

Handbook for Developing and Directing
International Field Courses

Prepared by
Office of International Relations



OVERVIEW

International field courses are an important component of Dalhousie University's international strategy related to international student mobility. International student mobility includes any credit-based opportunity for students to work or study abroad while undertaking their degree program – whether undergraduate, graduate or postgraduate. International student mobility for Dalhousie students includes student exchange, study abroad, internships or co-op placements, research projects, and field courses, if delivered outside of Canada.

Dalhousie's international field courses are structured, for-credit group learning experiences which take place outside Canada in a location which acts as a 'home base' for studies. Teaching focuses on topics which are enhanced by the academic, cultural, or environmental resources of the field course location.

The purpose of this handbook is to provide a comprehensive source of information for Department, Course Directors and Administrators, and other units responsible for supporting the delivery of international field courses. It outlines the elements required to plan, execute, and assess an international field course. It is intended to guide both first-time and more experienced Course Directors and Administrators through the process.

The handbook will:

- Provide information and support to the academic units running international field courses
- Clarify roles and responsibilities
- Provide samples of documents used in the process

NOTE: All international travel for university activities must be carried out in accordance with Dalhousie's International Travel Policy. All key players and participants in field courses must ensure they are familiar with that Policy and the information on this website: www.dal.ca/IntlTravel.

KEY PLAYERS SUPPORTING INTERNATIONAL FIELD COURSES

This handbook discusses the roles and responsibilities of a number of units and stakeholders in supporting international field courses.

Department / Faculty Leadership

Each Department and Faculty has its own culture, goals and character; the international field courses offered should enhance these. International field courses are an important aspect of many Department / Faculty's international strategies related to student mobility.

Course Director

The Course Director is the Dalhousie faculty or staff member with primary responsibility for the international field course. This person is the key to the success of a program. The Course Director will organize and implement the majority of the program's elements and will interact the most with the program's students. Ideally, the Course Director will have particular expertise in the host country and its language. He or she should also have a strong track record of teaching undergraduate students.

Administrative Coordinator

This person provides support for the Course Director and students participating in the international field course. They are able to represent the Course Director while the course is abroad should anything arise that requires the support or resources of Dalhousie. If the Administrative Coordinator also travels with the course, another administrative contact within the Department is required to be assigned to be a key point of contact during the course.

International Centre

A key support unit situated in Dalhousie Student Affairs, the International Centre collaborates with faculty, staff and students to enhance the international student experience for both visiting students from other countries and Dalhousie students studying abroad. The International Centre can advise Course Directors and Administrative

Coordinators on developing orientation programs for students and is also a comprehensive resource for travelling students. The International Centre administers the online orientation sessions required for all travelling students. The International Centre has primary responsibility for tracking student mobility through the university's central database.

Office of International Relations

In collaboration with Dalhousie academic and administrative units, the Office of International Relations provides leadership to the university in the development and deployment of Dalhousie's International Strategy, including a key focus on increasing outbound international student mobility.

Local Coordinator Abroad

Some courses have identified a Local Coordinator Abroad at the field course site. This person can provide logistical assistance in the host country before and/or during the international field course.

Students

Students who participate in international field courses remain responsible to act in accordance with Dalhousie's Code of Student Conduct and the University's Policies. Students are responsible to participate in pre-departure orientation(s) and maintain compliance with other eligibility criteria associated with the particular field course in which they plan to participate. Students travelling internationally on a field course are ambassadors of Dalhousie University and are responsible to hold this responsibility in high regard. All students participating in an international field course are required to sign a Student Commitment to Studying Abroad (Appendix A).

COURSE DEVELOPMENT

Department Leadership Responsibilities

Gauge Student Interest

International field courses will require a certain amount of student participation to warrant the considerable investment of financial and human resources. Thought should be given at very early stages as to the level of student participation required to run a successful course. The Department should determine ways to gauge student interest to ensure that a program will run successfully and determine the frequency of offering the course (i.e. annually, bi-annually). As a program is developed and its focus is sharpened, students' interest will have to be assessed in an ongoing manner.

Recruit a Course Director

Selection of a Course Director is of the utmost importance in ensuring a successful international field course. Department leadership is responsible to assess potential international field Course Directors' suitability to organize a course and lead a group of students internationally.

The Course Director will ideally have particular expertise in the host country and its language. They should also have a strong track record of teaching undergraduate students. Departments are also responsible to alert prospective Course Directors of the unique requirements of the position prior to either side making a commitment.

Assign an Administrative Coordinator and Determine Other Support Needs

All international field courses will require a great deal of administrative coordination and support at all stages of the implementation. It is critical for a Department to assign sufficient administrative resources to the coordination of international field courses.

The Administrative Coordinator typically manages student applications and, in the case that Course Directors change from year to year, provide program continuity. The Administrative Coordinator is a faculty or staff member responsible to be the main home contact for the Course Director while the Course Director is leading the course. If the Administrative Coordinator also travels with the course, another administrative contact within the Department is

required to be assigned to be a key point of contact during the course. The Administrative Coordinator may also assist the Course Director with various tasks related to the planning, implementation, and assessment of an international field course.

Identify Funding

Funding is critical to consider at the earliest stages of program development for international field courses. While field courses may include a fee paid by students to offset program costs, additional funds may be required. Departments may wish to use funds to enhance the experiences of the program participants. Departments should be willing to create or solicit funding for their international programs. Solicitations could be to internal Dalhousie funding sources or to external sources such as alumni, foundations or businesses.

Create International Partnerships

In some cases, an international field course would benefit from the creation of an institutional partnership between Dalhousie and another academic institution. The Department is responsible to work with the Office of International Relations to establish necessary partnership agreements.

A Note about Courses Offered through the University of King's College...

While Dalhousie and King's share a special relationship allowing interchange of students in courses offered at each institution, each institution has its own authority to decide on its own policies and procedures surrounding its courses. Thus, the guidelines laid out in this handbook apply to Dalhousie courses; the guidelines do not automatically apply to King's courses. Further questions about this can be directed to the Dalhousie Office of International Relations.

Course Director and Administrative Coordinator Responsibilities

Develop the Course and Curriculum Integration

The Department must determine the course level and where an international field course fits into the degree-seeking programs it offers. Ideally, the Department will integrate 'international program streams' into its offerings, making the choice to participate in international field courses and other international learning opportunities easy for students. The Course Director will need to consider the design of the course and determine how students will be evaluated.

International Centre Responsibilities

Provide Advice

The International Centre has significant expertise in assessing and advising on issues of student interest, safety, and risk management. The International Centre can advise Course Directors and Administrative Coordinators on developing orientation programs for students and is also a comprehensive resource for travelling students. They should be contacted early to discuss various issues that should be taken into account in the development of an international field course. Contacting the International Centre early will make developing a course easier!

Report Mobility

The International Centre has primary responsibility for tracking student mobility through the university's central database for international relations and can therefore provide advice on aspects of participant screening. International Centre staff are a resource for Administrative Coordinators when setting up online applications and managing applicants.

Office of International Relations

Liaise with the Legal Counsel Office and Human Rights and Equity Services

The Office of International Relations will be the key liaison between any parties working on international field courses and the Dalhousie Legal Counsel Office as well as Human Rights and Equity Services. Legal advice should be sought on issues related to risk management and liability while Human Rights and Equity Services can assist with matters pertaining to equity, diversity and inclusion.

Standardize Resource Development

The Office of International Relations coordinates a campus-wide interest group for Course Directors and Administrative Coordinators of international field courses and facilitates the development of standardized resources to support international field courses.

Create International Partnerships

Should a Department determine that an international field course would benefit from the creation of an institutional partnership agreement between Dalhousie and another academic institution, the Office of International Relations will assist in the establishment of the necessary agreement.

PLANNING, PROMOTION AND RECRUITMENT

Department Leadership Responsibilities

Promote International Programs

The Department can promote international programs through advocacy, advising, class contact with students, and other mechanisms. A Department's international programs need to be promoted to faculty, student advisors and students, particularly those not actively involved in the delivery of international programs. Students look to faculty and advisors to guide them in optimizing their academic experience; well-informed faculty and advisors are critical to recruiting students to international field courses.

Course Director and Administrative Coordinator Responsibilities

Develop Timeline

The Course Director and Administrative Coordinator will need to begin the planning process and to develop a realistic timeline at least 12 months in advance. This timeline should map out all of the tasks that need to be completed in order to create a successful program – from the development of the program idea to last minute pre-departure details. The timeline requires careful consideration and should be followed closely. It would be helpful to consult the International Centre who can provide advice on timeline development and help to ensure that steps are not missed.

Develop Program Focus

The development of the program focus is a major part of the planning process; the program focus will define the program content and the type of students who will want to participate. The Course Director will outline the program focus as well as the necessary linguistic or academic backgrounds required of participating students. While efforts should have been made by the Department early in the program development phase to gauge general student interest, this will need to be an ongoing process as the program focus is developed. The Course Director may wish to survey students on potential program focus as well as program location, timing and cost.

The university requires the development of a standardized program description which would include a [Risk Assessment and Safety Plan](#) to outline the risks associated with the course (i.e. proximity to health services, environmental factors, accessibility, etc). Program descriptions should be submitted to the Department Chair and Office of International Relations when a new field course is proposed. The Office of International Relations can consult with university legal counsel as necessary. The Office of International Relations will maintain a copy of all

program descriptions and share them on www.dal.ca/studyabroad. Program descriptions should be available to students before they apply so that they understand the specific expectations of the course. The program description should be reviewed again with enrolled students during the pre-departure orientation. The Program Description template is attached as Appendix B.

Determine Volunteer Role(s) – Local and Abroad

Given the complexity of delivering an unconventional course in a foreign country and overseeing a diverse student group in an intense experience, Course Directors should consider including volunteer support for the course. If any volunteer is to be recruited, the Course Director should clearly outline, in writing, the role and expectations of the volunteer during the course.

A volunteer who travels with the course can be an invaluable resource for supporting students as well as coordinating day-to-day logistics; their presence can allow the Course Director to focus more efforts toward the academic elements of course delivery. Volunteers travelling with the course could be Residence Assistants, Teaching Assistants, graduate students, or other individuals (whether associated or not with Dalhousie). It is highly recommended to consider offering this type of volunteer position to a student who has been trained as a Residence Assistant. Residence Assistants have considerable training and experience in maintaining student community standards and crisis management. Residence Assistants also have training in peer counselling, though they are not counsellors.

A Local Coordinator Abroad at the host site can also be helpful to a successful program. The Course Director should consider whether there are key university officials, faculty members, facility operators, travel agents or others that could provide logistical expertise to run a smooth program.

Volunteers, including those travelling with the course and Local Coordinators Abroad, can be offered honoraria. There is no specific guideline for the amount of an honorarium, however it should be reasonable based on the role identified and other program costs. Typically students will be paying for this through the auxiliary fees (see section below “Establish a Budget”) and it is important to use student funds appropriately. All Canadian volunteers will be issued a T4A for the amount of the honorarium and are subject to the associated tax implications. Volunteers from other countries will not be issued tax forms. The Course Administrator should make arrangements with the Financial Administrator for their Faculty to requisition a cheque or complete the forms to facilitate a wire transfer as necessary.

In lieu of, or in addition to, a volunteer honorarium, the volunteer’s travel expenses could be covered through the course budget. If no compensation is given to a volunteer other than reimbursement of expenses, there would not be a T4A issued to the volunteer.

If considering recruiting a volunteer or Local Coordinator Abroad, Course Directors and/or Course Administrators must discuss honoraria (including reimbursement for travel expenses) and insurance coverage with the Office of International Relations. The OIR will work with the Legal Counsel Office to ensure proper documentation is prepared. Documentation should be in place prior to making commitments to prospective volunteers.

Establish Budget

The Course Director and Administrative Coordinator should determine a budget for the program that clearly outlines the cost of key program activities. Typical international field course budgets may include some or all of the following key program activities:

- Instructional costs (teaching space, guest lectures, supplies)
- Faculty housing, airfare, and per diem
- Student housing
- Teaching assistant / volunteer support
- Excursions and entrance fees

- Site administration / local coordination
- Administration costs (recruitment brochures, cell service abroad)
- Student travel insurance (currently provided by Backpack)
- Student travel to and from the program site (if built into program fee)
- Student per diem (unusual, but in particular circumstances it may be appropriate)
- Program reserve (approx. 10% to cover currency fluctuations and emergencies)

In almost every case, students participating in an international field course will be required to pay an auxiliary fee to cover the additional costs associated with the course. The amount of the auxiliary fee will be determined by the program costs and the number of students anticipated to participate in the course. There is a formal process through Financial Services, and with eventual approval of the Board of Governors, that is required to establish the auxiliary fee for new courses and courses in which the curriculum has changed significantly. Course Directors should seek specific guidance from their Faculty's Financial Administrator on this process early in the previous academic year.

Make Financial Arrangements

The Course Director and Administrative Coordinator should determine the schedule for student fees as well as what fund advance the Course Director will require before departure. It is important to consider currency fluctuations and determine whether expenses will be incurred in local or foreign currency so that the required flexibility can be built into the budget and planning.

Students must make payments through the Student Accounts Office. Departments cannot accept deposits directly from students and under no circumstances is student credit card information to be requested or recorded. Through Financial Services and the Faculty Financial Officer, the Administrative Coordinator can make arrangements for the fees to be transferred into the appropriate operating account. Financial Services will provide regular updates as to which students have paid fees (the timing of these updates can be determined with them in advance). It is appropriate to determine and communicate a non-refundable deposit. There is no specific guideline for the timing or amount of this deposit, rather it depends on the upfront costs associated with the course.

Make Housing and Classroom Arrangements

Faculty and Student Housing. Living accommodations for international field courses vary widely from program to program. It is the responsibility of the Course Director to determine the most suitable form of housing (host families, apartments, dormitories, hotels, tents) and to confirm housing before participants are recruited. The nature of the living arrangements will affect whether students may need accommodations or otherwise decide whether the course is a good fit for them. The Local Coordinator Abroad can provide support in securing faculty and student housing with the guidance of the Course Director.

Classrooms. Some programs rely more heavily on classroom facilities than others, but in most cases having a 'home base' for the program is important. The Local Coordinator Abroad should be able to advise the Course Director on the location, cost and suitability of possible classrooms.

Recruit Students

Recruitment of students should take place at least eight months before program departure. Key tools for recruitment include program brochures, websites, information sessions, and word of mouth. Of course, if an international field course is built into an 'international stream' in the Department's curriculum, recruitment of students will be much easier as there will be a cohort expecting to participate in the program.

Brochure. A brochure advertising an international field course should contain as much information as possible about the program while being easy to read and understand. A typical brochure would include: program focus, credits, faculty, dates, location, fees and payment schedule, application and selection deadlines, refund policy, contact information for the Course Director and/or Administrative Coordinator.

Website. It is highly recommended that a website be developed for each international field course and should include the same information as the brochure with more detail about the location and course as well as links to application forms and other resources. The Course Director and/or Administrative Coordinator should oversee the development and maintenance of the site.

Information Sessions. Each program can host an information session for prospective applicants or a Department or Faculty could arrange an information session to highlight all international field courses and other international opportunities for students. Participating in recruitment fairs such as the International Centre's annual "Go Global" event should also be considered.

Word of Mouth. Students will value the advice of faculty and peers with regard to participation in international field courses. Consider hosting an event where potential students can hear from former students. Request that faculty make announcements about upcoming international field course opportunities in the classrooms and in advising appointments.

Determine Application and Selection Processes

Clear deadlines for applications must be identified and well communicated. Students should apply at least three months in advance of the course to allow enough time for planning, pre-departure orientation, and accommodations; ideally the application deadline would be six months or more before the start of the course.

There are academic standards and behavioural standards related to student participation in international field courses.

Academic Standards.

Students must be enrolled in an undergraduate or graduate program at Dalhousie and must be in good academic standing with a Cumulative GPA of at least 2.5 for undergraduate and a Cumulative GPA of at least 3.0 for graduate programs. Some field courses may have a higher GPA requirement; this is at the discretion of the Department and Course Director and should be noted on the Course Description.

Behavioural Standards.

Students' behaviour on international field courses has a significant impact on the learning environment for other students. Students who have been suspended as a result of a breach of the Code of Student Conduct or the Sexualized Violence Policy may not be eligible to participate in international field courses. As well, Students who (1) have complaints pending against them under the Code of Student Conduct or the Sexualized Violence Policy or (2) have been found to have breached the Code of Student Conduct or the Sexualized Violence Policy (without suspension) and have not fulfilled the terms of any disciplinary or educational outcomes imposed as a result of that breach may not be permitted to participate in international field courses.

Working with the Department, the Course Directors should determine if any further selection criteria are required given the specifics of the field course being offered. Consider whether students will be accepted on a first come, first served basis; whether candidates in a certain major will be given priority; whether there are course pre-requisites; whether students need to be in a senior year of study; whether students outside the Department or Faculty will be eligible to apply; and whether a student's specific motivation to participate will have a bearing on selection.

Promote Bursary Programs

Access to financial support addresses a major perceived barrier for many students' participation in international programs. The Course Director and Administrative Coordinator, with the support of the International Centre, should make sure to encourage students to pursue [bursary support](#) if they are eligible.

Consider Evaluation

There is a standard window of time following a course whereby student evaluations must be submitted. This is determined at the faculty level. If the Course Director determines that, because of the timing of the course or other factors, there will be insufficient time for students to complete the evaluation following the course, they should make necessary arrangements with their Faculty's Associate Dean Academic to extend the course evaluation time or provide another means for students to complete the course evaluation.

Engage Alumni

Dalhousie has alumni all over the world. In organizing an international field course, you may consider engaging local alumni in some form. Alumni may like to host a dinner for the group or join an excursion. They may also be a valuable in-country resource for planning. To determine whether there are Dalhousie alumni in the host country, contact the Dalhousie Office of Advancement.

Complete Appropriate Training

The Course Director and/or Administrative Coordinator will attend training offered by the International Centre on accessing online applications.

There is no required training for Course Directors, however a Course Director may wish to pursue certain training in advance of leading a group of students abroad. For example, it is recommended that Course Directors take a first aid or mental health first aid course to support emergency preparedness.

Course Directors and Administrative Coordinators should consider participating in the International Field Course Interest Group. This group meets approximately quarterly to share resources and insight on the successful delivery of international field courses across Dalhousie. The group is an excellent resource for new and longstanding Course Directors and Administrative Coordinators. Course Directors and Administrative Coordinators who are interested in participating in this Group should contact the Office of International Relations.

International Centre Responsibilities

Promote the Course

The International Centre can support student recruitment through its own website and social media presence. The Course Director and/or Administrative Coordinator should liaise with the International Centre on promoting international field courses to the broad student community.

Provide Training on Application Review

The International Centre will provide training to the Course Director and/or Administrative Coordinator on accessing online applications submitted by students.

Student Responsibilities

Apply for the Course

Students are responsible to meet all application requirements for international field courses by the stated deadlines.

SELECTION AND PRE-DEPARTURE

Course Director and Administrative Coordinator Responsibilities

Select Students

When the full selection criteria are established, the application process should be set up to measure the required selection criteria. There is a standard application form for International Field Courses set up online and managed by the International Centre. If additional application criteria are required for a specific field course, the Department

should determine how that information will be collected from students. The Administrative Coordinator will have access to student applications for the field course.

The process for review of applications will vary by course, department and faculty. Some may include a review committee.

Students' behaviour on international field courses has a significant impact on the learning environment for other students. Students who have been suspended as a result of a breach of the Code of Student Conduct or the Sexualized Violence Policy may not be eligible to participate in international field courses. As well, Students who (1) have complaints pending against them under the Code of Student Conduct or the Sexualized Violence Policy or (2) have been found to have breached the Code of Student Conduct or the Sexualized Violence Policy (without suspension) and have not fulfilled the terms of any disciplinary or educational outcomes imposed as a result of that breach may not be permitted to participate in international field courses.

The Course Director or Administrative Coordinator must ensure that applicants meet the above criteria before confirming their acceptance. As a part of the Application Form (Appendix C), student consent to the Course Director verifying that they meet the behavioural standards required to participate in an international field course. To determine students who have been suspended, have allegations pending, or who have breached the Code of Student Conduct and not fulfilled the terms of any disciplinary or educational outcomes imposed as a result of the breach, the Course Director or Administrative Coordinator will consult with the Office of the Vice-Provost, Student Affairs, or designate (vpsa@dal.ca).

To determine if a student has been suspended, has allegations pending, or has not fulfilled the terms of any disciplinary or educational outcomes imposed as a result of a breach of the Sexualized Violence Policy, the Course Director or Administrative Coordinator will consult with the Office of the Vice-Provost Student Affairs or designate (vpsa@dal.ca).

The Vice-Provost Student Affairs will then determine if the student should be permitted to participate in a specific international field course, with or without conditions. For example, one condition could be that all outstanding disciplinary or educational outcomes be completed prior to the start of the course, in which case the student could be conditionally admitted to the course. In order to respect the confidentiality of student discipline processes, in all communications with the Course Director or Administrative Coordinator, the Vice-Provost Student Affairs will only disclose that information which is reasonably required.

It is important to notify all applicants, selected or rejected, of the decision in writing. The Course Director or Administrative Coordinator may or may not decide to maintain a waiting list for qualified students who are not selected and/or give them first option to take a spot the following year. The process for handling applicants not selected will vary by course.

Carry Out Pre-Departure Orientation & Expectation Setting

Prior to departure, the Course Director should meet *in person* with the students at least once, but often several times. The pre-departure orientation should include a general program overview, review of practical details, discussion of risk and security, and clear expectation setting (including the Student Commitment to Study Abroad).

General Program Overview. The Course Director should share with the group some of his or her own experiences in the host country and explain the rationale for hosting the international field course there. The group should review the Program Description and discuss the learning objectives for the course.

Practical Details. These include discussion should include the culture and environmental factors that will impact the course as well as logistics such as living arrangements, food, what to pack, travel arrangements, visa and insurance requirements, and general schedule of the course.

Risk and Security. Every international setting will have its own considerations related to risk and security. These will have been identified in the Program Description. In reflecting on risk and security, consider the host country's government, human rights and diversity, as well as access to and the quality of health services, and provide the required information in the [Risk Assessment and Safety Plan](#). The Risk Assessment and Safety Plan should be provided to all participants.

Expectation Setting. The Course Director should begin to set behavioural expectations for the students before departure. This should involve reviewing and discussing the Student Commitment to Study Abroad (which should be signed by all students during the application process) as well as the pre-course student responsibilities outlined in this guide. Dalhousie students must adhere to the Code of Student Conduct and University Policies, including the Sexual Violence Policy, throughout their studies, whether at home or abroad and this should be reiterated during the pre-departure orientation. There may also be specific rules developed for a particular field course. These should be discussed pre-departure as well. The Course Director should make sure that students understand the consequences for not adhering to the Course Rules or Code of Conduct (up to and including being sent home early).

Meeting together will help the group develop an *esprit de corps*; building strong relationships between participants early may help support stable group dynamics during the course delivery. The International Centre will support Departments in the development of their site-specific pre-departure information sessions as needed and is responsible for administrating the online pre-departure orientation sessions required for all travelling students.

Students are also required to complete an online pre-departure session hosted by the International Centre before departure. Information on this session can be found in the next section.

Engage in Student Accommodation Process

In accordance with Dalhousie's Student Accommodation Policy, Dalhousie will provide reasonable accommodations up to the point of undue hardship, to students experiencing a barrier due to a characteristic protected by human rights law. Students are encouraged to seek accommodation where they believe that they are experiencing such a barrier to participation in a University activity which may be reduced or eliminated through accommodation. All requests for accommodation must be made by students in accordance with the Student Accommodation Policy. Given the additional complexities involved in accommodating students enrolled in international field courses, students should be encouraged to make accommodation requests as early as possible.

If an accommodation request is sought by a student enrolled in an international field course, the Student Accessibility Centre will contact the Course Director. They will be involved in thorough consultation about if and how accommodations can be made given the nature of the field course. Accommodation requests will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

It is important to note that accommodations are not always possible. Students should be informed that paying a deposit on course fees does not guarantee that a requested accommodation will be available to support their participation in a field course. If a student has paid a deposit and cannot attend a field course because no reasonable accommodation is possible within the timeframe available, they may not receive a refund (dates whereby refunds can be issued are determined in the planning of each course). Course Directors and Course Administrators must ensure that the program description appropriately describes the conditions of the course so that students can make informed decisions about whether a field course will be appropriate for them.

Should a Course Director have a concern that a registered student is not equipped to participate in an international field course or would be a risk to other participants, he or she should contact the Director of the Student Accessibility Centre to discuss. The Course Director cannot unilaterally decide to pull a student out of a course or that a student cannot participate in a course because of the accommodations they require. Course Directors should expect to hear from the Student Accessibility Centre within seven days. Potential issues should be discussed as soon as possible.

Make Travel Arrangements

Course Directors must make their own travel arrangements. Consider whether you need to arrive in advance of students to manage any in-country course logistics. Faculty travelling abroad are required to adhere to the [International Travel Policy](#)

In some cases, travel arrangements for all participants are made by the Course Director or Administrative Coordinator. In other cases, students are required to make their own travel arrangements. This needs to be clearly communicated to students well in advance. If students are booking their own travel, give clear instructions about when and where to arrive and what will happen. Let students know how they will get from the airport to the host site.

Dalhousie has preferred vendor contracts with Maritime Travel (travel agent) and Enterprise (car rental). When possible, these vendors should be used for travel bookings. If students are travelling as a group, be prepared that some students will want to make alternate arrangements. Such accommodations can be made at the discretion of the Course Director.

REGISTER TRAVEL with Global Affairs Canada and International SOS

As outlined in Dalhousie's [International Travel Policy](#), travellers (including Dalhousie faculty, staff and students) are required to register travel for university activities outside of Canada with Dalhousie's international travel registration system, International SOS, and with Global Affairs Canada through the Registration of Canadians Abroad (ROCA) system.

Instructions on how to register travel with International SOS can be found here: www.dal.ca/intltravel.

Registration with ROCA can also be done [online](#). The Canadian embassy can contact Canadian travellers to offer assistance during a natural disaster or civil unrest, or to inform you of a family emergency at home. (Travellers who are citizens of countries other than Canada are required to register their travel with the foreign office of their country of citizenship, where possible).

Course Directors must register themselves and ensure that students have registered with ROCA and International SOS before departure.

All students are also required to register and provide their emergency contact through the International Centre emergency contact form.

Obtain Travel Insurance

Faculty are responsible for obtaining travel insurance for themselves for the period of their international field course and will be responsible for the cost of this insurance. Faculty are also responsible for ensuring that all student participants are registered with Backpack, the university's student outbound travel insurance program. The costs of Backpack will be included in the total cost of each field school.

Download the International SOS app

As noted, Dalhousie subscribes to International SOS, a medical & travel security assistance company. The easiest way to contact International SOS in the event of illness or emergency is via the free official International SOS app. Course Directors should download the app before travelling and ask students to do the same (it can be downloaded at app.internationalsos.com, the App Store, Google Play, and App World). Faculty and students should download the app using their Dalhousie University email addresses (important) and will be asked to input Dalhousie's membership number: **27ASCA824913**. Once installed, the app's "Call for Assistance" button will connect Dal personnel with International SOS physicians, nurses, security, operations, logistics, aviation experts, and over 79,000 vetted providers. Whether they are in need of routine advice, or have an emergency, the International SOS team can help.

Be Aware of Travel Advisories

Course Directors and Administrative Coordinators should maintain up-to-date information on any Canadian Government travel advisories for the host country. Within the six months leading up to the course delivery, any travel warnings associated with the host country should be discussed with the International Centre; continuous monitoring is required. Legal Counsel may be consulted by the International Centre as appropriate. Travel advisories from the Canadian Government are posted here: <https://travel.gc.ca/travelling/advisories>. The SOS International app will also send updates depending on where it detects you are, or for countries you choose.

The International Travel Policy prohibits travel by students to destinations where the Government of Canada has advised to “avoid non-essential travel” or “avoid all travel”. There is no exception to this restriction for undergraduate students. Graduate student who wish to request an exemption must follow the process described in the International Travel Policy: See: www.dal.ca/IntlTravel (Restricted Travel).

International Centre Responsibilities

Advise Students

Students can consult a Study Abroad and Exchange Advisor (SAEA) for support as they prepare for their time abroad. They may have an issue they want to discuss confidentially, they may like another source of logistical support, or they may be looking for support finding various funding opportunities.

Deliver General Pre-Departure Orientation

All Dalhousie students planning to study abroad must complete an [online pre-departure course](#) at least two months prior to departure. The International Centre administers this course through Brightspace. The course covers a range of considerations that students must engage with prior to departure. These include applying for funding, staying healthy and safe while abroad and while traveling, what to do about money while abroad, securing insurance for trip, applying for travel documents, what to do if there is an emergency, and cultural adjustment. The course is general in nature and is designed to be supplemented by site-specific information provided by the Course Director.

Obtain Participant Information

Students must register [emergency contact information](#) and travel details. The International Centre collects and stores participants' travel and emergency contact information for the duration of the course in order to be prepared to support participants in the event of an emergency.

Be Aware of Travel Advisories

The International Centre will maintain up-to-date information on any Canadian Government travel advisories for the host country and respond as appropriate. Response may include discussion with Course Directors and Course Administrators, keeping the Emergency Response Committee informed of changes that should be brought to their attention, and advising on cancelling the course if advisories warrant. The International Centre will continuously monitor travel advisories through the Government of Canada website: <https://travel.gc.ca/travelling/advisories> and through notifications from SOS International.

The International Travel Policy prohibits travel by students to destinations where the Government of Canada has advised to “avoid non-essential travel” or “avoid all travel”. There is no exception to this restriction for undergraduate students. Graduate student who wish to request an exemption must follow the process described in the International Travel Policy: See: www.dal.ca/IntlTravel (Restricted Travel).

Administer Student Bursary Programs

The International Centre administers several [bursary programs](#) to support Dalhousie students' participation in international programs. There is one application for all student bursaries and scholarships. Eligibility will depend on the length of the program, financial need of the student, and other factors. In all cases, the placement must be a component of a student's degree.

Student Responsibilities

Apply for Bursaries

Students are responsible to review available bursary options and eligibility criteria. It is the students' responsibility to complete all steps to apply for bursaries supporting their participants in an international field course.

Make Accommodation Request (if required)

Students are responsible for making accommodation requests in accordance with Dalhousie's Student Accommodation Policy.

Coordinating accommodations, particularly for an international field course, can take time. As such, student requests for accommodations should be made by the beginning of the academic term preceding the international field course when possible. It is important to note that accommodations are not always possible. Paying a deposit on course fees does not guarantee that a requested accommodation will be available to support a student's participation in a field course. If a student has paid a deposit and cannot attend a field course because no reasonable accommodation is possible within the timeframe available, they may not receive a refund (dates whereby refunds can be issued are determined in the planning of each course). Students are responsible for carefully reviewing the program description, asking questions of the Course Director and Course Administrator in order to make informed decisions about whether a field course will be appropriate for them, and making any accommodation requests in a timely fashion.

Make Travel Arrangements

In some cases, travel arrangements for all participants are made by the Course Director or Administrative Coordinator. In other cases, students are required to make their own travel arrangements. Students should verify how travel arrangements are to be made and confirm how they will be transported from the airport to the host site. Students are responsible for acquiring the necessary visa documents and for the payment of passport fees.

Register Travel

As outlined in Dalhousie's [International Travel Policy](#), travellers (including Dalhousie faculty, staff and **students**) are required to register travel for university activities outside of Canada with [International SOS](#), Dalhousie's emergency response service provider, to departure. All students are required to register and provide their emergency contact through the International Centre emergency contact form.

Before departure, faculty, staff and **students** must register with Global Affairs Canada through the [Registration of Canadians Abroad \(ROCA\)](#) system. Registration can be done [online](#). The Canadian embassy can contact Canadian travellers to offer assistance during a natural disaster or civil unrest, or to inform you of a family emergency at home. (Travellers who are citizens of countries other than Canada are required to register their travel with the foreign office of their country of citizenship, where possible).

Dalhousie subscribes to International SOS, a medical & travel security assistance company. The easiest way to contact International SOS in the event of illness or emergency is via the free official International SOS app. **Students** should download the app before travelling (it can be downloaded at app.internationalsos.com, the App Store, Google Play, and App World). Faculty and **students** should download the app using their Dalhousie University email addresses (important) and will be asked to input Dalhousie's membership number: **27ASCA824913**. Once installed, the app's "Call for Assistance" button will connect Dal personnel with International SOS physicians, nurses, security, operations, logistics, aviation experts, and over 79,000 vetted providers. Whether they are in need of routine advice, or have an emergency, the International SOS team can help.

Be Aware of Travel Advisories

The student should maintain up-to-date information on any Canadian Government travel advisories for the host country. Students' first point of contact for concerns related to travel advisories is the Course Director and/or Administrative Coordinator. Travel advisories from the Canadian Government are posted here:

<https://travel.gc.ca/travelling/advisories>. The SOS International app will also send updates depending on where it detects you are, or for countries you choose.

Complete Required Documents

All students participating in an international field course are required to sign a Student Commitment to Studying Abroad (Appendix A). Depending on the international field course, students may be required to sign additional documents in advance of participating in the course. The student is responsible to read, understand, and agree to the contents of any required forms.

Complete General Pre-Departure Orientation

All Dalhousie students planning to study abroad must complete an online pre-departure course at least two months prior to departure. Pre-departure is hosted on Brightspace by the International Centre. To gain access to the course, students must register. www.dal.ca/predeparture.

Participate in Site-Specific Pre-Departure Orientation

The Course Director will meet with students at least once before the international field course. Students must attend all pre-departure orientation sessions.

Travel Insurance

Students must have travel insurance for the period of their international field course. The cost of this insurance must be included in the cost of the field course.

DURING THE COURSE

Department Leadership Responsibilities

Maintain Communication with Course Director

Before and during the program, the Administrative Coordinator within the Department should arrange mechanisms for regular communication with the Course Director via email, telephone or other means. The Administrative Coordinator should function as the Course Director's home departmental contact and should be ready to offer assistance and advice as needed.

Course Director Responsibilities

Teach

The Course Director's duties are varied, but they are first and foremost academic. It is important to remember that all Dalhousie international field courses are academic programs. Because their delivery is novel, students can sometimes lose sight of this. Successful Course Directors have been able to meld site and course materials in ways that make the programs unique educational experiences. Course Directors are encouraged to bring in local experts, design excursions, and empower students to investigate the environment.

Maintain Communication with Department and International Centre

Course Directors are not responsible for the behaviour of students (students are accountable for their own behaviour). Course Directors are, however, responsible for putting processes in place to remind students of expectations.

The Course Director should maintain communication with the Administrative Coordinator within the Department. Mechanisms for regular communication via email, telephone or other means should be established in advance. The Course Director should also keep the Department and International Centre advised of any development in the host country that could affect the welfare of students and/or the program. The Course Director should inform the Department and International Centre of major issues in the host country. Issues may include external factors such as

civil unrest, dangerous weather conditions, or changes in the structure or function of the living or learning conditions as well as issues with the student group such as alcohol abuse, disruptive behaviour, or a change in the medical condition of a participant.

Handle Group Program Costs

With support as possible from the Administrative Coordinator, the Course Director will be responsible to handle all group program costs. Such costs may include student or faculty accommodation, local coordination, guest instruction, excursions, educational resources, group dinners, etc. The Course Director may need an advance of funds from the Department to bring on the field course to cover such expenses. Accounting for the use of advance funds is the responsibility of the Course Director; receipts should be kept for all transactions.

Many program budgets include a modest per diem allocation for Course Directors. This amount is designed to offset some of the costs of daily life during the program. The per diem funds are the only portion of an advance that would not require receipts.

Lead On-Site Orientation and Expectation Setting

Although students will have taken part in general and site-specific pre-departure orientation, a further orientation takes place in the host country. Student exposure to the realities of study in a foreign context begins with the on-site orientation. The success of this orientation will require careful planning by the Course Director in terms of timing, content, and relevance to the various situations in which students may find themselves during the course. Some suggested orientation topics are:

- Introduction to local personnel or others who are willing to support the group in some way
- Introduction to the community and its surroundings
- Discussion of available food / dining
- Discussion of availability and use of local transportation
- Discussion of available internet resources
- Discussion of available banking or money changing facilities
- Review of medical and health facilities including what to do in a medical emergency
- Distribution of housing information and regulations
- Explanation of local regulations concerning drug and alcohol use, political activism by foreigners, etc.
- Explanation of the role of the Course Director, teaching staff, volunteers, and local coordinator
- Discussion of the Student Commitment to Study Abroad and the importance of being an international ambassador for Dalhousie and Canada
- Discussion of the program rules and policy concerning student academic obligations during the course
- Presentation of measures that should be taken to ensure everyday safety and well-being. In addition, depending on the country, a general discussion of emergency evacuation procedures may be necessary. All travellers should have SOS International app and review how it works.
- Distribution of emergency contact information to students
- Review of the Risk Assessment and Safety Plan

Student Welfare and Emergency Response

The Course Director plays an important role in assuring the welfare of students on the international field course. The Course Director oversees the academic program but also orients students to the culture of the host country and counsels them on a range of social and practical issues. Therefore, the Course Director should be sensitive to problems that may impeded students' acculturation while abroad.

Housing. Students' degree of satisfaction with the living situations abroad can often make or break their opinions of the program. It is important to make sure that housing adequate and to provide assistance if problems arise.

Volunteer Assistance. As stated in the section outlining pre-course responsibilities, it can be invaluable to include a volunteer to support logistics and student welfare during an international field course. With a volunteer, the Course Director should discuss sharing onsite responsibilities.

Emergency Response. In the event of an emergency that affects the group or a single individual, the Course Director will be expected to:

- Act to protect their own safety and the safety of other members of the group;
- Contact SOS International who will engage with the university as appropriate; and
- Follow instructions given by the university and SOS International.

Student Behaviour. If a student violates the Code of Student Conduct, the Sexualized Violence Policy or other University policy, the Course Director must contact the Vice-Provost Student Affairs so that steps can be taken to address the situation. Steps may include immediate removal from the course. Any additional expenses incurred as a result of early removal from the course will be the responsibility of the student and may be added to their student account.

Alcohol. Students' use of alcohol on an international field course is raised as a concern for many Course Directors. Alcohol and its impact on student life are addressed through the [Code of Student Conduct](#) and the university's [Alcohol Policy](#).

It is also important to note that many insurance policies will have an exclusion clause for any injury that occurs while under the influence of alcohol. This means that in the event that a student's insurer excludes coverage because of alcohol consumption, then the student would be responsible for covering the expenses related to treatment of an injury. This should be clearly discussed in the pre-departure orientation and the responsibility rests with the students to ensure they know the details of their insurance policy.

International Centre Responsibilities

Administer the Emergency Concerns & Response Protocol

In the event of an issue abroad, the International Centre will initiate Dalhousie's Emergency Concerns & Response Protocol in collaboration with the Vice-Provost Student Affairs.

Support Course Director in Dealing with Disruptive Students

The International Centre will support the Course Director in situations where students are disrupting the program and/or the learning experience for the group. This will involve engaging support from necessary offices at Dalhousie, iSOS, or Backpack to ensure the appropriate response is executed.

Use of Participants' Information

The International Centre will follow appropriate procedures regarding use, privacy and destruction of student information should it be needed to follow through with an emergency response.

Student Responsibilities

Abide by Student Commitment to Study Abroad & Program Rules

Students are responsible to understand and adhere to the Student Commitment to Study Abroad and the specific program rules laid out by the Course Director. Failure to adhere to the rules could result in dismissal from the program.

AFTER THE COURSE

Department Leadership Responsibilities

Course Review

Department and/or Faculty leadership should review the final report on each international field course to inform decisions about future course offerings. A summary of the results of these reviews should be shared with the International Centre and Office of International Relations.

Course Director and Administrative Coordinator Responsibilities

Reporting

Student Grades. As with all academic courses, the Course Director is required to record and submit student grades in a timely manner.

Program Report. The Course Director should submit a final report following the delivery of an international field course. This report should note the number of participants, briefly describe the course offered, note any particular concerns or issues that arose in the planning or implementation of the course, include a final accounting of course expenses, and recommend next steps. This report should be submitted to Department and/or Faculty leadership and should be copied to the International Centre and Office of International Relations.

Personal Information

The Course Director and/or Administrative Coordinator is responsible to securely dispose of personal information records in accordance with privacy obligations.

International Centre Responsibilities

Personal Information

The International Centre is responsible to securely dispose of personal information records in accordance with privacy obligations.

Reporting

The International Centre is responsible to provide annual (or more frequent) reports on mobility statistics, including international field course participation, to the Office of International Relations.

Student Responsibilities

Bursary Reports

Student who received financial assistance may be required to complete reports following the course.

Evaluation

Students are expected to complete the course evaluation.

Office of International Relations

Mobility Reports

The Office of International Relations maintains overall responsibility for tracking and reporting on international mobility numbers, including international field course participation.

APPENDICES

Appendix A: Student Commitment to Studying Abroad

Appendix B: Program Description

International Field Course

Student Commitment to Studying Abroad



COURSE CODE: [insert]

Course Name: [insert]

I, the undersigned acknowledge the following:

1. Dalhousie University (“**Dalhousie**”) is offering [course name] in [City], [Country], from [Dates] (the “**Program**”). I wish to participate in the Program.
2. I understand that my participation in the Program involves risks not found in study on Dalhousie’s campus. These include, but are not limited to, risks inherent in traveling to, and returning from, foreign countries; foreign political, legal, social, cultural, and economic conditions; and more limited access to health services. I have made my own investigation. I am willing to accept these risks.
3. [If responsible for own transportation and edit as needed] I will be responsible for my transportation to and from [City, Country]. I will be also responsible for all costs during the Program, including tuition and associated fees, room and board, books and supplies, local transportation (except transportation from [insert], which will be provided by Dalhousie), fees for additional activities (such as the cost of tickets to [insert]), and all personal expenses. I will provide my own travel and property insurance.
4. Dalhousie will provide me with ground transportation from the airport to the final destination so long as I am at the [Airport Name] on the date and time to be confirmed by Dalhousie. Dalhousie will also provide me with ground transportation from final destination to the airport so long as I am at the designated departure location in [City] on the date and time to be confirmed by Dalhousie. If I am not at the departure location at the designated time, I will be responsible for my own ground transportation.
5. I will obtain all necessary visa documents and a passport, and pay all passport, visa and other travel fees. I acknowledge that my passport must be valid for at least six (6) months beyond my date of return to Canada.
6. I have completed Dalhousie’s Pre-Departure Orientation Course session, on-line. Information on the course is available at: https://www.dal.ca/campus_life/ile/travel_abroad.html

I have submitted a copy of my certificate of completion to the Course Director.

7. I have reviewed and understand the Program Description and have sought clarification on course requirements as necessary.
8. I understand the course delivery environment and the program activities as they have been described in the Program Description. It is my responsibility to ensure that I am physically, emotionally and mentally able to safely participate in the Field course given the course delivery environment and program activities. I am also aware of the Student Accommodation Policy. https://www.dal.ca/dept/university_secretariat/policies/academic/student-accommodation-policy-wef-sep--1--2014.html

I understand that it is my responsibility to request an accommodation under that Policy if I believe there is a barrier to my participation in the Program because of a characteristic protected by human rights law (ex: disability, religion, race, etc). I further understand that the assessment of accommodation requests in relation to international field courses can be more complex and therefore that I should make any necessary accommodation requests as early as possible.

9. The academic aspects of the Program are such that my participation for the entire duration of the Program is necessary to achieve the objectives of the Program. I agree to attend all elements, including all orientations, meetings, classes, excursions, and exams on Dalhousie's campus and abroad. I agree to complete all requirements/assignments associated with the Program.
10. I have reviewed and agree to be bound by Dalhousie's Code of Student Conduct, the Sexualized Violence Policy and other applicable policies, rules, standards and instructions for student conduct. I will, at all times, act responsibly and comply with the policies, rules, standards, and instructions for student conduct. University Policies are available online at: https://www.dal.ca/dept/university_secretariat/policies.html#
11. In addition to the requirements under Dalhousie's Code of Student Conduct, Dalhousie will not tolerate alcohol or drug abuse. I understand that if I am impaired and cannot attend and fully participate in Program activities and/or my conduct is disruptive or incompatible with the Program purpose or objectives, Dalhousie may immediately terminate my participation in the Program and I will return to Canada.
12. [If applicable and edit as needed] I understand that the living accommodations provided to me as a participant of the Program are for my use only. I will not share those living accommodations with any other person, including a spouse or significant other, family member, or friend.
13. Dalhousie will enforce appropriate standards of conduct and may terminate my participation in the Program for failure to maintain these standards or for any actions or conduct which Dalhousie considers incompatible with the interest, harmony, comfort, or welfare of other Program participants or Dalhousie employees. Unacceptable conduct includes, but is not limited to, unauthorized absence from the Program, harassment, assault, vandalism, public disturbance, and any illegal activity.
14. If my participation in the Program is terminated or if I withdraw from the Program, Dalhousie shall have the right to require me to leave the Program and the living accommodations provided to participants of the Program and return to Canada without refunding my tuition or fees and without academic credit. If Dalhousie directs me to return to Canada, I agree to cooperate and abide by such direction and cover all associated costs. Dalhousie is not responsible for any loss or additional expense which I incur as a result of any cancellation of the Program, my withdrawal from the Program at any time, or the termination of my participation in the Program by Dalhousie.
15. I am required to have health insurance coverage (DSU International Health Plan or equivalent as determined by the DSU plan administrator) and travel insurance for the duration of the Program, and the costs of such health insurance, inoculations, and additional medical costs associated with it are my responsibility.
16. Dalhousie assumes no liability for any loss, damage, injury or additional expenses which I incur and suffer as a result of my participation in the Program, except to the extent that such loss, damage, injury or additional expense is the result of Dalhousie's negligence. I agree to indemnify and save harmless Dalhousie from any loss, damage, injury or other expenses caused by me to any third party.

Student's Name _____ **B00** _____

Student's Signature _____ **Date** _____

For Dalhousie's internal purposes only -

Date received by Department: _____

International Field Course

Program Description



Course Title	
Instructor(s)	
Dates	
Location	
Program fee	
Costs not covered in program fee	
Prerequisites	
Admission requirements	
Enrollment (max/min)	
Application deadline(s)	
Course description	
Evaluation	
Course Environment <small>(accessibility, living conditions, learning environment, proximity to health services, notes on climate, political environment)</small>	
Types of activities <small>(include statement of physical fitness required)</small>	