

# Framework on Off Campus Safety

April 2011

## **Preamble**

In the normal course of University-related life, many University members engage in academic work or participate in a wide range of activities which take place at locations away from the campuses of the University. Some of these activities, such as field research, field placements, and internships may be directly related to an individual's formal academic study, program or research. Other activities, such as athletics team travel, recreational and social events organized or sponsored by the University or its divisions, and the activities of the co-curricular units, relate to the out-of-classroom experiences of students or contribute to the on-going development of community at the University. The safety and well-being of University members and others participating in these activities is a paramount concern.

This *Framework* is designed to provide University staff and faculty involved in the planning and execution of University-related off-campus activities with a set of core planning principles with respect to safety.

## **Applicability**

Except as otherwise provided herein, this *Framework* applies to all academic and non-academic activities held off the premises of the University of Toronto which are organized or sponsored by the University or any of its divisions. This Framework does not apply to the activities of independent campus organizations such as Recognized Campus Groups (pursuant to the *Policy on the Recognition of Campus Groups*) and Student Societies (as designated pursuant to the *Policy for Compulsory Non-Academic Incidental Fees*) except when such activities are formally sponsored by, or are organized with the direct participation of the University. Nevertheless, Recognized Campus Groups and Student Societies are strongly encouraged to consider and implement appropriate principles concerning safety issues in the planning and presentation of their own off-campus activities.

The Office of the Vice-President and Provost can advise on the applicability of this *Framework* to various types of off-campus activities.

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### **Principles**

1. The safety of all participants in any University activity must be taken into account when the activity is being planned. Participant safety is a paramount concern.
2. The University and its members have a shared responsibility in assessing and appropriately addressing safety issues concerning off-campus activities.
3. With respect to academic activities, the level of risk should be considered when determining whether or not the activity should proceed.

### **Guidelines**

The Office of the Vice-President and Provost will establish Guidelines which are designed to assist in the planning and execution of off-campus activities. While these guidelines provide parameters and requirements for a number of particular situations, it should be recognized that no set of guidelines can address every possible contingency and those responsible for the activity should assess the proposed activity according to the applicable circumstances. Guidelines can be used concurrently. Select the most appropriate guidelines for each situation, if questions arise, please contact the Office of the Vice-President and Provost.

Academic and non-academic divisions of the University may establish additional guidelines consistent with this *Framework* and the Guidelines as necessary (e.g., protocols for academic-related placements, etc.).

**Reasonably Foreseeable Potential Risks:** Staff and faculty organizing any off-campus activity should make reasonable efforts to become aware of the foreseeable potential risks presented by participation in the activity and should, with the assistance of qualified individuals, take reasonable steps to appropriately address those risks. If an assessment of an activity suggests that the risks of participation are considerable even after reasonable risk minimization strategies have been implemented, the activity should be cancelled or its design revised in order to appropriately address the safety of participants and limit risks to an acceptable level. It is essential that, having assessed the risks, those organizing the activity will exercise appropriate care in deciding whether to proceed.

**Organizers:** Organizers of off-campus activities should advise potential participants of the reasonably foreseeable risks associated with participation in the activities prior to the participants deciding to participate.

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**Participants:** Potential participants in off-campus activities should familiarize themselves with the risks involved and assess the individual appropriateness of the activity for them. Individuals are not required to participate in non-academic off-campus activities and their decision to participate in any such activity indicates voluntary acceptance of the risks associated with that activity. If a required academic activity is considered to be risky, a student should discuss the matter with his or her instructor or supervisor in order to explore risk minimization strategies and/or alternative activities which meet the learning objectives of the course or program. No student should be compelled to participate in an academic activity that involves risks that they are not willing to assume for their own safety. Each individual participant is responsible for assessing the risks to his or her own safety and a decision to participate in the academic activity indicates voluntary acceptance of the risks associated with the activity.

### **Responsibility**

Administrative responsibility for this *Framework* rests with the office of the Vice-President & Provost.

Guidelines for the application of this *Framework* will be set and maintained by the Office of the Vice-President and Provost and reported for information to the Governing Council or its designated Board or Committee.

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**The Office of the Vice-President and Provost has established the following Guidelines.**

1. All field research should be conducted in compliance with the Guidelines on Safety in Field Research. All environmental and health or safety incidents which occur must be reported according to Guidelines for Safety in Field Research. The online form is available at [www.ehs.utoronto.ca](http://www.ehs.utoronto.ca).
2. All international travel related to a program of study and other University-sponsored or organized international travel should be planned and organized in compliance with the Guidelines on Safety Abroad.
3. Units considering providing financial support and other forms of sponsorship to campus organizations should comply with the Guidelines on Sponsorship of Off-Campus Activities Undertaken by Campus Organizations.
4. University-related travel to and from off-campus sites, as well as University travel between University properties (e.g., between a campus and Hart House Farm) is subject to the Guidelines on University Travel.

Additional guidelines will be developed as needed.

### **Other Policies**

In addition to this *Framework*, the University's *Standards of Professional Practice Behaviour for all Health Professional Students* apply to students engaged in off-campus activities related to their programs of study.

The following policies also relate to a variety of circumstances involving off-campus activities.

Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters

Code of Student Conduct

Health and Safety Policy

Policy and Procedures on Sexual Harassment:

Policy with Respect to Workplace Harassment,

Policy with Respect to Workplace Violence