

Dear International Learning Participant,

In preparation for your upcoming international travel, the Office of International Activities presents this pre-departure information specifically related to international travel safety and risk management. The objective of this briefing is to provide you with the tools and the resources so that you can draw up your own contingency plans.

You will review the below information on your own. A meeting with the staff of the International Activities Office is not necessary, unless you had specific concerns that you would like to discuss in person. If you had any questions, please feel free to direct your inquiries to Ms. Miyuki Arai, International Activities Office, at mobility.international@smu.ca.

International travel is never risk free regardless of your destination or past travel experience. It is extremely important that you are aware of the risks associated with your travel and that you take responsibility to mitigate those risks, so your travels are well-planned and safe and that your experience overseas will be successful.

Some of the websites referred in this guide are for Canadian citizens. If you travel on a non-Canadian passport, please consult the foreign affairs department of your home country.

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During your travel, it is important that you keep your family and the University informed of your whereabouts and well-being. When an event (e.g. earthquakes, political unrest, etc.) happens overseas, it is difficult to assess the situation on the ground from the media coverage we receive in Canada or elsewhere. Therefore, it is vital that you keep in contact with your family and the University (mobility.international@smu.ca) whenever necessary.

Upon return, please do let us (mobility.international@smu.ca) know of your safe arrival back home.

I hope your trip will be safe and fruitful! It will take some time after your arrival in a new country to gain the true sense of security. Use your sound judgment and do whatever necessary to stay safe.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions.

Contact information:

Ms Miyuki Arai

Project Manager-International Mobility

The Office of International Activities (**IAO**), Saint Mary's University

923 Robie Street, Halifax NS B3H 3C3, Canada

Tel: 1 902 496 8725 Fax: 1 902 420 5530 E-mail: mobility.international@smu.ca

The International Activities Office is located in the Oaks Building:

Campus map: <http://www.smu.ca/documents/campus-map.pdf> (far right, marked "O")

Part I: Review and Research

You are introduced to a number of websites below. Please review all of the sites in order to get a comprehensive view on travel issues and to identify any areas you need to investigate further to meet your own individual needs.

◆ Travel Safety and Advice

○ The Government of Canada Travel Resources

- <http://travel.gc.ca/travelling/advisories> (Travel Report – once you chose a country, see all information under each tab: Advisories, Security, Entry/exit requirements, Health, Laws & Culture, Natural disasters & Climate, Assistance)
- <http://travel.gc.ca/travelling/health-safety> (Travel Health and Safety)
- <http://travel.gc.ca/travelling/documents/travel-insurance> (Travel Insurance)
- <http://travel.gc.ca/assistance> (Assistance Abroad)
- <http://travel.gc.ca/assistance/emergency-info> (Emergency info)
- <http://travel.gc.ca/assistance/emergency-info/consular/general> (Consular Services: what they can do and cannot do)

○ Before You Go and Checklists, DFAIT

<http://travel.gc.ca/travelling/publications/travellers-checklist>

○ The Government of Canada Mobile Web App

<http://travel.gc.ca/mobile>

○ The Government of Canada Safe Travel Planner

<http://travel.gc.ca/travelling/safe-travel-planner/intro>

Consular Services of the Foreign Affairs and International Trade Canada and Passport Canada present this *Safe Travel Planner*. This site is originally intended for travel counsellors who provide travel advice for their clients, but all the information is well applicable to SMU travelers. To start this interactive Planner, click on “What You Will Learn” which appears at the top of the image, and follow the contents outlined in the right hand side panel.

Tip: in reviewing the information, keep the following commonly asked questions in mind:

- Q. Where is the Canadian government office nearest to where I’m going?
- Q. In emergencies (e.g. war, civil unrest, a natural disaster, etc.), can Consular Services assist Canadians in arranging an evacuation? Is there a charge?
- Q. Where in the Travel Reports can I find information about visa/entry requirements?
- Q. What are good discussion topics when meeting someone in the destination country?
- Q. What do I need to remember about bringing medications?

At the end of the Safe Travel Planner, test your knowledge by taking the Certification Assessment. (This is for your own use, and do not worry about continuing with the Travel Counsellor Certification program or informing us of your score.)

○ Advice for female traveler, DFAIT

http://www.voyage.gc.ca/publications/woman-guide_voyager-feminin-eng.asp

(Part I: Review and Research, Cont'd)

- Registration of Canadians Abroad, Government of Canada (for Canadian citizens*)
<http://travel.gc.ca/travelling/registration>

This registration service is provided for Canadians so that the Canadian consular office can contact and assist you in an emergency in a foreign country and/or inform you of a family emergency at home. If you are a Canadian citizen, do register on this website.

*If you travel on a non-Canadian passport, please refer to consular services offered by your home country.

◆ Country-Specific Information

Choose your destination country in the following websites.

- **Travel Reports and Warning, DFAIT**
<http://travel.gc.ca/travelling/advisories>
- **Country Briefings, The Economist**
<http://www.economist.com/topics/>
- **The World Factbook, CIA**
<https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/>
- **Destinations, Lonely Planet**
<http://www.lonelyplanet.com/>

◆ Culture

- **Country Insights, Centre for Intercultural Learning**
http://www.international.gc.ca/cil-cai/country_insights-apercus_pays/countryinsights-apercusays.aspx?lang=eng
- **On-Line Cultural Training Resource for Study Abroad, University of the Pacific, USA**
<http://www2.pacific.edu/sis/culture/>

Part II: Your Risk Management Strategy

Based on the advice and information you learned in **Part I** above, you will now draft your own risk management strategies. For each identified risk and hazard, you must have 1) plans to lower/mitigate the risks and 2) contingencies for how to minimize the damage when you encounter the risk.

It is not possible to come up with all of “what-if” scenarios, but the more prepared you are the better off you will be in dealing with any given situation. Contingency planning is key.

For your own benefit and safety, do your best to complete the Risk Exercise Worksheet (attached at the end of this document, 2 pages). You do not need to submit the completed worksheet to the International Activities Office, but if you e-mail it to Miyuki Arai at mobility.international@smu.ca, we would be more than happy to review it and provide feedback. Do take the completed exercise with you and refer to it during your sojourn overseas.

Do you need ideas for what could go wrong? Some of the common and serious problems you may encounter while overseas are:

“What if I lost my passport?”

“What if I got ill but don’t know where to receive medical treatment or cannot explain my situation in another language?”

“What if I was asked to go out with friends but don’t know how safe it would be?”

“What if my money and credit cards were stolen?”

“How do I replace debit or credit cards while away?”

“What if my luggage got lost and I don’t have any change of clothes and other essentials?”

“What if I was walking by a crowd of people and got arrested for unknown reasons?”

“How can I contact the Canadian government office (or the office of your home country, if not Canadian) for emergencies?”

“What if an emergency happened at home and need to return home right away?”

Use the information from **Part I** as well as the following link to come up with strategies that are appropriate in your context:

-Country Travel Advice and Advisories – FAQ <http://travel.gc.ca/travelling/advisories/faq>

-Emergency info <http://travel.gc.ca/assistance/emergency-info>

Part III: Forms and Travel Information to Submit to Saint Mary's University prior to Departure

As part of the University's risk management services, you are asked to submit information and forms about your travel prior to departure. Two to three weeks prior to your departure date, please pass in the following to the International Activities Office in person at the Oaks building, by e-mail with attachments of the scanned documents, or by fax – see the contact information on the first page.

The documents you are asked to submit are:

- a. The Travel Registration Form, completed (see the last page of this Guide)**
- b. Copy of your passport (pages with your photo)**
- c. Copy of your flight/travel itinerary**
- d. Risk Exercise Worksheet, completed (optional)**
- e. The waiver form*, signed**

*Notes about the waiver form:

Saint Mary's University Program Participants are asked to sign a "Program Agreement and Release of Liability, Assumption of Risks and Indemnity Agreement" or also known as the "waiver" before participating in an overseas activity.

"What is the waiver form?"

The waiver is made of several components:

- Preamble
 - Brief description* of the program and anticipated results
 - Updates, warnings, recommendations, and issues of safety & security found in the Government of Canada Travel Report
 - Acceptance of risks and hazards as a condition of participation in the international activity.
- Program Agreement
 - Participant's responsibilities
 - Confirmation of review of the Pre-departure Briefing Guide (i.e. **Part I** & **Part II** above) and of the [Travel Reports and Warnings](#) for the destination/transit country
- Release of Liability, Assumption of Risks and Indemnity Agreement
- Signature of participant and witness

"Where do I get the waiver form?"

Each waiver is customized to include specific information about the individual program and the destination country. For participants in:

- [SMU Exchange Program, Angers Program, UNAM Program](#): once your acceptance is confirmed by the host institution, the International Activities Office (IAO) will e-mail the waiver to you. If you are part of this activity, it is not necessary to send the program information to the International Activities Office.
- [SMU International Field Course/Program](#) (e.g. Archaeological Field Course in Italy, The Gambia Field Study Course, Model UN, Northern Ireland Conflict Resolution Project, Internship in Forensic Anthropology, Biology Field Course in China, MMCCU Study Trip, Summer Field School in St. Vincent and the Grenadines, etc.): after your participation is confirmed by the group leader (typically the course instructor), your waiver will be e-mailed to all group members via the group leader. If you are part of this activity, it is not necessary to send the program information to the International Activities Office.

- Non-SMU organized international programs, thesis research, internships, conference attendance, etc.: please e-mail mobility.international@smu.ca the details of your activity so that the specific program information can be incorporated into your waiver. (Include as many details about your activity as possible such as 1) the program start date, 2) program end date, 3) program destination, 4) program purpose and descriptions as well as 5) any other relevant information such as the types of daily activities, accommodation arrangement, mode of transportation, etc.). The International Activities Office will use this information to finalize your waiver, and e-mail it to you.

Note: If you are receiving funding from Saint Mary's University towards your activity (e.g. International Mobility Awards, funds from the University department of office, etc.), the waiver has to be signed before the University releases the funding.

Attention: Graduate Students

Graduate students must complete the Graduate Research Hazards Assessment (GRHA) form found at: http://fgsr.smu.ca/grad_cur_form.html. All inquiries about how and when to complete the GRHA form should be directed to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research (fgsr@smu.ca). The approval of your Graduate Research Hazards Assessment is not complete until the form is signed off by all parties (i.e. Supervisor/ Supervisory Committee, Graduate Program Coordinator/Director, and Dean of FGSR). The review process could take several weeks; therefore, it is recommended that you submit the GRHA well in advance of your planned departure.

The GRHA is not the same as the waiver form. Even if you provided the thesis research activity information for the GRHA to FGSR, you will still need to e-mail the International Activities Office (mobility.international@smu.ca) the program information for the waiver form, as instructed above.

The GRHA has to be approved before the University releases funding, if you are receiving any.

Risk Exercise Worksheet

Living in a new environment is bound to involve some responsibilities for risk management. The degree of risk and the necessary measures to deal with it will vary depending upon your circumstances. By becoming aware of the risks you may face and thinking about how you will deal with them, you should have a greater awareness of the preventive measures that you can take. Taking preventive actions in a thoughtful and consistent manner will increase your safety and security, resulting in effective risk management, and decreasing the likelihood of later having to deal with problems.

As you prepare to study overseas, what are your concerns about personal safety, security of your belongings and environment, and the differing political situations that will confront you?

Please review all sections of the following table, thinking about any concerns you may have in each, and noting how you will manage them.

Hazard Identification	Risk Analysis	Strategies for Risk Management
<p>SECURITY</p> <p>(avoiding theft and loss; ensuring security of home, bicycle, luggage, bags, passport, etc; security during travel within and outside of placement)</p>	<p>e.g. I could be a victim of any crimes. There is a strong possibility that I could encounter this hazard, especially if I was a female travelling alone or appear to have a lot of money. Impacts could be financial, physical, or psychological. The DFAIT warned about this risk in the Travel Report for my host country.</p>	<p>e.g. I will travel in groups. I will plan for safe routes, and investigate the transportation options as to how I can arrive back at hotel/residence safely. I will not wear flashy clothes. I will be aware of surroundings. If I consume alcohol at a gathering, I will do so in the most responsible manner. I will carry only the necessary amount of money. I will tell someone where I am going and when I expect to return back.</p>
<p>PERSONAL</p> <p>(exposure to new customs; manners of behavior; social conduct; dress; religious beliefs; language differences, recreational activities, sexuality, accidents, violent crimes such as assault, car hijacking and armed robbery)</p>		

<p>HEALTH</p> <p>(avoiding personal injury and harm; safely using public transportation; cycling; sports; health related concerns; prevalent diseases; personal factors such as allergies; adequate insurance coverage; access to medical service or English-speaking doctors)</p>		
<p>POLITICAL</p> <p>(neutrality; political discussion; openness; written records)</p>		
<p>ENVIRONMENT</p> <p>(physical environment such as weather, extreme heat/cold, access to clean water, natural disasters, and wild animals)</p>		
<p>LEGAL</p> <p>(the laws and legal system of the host country related to drugs and alcohol, sexuality, severity of punishment for offences, nature of the legal system, access to legal assistance)</p>		
<p>OTHER?</p>		

NOTES:



International Activities Office
Tel: 1-902-420-5177
international.activities@smu.ca

Travel Registration Form

The International Activities Office at Saint Mary's University is committed to protecting the privacy of individuals.

The personal information requested in this form will be used only by office staff in responding to emergency situations and will not be released to any third party without your consent.

Name: _____ **Project/Program:** _____
 (Please print your name as shown on passport) (e.g. exchange, thesis research, field study, other, etc.)

Please attach a photocopy of the photo page of your passport.

<p>Status: Please check</p> <p> <input type="checkbox"/> Student <input type="checkbox"/> Faculty <input type="checkbox"/> Staff <input type="checkbox"/> Community member </p>	<p>Destination: _____</p> <p>Dates outside of Canada: _____</p> <p>_____</p>
<p>In case of emergency the University can contact this person for or with information about me (i.e. your parent, guardian, a relative in the host country if any, etc.):</p> <p>Name: _____</p> <p>E-mail: _____</p> <p>Tel: (h) _____ (w) _____ (c) _____</p> <p>Name: _____</p> <p>E-mail: _____</p> <p>Tel: (h) _____ (w) _____ (c) _____</p>	<p>Contact while I am outside of Canada (your own contact information in the host country, such as your e-mail, telephone at your accommodation if known, on-site advisor/coordinator through whom we can get in touch with you):</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>Name: _____</p> <p>E-mail: _____</p> <p>Tel: (h) _____ (w) _____ (c) _____</p>

- ◆ I authorize the release of this personal information by the staff of Saint Mary's International Activities Office to Consular officials or to other relevant administrative offices in the University in the case of an emergency.
- ◆ I authorize the retention of this information on file for the duration of my involvement with the project.

Signature: _____ Date: _____