

Student Off-Campus Activity Travel and Safety Policy	
Effective Date	January 2024
Review Date	January 2027
Approval Authority	Vice-President (Finance & Administration)
Authority	Deans of Humanities & Social Sciences, Director of Student Services

1 Reason for Policy

This policy is designed to ensure that all persons engaged in off-campus activities (curricular and co-curricular) on behalf of the University incorporate appropriate preventative measures to: identify and reduce risks to themselves, their colleagues, and the University; to aid in the prevention of accidents; and to maintain emergency plans to activate should accidents or serious incidents occur.

Activity Approvers, Activity Organizers, and Team Leaders have the obligation to exercise due diligence in all aspects of the planning, booking, preparation, training, and execution of the activity. St. Thomas University must take reasonable precautions, considering the particular circumstances of each activity, to prevent injuries or accidents during activities and provide adequate care to participants in the event of an accident or illness.

2 Policy Highlights

- There is pre-approval process (Initial Risk Assessment and Application form) for off-campus travel activities. (See 5.b (ii), 7.1, 7.2 and 7.3)
- No travel or accommodations can be booked until the activity has been approved through the pre-approval process. (See 5.b (iii), 7.4 and 7.5)
- Local and Canadian travel must have all documentation completed a minimum of 3 business days in advance of the event, and for international activities it must be completed within 10-business days. (See 7.6)
- Faculty and staff cannot use their own vehicles to transport participants. (see 6.a (iii))
- An activity review form must be completed within one month of the activity, series of activities, or course being completed. (See 7.10)

3 Scope:

- a) This policy applies to all student travel as part of University activities which take place off campus, with the exclusion of travel and events organized by the Athletics Department.
- b) Student Clubs and Societies are ratified by the Students' Union, not the University. As such, travel by student clubs, even when partially sponsored by the University, falls outside of this policy.

- c) Students travelling on their own, or of their own interest, to academic or co-curricular events such as conferences, even when partially sponsored by the University, will be travelling as independent individuals, not within this policy.
- d) This policy is not intended to include negligible risk activities that can reasonably be considered to fall within the scope of students' everyday lives. For example: traveling independently within city limits for course work; visiting a local establishment such as an art gallery; attending a concert; etc.
- e) This policy and its related procedures are not intended to limit or amend provisions of any collective agreement, or any contractual agreement entered into by University faculty members, staff, or student groups. The policy is designed to complement related University policies.

4 Roles

- a) Activity Approvers: Deans and the Director of Student Services
- b) Activity Organizer: Faculty or staff member principally organizing the activity
- c) Team Leader: Faculty or staff member who is accompanying the excursion, but who may be different from the Activity Organizer
- d) Participants: Students taking part in the activity

5 Responsibilities

- a) **Activity Approvers** (Deans and Director of Student Services or their designates) are responsible for:
 - I. Communicating the Policy and associated procedures to potential Activity Organizers and other interested parties (e.g., Chairs and Directors, Faculty and Staff Members).
 - II. Reviewing and approving Initial Activity Forms, including any feedback or relevant communication with the Activity Organizer.
 - III. Receiving, reviewing, approving, and storing all completed pre-departure information (health, itinerary, waivers, safety plans, emergency contacts, etc.)
 - IV. Once notified of an accident or incident, the Activity Approver will ensure emergency contacts are notified and advise the Director of Facilities Management, the Director of Communications, the VP Finance and Administration, and the VP Academic and Research of the incident and forward reports as soon as they become available.
- b) **Activity Organizers** are responsible for:
 - I. Taking all appropriate steps to ensure the safety of all participants throughout the activity;
 - II. Completing the Initial Risk Assessment and Application form.
 - III. Making necessary revisions to ensure preapproval before going ahead with travel bookings, etc.
 - IV. Completing, and ensuring participants complete, pre-travel documentation and (where required) training as per and within the timelines of the procedures below;
 - V. Approving the composition of the leadership team and roster of participants;

- VI. Ensuring each participant receives appropriate site-specific training, including information on the known risks and physical hazards of the area in which the activity is to be carried out;
- VII. Creating an itinerary with specific regulations for down/free time, and communicating these to students.

c) **Team Leaders** are responsible for:

- I. Ensuring implementation of the controls and safety procedures established by this policy and the Activity Organizer;
- II. Ensuring that all activity participants are aware of risks at the activity site and use appropriate safety equipment and follow appropriate safety procedures and medical precautions;
- III. Conducting on-going risk assessments during the activity and reporting significant new hazards to the Activity Organizer and Activity Approver;
- IV. Addressing or resolving any safety concerns that arise in the field;
- V. In the event of an accident or incident, as soon as safely possible, ensure that the Activity Approver is notified of the accident/incident.
- VI. Complete the *Accident/Incident Report* as soon as possible and forward it to the appropriate Activity Organizer and Activity Approver.

d) **Student participants** are responsible for:

- I. Understanding the parameters of the activity and the safety procedures related to it;
- II. Completing all required pre-activity forms and supplying relevant information and documents.
- III. Completing required training (where relevant) and using the appropriate protective equipment provided;
- IV. If traveling abroad, registering with: <https://travel.gc.ca/travelling/registration>;
- V. Working safely and in a manner to prevent harm to themselves or others; and following the guidelines set out by the Activity Organizer, including regulations regarding down time and free time.
- VI. Reporting any identified hazards to the Activity Organizer or Team Leader in a timely fashion;
- VII. Monitoring and responding appropriately to communications from the Activity Organizer or Team Leader(s).

a) The **Vice-President (Finance and Administration)** is responsible for:

- I. the general communication, administration, interpretation, and review of this policy.

6 Travel and Activity Safety Requirements

a) **Transportation:**

- I. When an activity occurs in or near Fredericton, it is recommended that students use public transit, or find their own way to the activity. When finding their own transportation to an activity, the activity will begin at the activity location, and not include the travel portion. Students cannot be required to drive each other as part of the official activity, as this places undue liability on student participants.

- II. For activities outside of Fredericton, a professional bus charter is the preferred method of land transportation.
- III. For small groups, the Activity Organizer or Team Leaders may rent a vehicle to drive; **Activity Organizers or Team Leaders cannot use privately owned vehicles to transport students to and from activities.** Rentals for group travel cannot be a 15-passenger van. Once the activity has received pre-approval (the initial activity form is approved), arrangements for vehicle rentals can be made through the Office Coordinator for Facilities Management.
- IV. Only vehicles equipped with winter tires can be used for travel from November 15th to April 1st. (Note: for buses, “winter tires” mean tires specifically designed for winter driving conditions).
- V. All participants must travel as a part of the group and be accompanied by the Activity Organizer or Team Leader. However, if when traveling, a participant is denied entry into the USA or another country, they are responsible for informing the Activity Organizer and Team Leaders immediately and for organizing a drive or the next available flight returning to Fredericton. The Activity Organizer and Team Leaders should continue on with the group while the person who was denied entry makes their way home. In such cases the student is responsible for their transportation costs, and the price of the original ticket purchased on their behalf.
- VI. Participants seeking to travel separately from the group or extend their trips on their own, may request permission from the Activity Organizer a minimum of two weeks prior to departure. Participants electing to travel separately acknowledge that during their separate travel, they are not part of the University activity, and the University is not responsible or liable for them. Any costs associated with changing flights, etc. will be borne by the student.
- VII. Despite the legalization of cannabis in Canada, cannabis remains an illegal and controlled substance in the United States of America and other international destinations. Participants must not travel with cannabis or any other controlled substance that may hinder their ability to travel with the group.

b) Lodging

- VIII. Activity Organizers will book appropriate, reputable, and safe group lodging. Students will never be required to share a bed; Activity Organizers and Team Leaders cannot share rooms with each other or with students.

c) General:

- I. During the activity, all participants’ behaviour is subject to the Policy on Non-Academic Misconduct and all local laws.
- II. The University will purchase travel insurance for all participants on international trips.
- III. All bookings, especially air travel, must include trip cancellation insurance.
- IV. For international travel or overnight stays, Activity Organizers, Team Leaders, and students are responsible for carrying proper identification (including passports and relevant visas for international trips), their health card, and evidence of additional medical insurance.
- V. Approval for travel to international destinations will be reviewed in relation to the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade’s risk rating. Destinations with ratings of 1 and 2 are permissible destinations. No travel will be approved to areas in Level 3 or 4. <<https://travel.gc.ca/travelling/advisories>>
- VI. Activity Organizers or Team Leaders must consider communication requirements during their travel and activities and make appropriate arrangements. This may

include purchasing a travel plan for their cellular phone, renting a phone or satellite phone, etc.

- VII. Activity Organizers will create an itinerary that includes activity-specific regulations for participants during down time/free time.
- VIII. If at any time during the activity, at the discretion of the Activity Organizer or Team Leader, a student participant has violated activity regulations, put themselves or others at risk, or violated other regulations, the Activity Organizer or Team Leader may require the student to return to St. Thomas/Fredericton. The Activity Organizer or Team leader will arrange and pay for the travel, the cost of which will be charged to the student's account with the University.

d) Right to Refuse Participation or Rescind Approval:

- I. Upon reviewing the context, details, and risks of the activity, participants may refuse to participate.
- II. At any point after approval has been granted (including during the duration of the activity), new information or changing circumstances may lead the Activity Approvers to rescind their approval and cancel or recall the group/activity.
- III. Inclement weather or other circumstances may also lead an activity host or transportation provider to cancel the activity.

e) Risk Identification and Analysis:

- I. The identification and analysis of risks is the primary responsibility of the Activity Organizer, who may consult the Activity Approver, Director of Facilities Management, host, transportation provider, or other source to better identify and analyse potential risks.
- II. Risks, for the purpose of this policy, are meant to be those beyond what a student would typically encounter in their normal academic participation on campus or in everyday life.
- III. The Activity Organizer must consider the site and context of the activity, that may create difficulties for participants, including but not limited to sexism, racism, homophobia, ableism, etc.

f) Accessibility:

- I. The Activity Organizer will take all reasonable steps to ensure that all aspects of the activity are accessible to participants. This includes seeking relevant information from participants in advance, and working with transportation providers, hosts, Student Accessibility Services, and others to create solutions.

7 Procedures:

Activity Organizers seeking to plan an activity in accordance with this policy must follow the steps as outlined below:

- 1) Activity Organizers will first complete the online form: Initial Risk Assessment and Application, which includes:
 - a) Activity Organizer Information
 - b) Activity Information (travel, dates, activity outline, etc.)
 - c) Funding sources
 - d) Number of participants
 - e) Identified Risks

- 2) This form should be completed as early as possible in the process, normally 2 months prior to any international activity and 1 month prior to domestic activities. Note that this form represents a 'pre-approval process' and no bookings can be completed at this point, as the activity has not yet received initial approval.
- 3) The form will be forwarded automatically to the appropriate Activity Approver.
- 4) The Activity Approver will review the form and may approve, deny, or request updates to the form. This will automatically send an email to the Activity Organizer with the Activity Approver's decision and next steps.
- 5) If provided Initial Approval, the Activity Organizer will be prompted to complete the next steps in the process, which include:
 - a) Booking travel.
 - b) Sending forms and waivers to all participants, and ensuring that all participants complete the appropriate forms.
 - c) Developing and submitting an itinerary.
 - d) Coordinating any required training or pre-departure sessions.
- 6) After all the steps above are complete, the Activity Organizer will submit the package to the Activity Approver for final review and approval.
 - a) For activities within Canada, this process must be completed at least 3 business days prior to travel.
 - b) For international activities, this process must be completed at least 10 business days prior to travel.
- 7) During the activity, the Activity Organizer and/or Team Leader must have access to (in either hard or electronic format) key health, insurance, passport, and emergency contact information for all participants.
- 8) In the event of an accident or incident and where appropriate, the Activity Organizer/ Team Leader will notify the appropriate Activity Approver as soon as feasibly possible of the situation and steps being taken to address it.
- 9) When the Activity Approver is notified of an accident or incident, they will ensure emergency contacts are notified and advise the Director of Facilities Management, the Director of Communications, the VP Finance and Administration, and the VP Academic and Research of the incident and forward reports from the Activity Organizers/Team Leaders as soon as they become available.
- 10) Within one month of the activity, series of activities, or course ending, the Activity Organizer must complete an activity review form.