.
- Off-Campus Activity Leaders are required to inform their Department/Centre and OEHS immediately of any critical or non-critical incidents which occur by notifying them by phone (Campus Security after hours) and completion of the Brock University Injury/Incident report form.
- Off-Campus Activity Leaders must complete a Post-Activity Incident Report upon return from the activity if any critical or non-critical incident occurred.

### **Unmanageable Risk**

Following review of the TRESP (Appendix 1), and taking into account the category of the participants, the circumstances and the resources available, an activity may ultimately be deemed to entail unmanageable risk and will not to be approved by the TFSRC.

Activities that might involve unmanageable risk include, for example, travel to war zones, travel to areas with high medical risks, and activities in areas with high risk of natural disasters such as avalanches. Travel and health advisories posted by external agencies such as Foreign Affairs Canada (FAC) and Health Canada should be considered very carefully when assessing whether an activity falls in the higher-risk or unmanageable-risk category.

An activity that involves risks which are manageable for an experienced individual or small group may nevertheless entail unmanageable risk for a large group or inexperienced participants. For example, whereas an experienced individual may be able to avoid being injured by highway traffic at a roadside rock outcrop, it may be unfeasible to safeguard members of a large group in a similar circumstance. The amount of training required or the extent or cost of safety

precautions necessary to overcome the risks associated with a group's size or the inexperience of its members may render the activity's risks unmanageable.

The proponent of an activity that is deemed to entail unmanageable risk may be able to revise the plan and preparation in such a way that the activity's risks are reduced to a manageable level (e.g., by avoiding specific high-risk localities or by controlling the number of participants who visit a hazardous site at any one time).

Solitary field research in remote or hazardous areas may in some circumstances entail unmanageable risk. It is therefore recommended that field research involving particularly hazardous locations or activities should be conducted in groups of two or more and only after a full assessment of the risks and provisions for applicable risk-management procedures have been made.

A researcher who decides, contrary to the University's advice, to engage in an off-campus activity that has been determined to entail unmanageable risk will be asked to sign an acknowledgement that he/she has been advised not to proceed with the activity. Refusal to sign such an acknowledgement will be recorded. Failing to abide by the policies of the University is sanctionable, and absolutely no university-controlled funds, resources or support services may be used for what is essentially a private, independent trip.

In the event a critical incident occurs during a low- or higher-risk activity, the Principal Investigator/Responsible Authority has the responsibility to review (where possible with an Academic Administrator or OEHS) their TREMP and assess whether continuing the activity entails unmanageable risk and therefore it should be terminated. This review and assessment must be completed, in writing, and returned asap to the University, possibly with participant signatures where warranted.

## **ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

1. The individual field researcher, research team member or program participant acknowledges the risks of the particular project/activity and understands their role and responsibilities in the Requirements for Reasonable Care, and confirms these matters in writing to the Chair/Director or equivalent. Individuals will conduct themselves in a healthy, safe and respectful manner, attend and actively participate in all pre-trip education and training; supply and maintain equipment and clothing required in the TREMP; communicate immediately any hazard or concern; Not engage in horseplay, consume illegal substances or act in a way that undermines the security of the group; Comply with this and all other university policies throughout the duration of the trip.
2. The Principal Investigator/Responsible Authority is responsible for:
  - a. approving the composition of the field team, unless a dependent of the Principal Investigator is to be included in the team in which case the composition of the team shall be approved by the Chair/Director or other academic administrator to whom the supervisor reports prior to the field travel;

- b. establishing a clear chain of responsible leadership that is understood by all participants, which is in place at all times and placed on record in writing with the Chair/Director or equivalent prior to the research/activity;
  - c. alerting each individual field researcher, research team member or program participant to the Requirements for Reasonable Care and of the risks of the particular field project prior to the research/activity; and
  - d. obtaining the written confirmation required in section 1. above prior to the research/activity commencing.
3. The Dean/Chair/Director of the respective Faculty/Department/Centre is responsible to disseminate, implement and enforce the University Policy on Travel and Field Safety and to require its diligent application.
4. The Central Administration, specifically the Office of Human Resources, Environment, Health and Safety, the Office of Research Services, the Offices of the Vice-Provost and Associate Vice-Presidents Academic and Student Services, the Office of the Vice-President Research and the Faculty Dean(s) are jointly responsible for the implementation and application of the policy within the University, and shall;
  - a. inform annually all faculty members and other concerned parties about this policy and the procedures by which it will be implemented;
  - b. provide an on-going program of education and skills training for faculty, staff and students engaged in travel and field work, and
  - c. report annually to the Senate and the Board on the application of the policy and issues arising from its administration.

More specifically, in a coordinated and collaborative manner, the above administrative units, have the following responsibilities:

- a. The Travel and Field Safety Review Committee is responsible for monitoring compliance with this policy. In addition to monitoring, it is the committee's role to provide expert advice, review assessments & TREP's and provide approvals where appropriate.
- b. Where graduate student thesis and project research requires field research, the Faculty of Graduate Studies is responsible for ensuring that graduate students engaged in field research activities are fully informed of their obligations under this policy and are fully aware of the potential health, safety and/or security risks before agreeing to their participation in the research program or project.
- c. Where faculty research requires field research, the Office of Research Services is responsible, with the Office of Environment, Health and Safety and respective Deans,

Chairs and Directors, for ensuring that faculty researchers are fully informed of their obligations under this policy and have assessed the potential for health, safety and/or security risks and planned and acted appropriately to mitigate them before embarking on the research project.

- d. The Office of the Vice-Provost and Associate Vice-President, Academic, through the Faculty Deans is responsible for the application of the project to sanctioned undergraduate travel, field trips and field research programs.
- e. The Office of Environment, Health and Safety is responsible for providing on-going education and training programs for University faculty, staff and students in travel and field safety. Such programs shall be designed in collaboration with the TFSRC, University faculty researchers and/or external experts as required and as appropriate.
- f. The Office of Environment, Health and Safety is responsible for receiving, investigating and reporting on critical and non-critical incident reports (e.g., accident reports). In the instance of a critical incident, OEHS, with the PI/RA and academic administrator, will participate in a review and assessment of the feasibility of trip continuation.
- g. The Office of the Vice-President Research and the Office of Research Services are responsible for monitoring faculty members' compliance with this policy and the policies and procedures of sponsors that may affect field research safety.
- h. The Office of the Provost and Vice-President, Academic, through Human Resources, Environment, Health and Safety will inform all new faculty appointments of the provisions of this policy.

#### Chain of Command

#### **Travel and Field Safety Review Committee**

- a. ensuring that the Travel and Field Safety Policy is in place and disseminated widely;
- b. establishing procedures to:
  - i. review the assessment of the risk associated with the nature of the travel and field work proposed, in accordance with the guidelines provided.
  - ii. establish the level of risk, upon the advice and guidance of the Environment, Health and Safety Research and Academic Safety Officer, where appropriate;
  - iii. approve and sign the TREMP (Appendix 1);
  - iv. file a copy of the TREMP (Appendix 1) with the Environment, Health and Safety Office, as appropriate; and
  - v. monitor compliance with this policy across the University.
- c. Reviewing/approving/recommending changes or modifications to the Policy, Risk Assessment Tools, Education & Training or Evaluation mechanisms.

#### **Office of Environment, Health and Safety**

The Office of Environment Health and Safety is responsible to:

- a. Provide advice and counsel in the implementation of the policy in the context of hazards, controls, health, safety, insurance and risk management including liaising with regulators, insurers and legal representatives where necessary
- b. Serve as a resource to the Travel and Field Safety Review Committee and the University community with respect to the implementation of the Travel and Field Safety Policy
- c. Filing and maintaining records of travel and field safety planning for 7 years
- d. Monitoring, investigating and reporting on associated incidents
- e. Provide Education and Training to support the TFSP, eg relevant workshops, First Aid/CPR, Wilderness training, etc.

### **Dean, Chair/Director**

The unit Head is responsible for:

- a. advising members of the Faculty of the provisions of this policy; and
- b. advising members of the Department/Centre of the provisions of this policy;
- c. with the PI/RA identifying an individual to serve as the contact on a regular basis and in the case of emergency;
- d. reviewing and approving all field activities under their jurisdiction.

Additionally the Dean will be responsible for enforcement, and issues around the implementation and use of this policy.

### **Principal Investigator/Responsible Authority**

The primary responsibility for compliance with this policy lies with the Principal Investigator (for research activities) or the Responsible Authority (for academic and extra-curricular activities). The Principal Investigator is defined as the person with direct responsibility for a specific research project, including supervision of a graduate or undergraduate student thesis project, a post-doctoral research project, or a project carried out under a research or service agreement. The Responsible Authority is defined as the person with direct responsibility for a specific academic/extra-curricular activity. Course instructors, exchange coordinators or field trip leaders are examples of a Responsible Authority.

In particular, the Principal Investigator/Responsible Authority is responsible for the following:

- a. identifying and documenting the health, safety and/or security risks associated with the field research project/academic activity, including risks of potential natural hazards, assault, robbery, kidnapping or other forms of personal injury, and developing a TRESP to avoid or mitigate those risks
- b. approving the composition of the field team. The University will not normally approve dependents of team members and the PI/RA as members of a research team;
- c. in consultation with the team members and using the risk assessment criteria outlined above, determine the specific health and safety hazards and the level of risk associated with them for the particular field project/academic activity;

- d. identifying and implementing appropriate controls and safety procedures, including methods to deal with any emotional or psychological distress issues created in the field research environment, eg. sensitivity training maybe required when entering poverty stricken areas or war zones;
- e. providing for (i) a pre-trip planning session(s), which includes a briefing on the specific nature of the trip, its challenges and precautions which must be taken, (ii) an in-country orientation session and (iii) a post-trip debriefing session, if appropriate.
- f. ensuring that all participants have undergone any necessary medical pre-screening and have received medical advice related to travel, immunization, prophylaxis, etc.
- g. ensuring that the appropriate controls and safety procedures are implemented, including the provision or use of protective equipment, procedures, and training, to deal with the risks as far as is reasonably practicable;
- h. establishing a clear chain of responsible team leadership that is understood by all participants;
- i. Developing a robust Communications/Emergency Response Plan and ensuring that communications procedures and contact numbers for regular and emergency circumstances are provided to the department/program contact person.
- j. ensuring that each individual field researcher, research team member or program participant is aware of the provisions of this policy, the risks of the particular project, and the appropriate controls and safety procedures in place;
- k. ensuring that each team member/program participant is made aware of the specific risks associated with the research/activity and the specific requirements which need to be met for participating in the research (e.g.: specific safety training and training in the use of fire arms or equipment, visas, immunizations, health insurance requirements) and obtaining the written, voluntary detailed informed consent from each participant or obtain a completed, signed waiver from all volunteer participants in the research/activity, and;
- l. maintaining written documentation of the steps taken above, including the completion of the Trip Risk and Emergency Management Plan in sufficient time to be forwarded to the Travel and Field Safety Review Committee or Faculty/Administrative signing authority well in advance of the departure date.

### **Activity Leader**

The Activity Leader may be the Principal Investigator/Responsible Authority or may, in the absence of the PI/RA, be another member of the team, as designated by the PI/RA.

In particular, the Activity Leader is responsible for:

- a. identifying and documenting the health, safety and/or security risks associated with the research/activity and undertaking steps to avoid or mitigate those risks;
- b. ensuring implementation of the controls and safety procedures established by the PI/RA;
- c. ensuring that the team members use the appropriate safety equipment and follow appropriate safety procedures and medical precautions;
- d. conducting ongoing risk assessments during the travel/research and reporting any new hazards to the PI/RA;

- e. dealing with and resolving any environment, health or safety concerns which arise in the field;
- f. maintaining regular contact with the PI/RA and/or departmental contact wherever/whenever possible; and
- g. informing the PI/RA and departmental contact and OEHS of all substantive incidents that occur in the field in a timely fashion

### **Activity Members**

Activity members are defined as all other team members, other than those previously defined and include students, staff and volunteers.

Each member of the research team/activity participant is responsible for:

- a. familiarizing themselves and acknowledging the risks of the particular project/activity to their health, safety and/or security and, with the PI/RA and Team Leader, identify and implement methods for avoiding or mitigating those risks;
- b. using the appropriate protective equipment provided or required and following the procedures established by the Principal Investigator;
- c. obtaining the necessary training and skills required to conduct the research/activity in a safe and responsible manner;
- d. obtaining personal medical advice related to travel, immunization, prophylaxis, etc. from Student Health Services, a physician or travel clinic.
- e. understanding the General Requirements outlined in the attached Guidelines;
- f. working safely and in a manner to prevent harm to himself/herself or to others;
- g. providing evidence of a satisfactory state of health and immunization status;
- h. providing information of and demonstrating adequate health insurance coverage;
- i. providing written consent of the above to the Principal Investigator/Responsible Authority;
- j. reporting any identified hazards to the Team Leader or Principal Investigator/Responsible Authority; and
- k. reporting all incidents or concerns to the Team Leader in a timely fashion.

### **Solitary Travel and Field Research**

Solitary travel and field activities in distant or remote areas require special care and attention to and assessment of risks. In some cases, field research involving particularly hazardous locations or activities should be conducted in groups of two or more and only after a full assessment of the risks and available controls and safety procedures has been made.

In circumstances where field research necessitates solitary fieldwork (e.g., specific forms of anthropological or scientific research), the Solitary Field Researcher assumes the responsibilities of Team Leader and Team Member. The Solitary Field Researcher is also responsible for preparing the travel itinerary, completing and submitting the TREMP (Appendix 1). A method of regular communication, with the home Department/Centre should be implemented, including steps to follow if a scheduled contact is not made.

In some extreme cases, e.g., where the proposed field research will occur in a highly unsettled political environment, the University may recommend that a solitary researcher not participate in a research activity at a particular time and/or may decline to authorise the research under the

University's risk management policies. Under these circumstances, it is the responsibility of the researcher to assess whether he/she will undertake the field research as a private, independent traveller at her/his own risk.

A researcher who decides, contrary to the University's advice, to engage in a field research activity that has been determined to entail unmanageable risk will be asked to sign an acknowledgement that he/she has been advised not to proceed with the activity. Refusal to sign such an acknowledgement will be recorded and placed in file. Failing to abide by the policies of the University is sanctionable, and absolutely no university-controlled funds, resources or support services may be used for what is essentially a private, independent trip.

### **Solitary Academic Off-campus Activity**

In circumstances where an academic/extra-curricular off campus activity involves a solitary individual (eg. a student on exchange, study abroad or professional placement/practicum) the participant in the activity assumes the responsibility of the Activity Leader and Activity Member. The solitary participant is also responsible for preparing the travel itinerary, completing and submitting the TREMP (Appendix 1). A method of regular communication, with the home Department/Centre, should be implemented, including steps to follow if a scheduled contact is not made.

A participant who decides, contrary to the University's advice, to engage in an off-campus activity that has been determined to entail unmanageable risk will be asked to sign an acknowledgement that he/she has been advised not to proceed with the activity. Refusal to sign such an acknowledgement will be recorded and placed on file. Failing to abide by the policies of the University is sanctionable, and absolutely no university-controlled funds, resources or support services may be used for what is essentially a private, independent trip.

### **Refusal to Participate**

All participants have a responsibility to exercise judgment and common sense in respect or their own safety, taking into account their capabilities and the circumstances at that time.

Every individual field researcher/program participant has the legal right to refuse, at any time, to participate in any activity that he/she feels may endanger his/her health or safety or that of another person.

Any participant who is concerned that appropriate safety preparations have not been made, or that an off-campus activity is not being conducted with due regard to safety, has an obligation to bring the concern to the attention of the Team Leader, PI/RA, Chair/Director or any other University official (Dean, Associate Vice-President, Human Resources, Provost and Vice-President, Academic) as soon as possible after the concern arises.



## **Appendices**

### **Appendix 1 – Trip Risk and Emergency Management Plan (TREMP)**

EHS Injury/Incident Form

Post activity reports on incidents, evaluations, etc.

Waiver/Informed consent form template

### **Relevant Legislation and Policies (List is not complete!)**

- Occupational Health and Safety Policy <http://www.brocku.ca/oehs/policies>
- Safety in the Sciences Manual <http://www.brocku.ca/oehs/safety/index.php>
- Policy on Working Alone <http://www.brocku.ca/oehs/policies>
- Travel and Related Expense Policy <http://www.brocku.ca/finance/infopolicies>
- Student Code of Conduct and Disciplinary Procedures in non-academic matters  
[http://www.brocku.ca/sdc/discipline/policies\\_conduct.php](http://www.brocku.ca/sdc/discipline/policies_conduct.php)
- Occupational Health and Safety Act  
[http://www.e-laws.gov.on.ca/html/statutes/english/elaws\\_statutes\\_90o01\\_e.htm](http://www.e-laws.gov.on.ca/html/statutes/english/elaws_statutes_90o01_e.htm)
- Student Event Risk Management Policy
- Campus Alcohol Policy
- Academic Field Trip Risk Assessment and Planning Record Form
- Travel and Field Safety Manual (in development)
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### **Policy Review**

To be formulated