SETTING UP AN ACADEMIC COURSE OR FIELD TRIP THAT WILL TAKE STUDENTS OUT-OF-COUNTRY

Where to start?

The International Centre’s approach to working with students to develop study/work/travel abroad options is:

- to design the best possible program for their needs;
- to stress individual research; and
- to provide quality support services for students including an accessible and current resource library, volunteer support, information programs, international activities, advising sessions, pre-departure briefings and re-entry support.

Underlying this approach are two principles that assist in managing risk and providing for a safe and healthy sojourn out-of-country:

- quality support services for students are one of the best means of managing risk for study abroad programs; and
- when the responsibility for managing the risks of study abroad from the outset of the process is shared through a partnership between students and the institution, the students are able to make informed decisions in the field as to their own health and safety and to become ambassadors for Queen’s and Canada.

Some hints to assist you when setting up your program!

This information sheet has been developed to assist in the development of new courses, programs and field trips that will take students out-of-country. When designing and planning an academic course or field trip that includes taking a group of students out-of-country for a period of time, the following steps should be considered:

Administration:

- Are there clear, concise promotional materials available 6 months in advance of the start of the program?
- Are the application materials clear and concise giving notice that a waiver will be required by Queen’s and offering the students an opportunity to disclose any special needs that they may have?
- Have the promotional materials been prepared with reference to existing materials for other Queen’s field study programs?
- Have the materials been reviewed by the various offices that will be involved in supporting the program?
- If there are course requirements for the program, are they laid out clearly in the application materials?
- Does the information describe in detail the process of applying for the program, the criteria for being selected, and the responsibilities that the student must meet if admitted and wishing to receive credit for the course e.g. Applying for a Letter of Permission?
Course requirements:
- Have course descriptions been prepared?
- Has the form of instruction (e.g. lab, seminar, tutorial, etc.) been determined?
- How will participants be graded?
- If it is proposed that academic credit be offered for the completion of the course, have the course materials been submitted and approved by the appropriate Departmental and Faculty committees?

Accommodations and non-academic needs:
- Have accommodations been secured?
- Do accommodations meet the standards and expectations of participants?
- Are these described accurately in the publicity?
- Will recreation facilities be available to participants?
- Have all costs/expenses been determined and have participants been informed of such?
- Is the process for paying for the program laid out clearly in the application materials?
- Will support services be available to participants with special needs, or to those who encounter difficulties?

Relationship with other institutions:
- Will your group be using the facilities of another institution?
- Are the facilities at the host institution adequate for the course requirements (will participants have access to necessary resources, computers, etc.)?
- Is there any previous relationship between the institution and Queen’s?
- Will matters of curriculum and teaching be the concern of Queen’s faculty members, or of another institution (if the latter, is the quality comparable to that of Queen’s)?
- Are there issues (e.g. academic, safety) re. the quality of the partner institution?

Indemnity and other liability concerns:
- In the case of arrangements not made or services not provided by Queen’s, has the university been indemnified of responsibility, if for some reason they are not supplied to the satisfaction of participant(s)?
- Has legal advice been sought with respect to any indemnification agreement?
- Have the students been notified in the publicity and on the application form that they will be required to sign a waiver?

Emergency Support Program and Evacuation Plan:
- Have the students been informed that they will need to take part in a pre-departure orientation program?
- Has a Program Emergency Contact been identified to ensure the International Centre receives the information on all participants, monitors the program and submits the incident report upon completion?
- Are there resource people who can contribute to a site-specific briefing?
- Has their been a site visit in order to determine the level of services offered and the various risks specific to the location?
- How are the students being made aware of these risks?
- Are plans in place for response to potential emergencies?
- In the case of extreme emergency, is there a plan in place to evacuate all participants from the area (form available at the International Centre)?