

Personal Travel Risk Management Plan

NAME:

CONCORDIA STUDENT ID:

ACTIVITY NAME:

DEPARTURE DATE:

RETURN DATE:

DESTINATION(S):

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NOTE:

This resource and planning document is a work in progress. If you have any feedback on how it can be improved, you can submit it anonymously through our [feedback form](#).

When preparing to travel abroad, you should create a risk management plan.

A risk management plan is not meant to discourage you from travelling. Remember, you deal with and manage risks daily. When travelling, you will also have to navigate and manage risk every day. However, in your new destination, you won't be able to rely upon a familiar context or past experience the same way you do at home. This makes it harder to make everyday risk management decisions abroad. By researching and understanding potential hazards in advance, it will be easier to avoid, manage and plan for those risks. Risk-aware travel is the best way to protect yourself while abroad.

Keep this plan in an accessible place while travelling, both electronically and in a physical format. If you feel comfortable, give a copy of your plan to your activity leader and/or your family/friends. Doing so may help them support you while you are abroad. Otherwise, this plan is for your personal use and planning. It can be used and shared as you see fit.

Location- and Activity-Based Risks

Resources to Identify Risk:

- Government of Canada's Country-Specific [Travel Advice and Advisories](#)
- Government of Canada's [Travel Health Notices](#) (Filter items by your destination country)

Resources for Risk Reduction Strategies:

- [Bon voyage, but... essential information for Canadian travellers](#)
- [Living abroad – a Canadian's guide to working, studying, volunteering or retiring in a foreign country](#)
- [Well on your way – a Canadian's guide to healthy travel abroad](#)
- [Government of Canada's Traveller's Checklist](#)
- [Government of Canada's Travel outside Canada website](#)
- [Identity-Based Resources for Travelling Abroad](#)

Instructions:

- 1. Identify Risks:** Review basic information regarding potential hazards in your destination using the resources listed above. Summarize your findings in the Location-Based Hazards and Activity-Based Hazards tables. We inputted some common hazards you may face to help guide your research. Not all the hazards listed will apply to all locations or all activities! If a hazard is not applicable to your circumstances, write N/A. We have also left space for you to add any additional hazards you may identify.
- 2. Evaluate Risks:** Using the Risk Assessment Matrix below, evaluate each hazard based on the following two factors:
 - a. **Probability Level (PL):** This refers to probability that you will encounter the hazard. Use the above resources to judge the likelihood of experiencing the hazard in your destination country.
 - b. **Impact Level (IL):** This refers to the negative impact experiencing this hazard would have on you. A hazard should be rated as Unacceptable or Intolerable if it would have serious, long-term negative effects on your quality of life (e.g., health, finances, job, education, etc.).

To determine a hazard's risk level, look at the intersection of the Probability Level and the Impact on the Matrix. For example, a hazard with a High Probability Level and a Tolerable Impact Level is a Medium Risk level.

Tips on Evaluating Risk: Most of the daily risk assessment we do is unconscious. Consciously evaluating risk is not an exact science. Remember that your ability to assess how likely a hazard is to occur and the level of impact it could have on you will be influenced by a number of factors, including how familiar you are with the hazard, your past experiences in similar situations, your emotions, and more. When trying to determine the likelihood and impact of a hazard when travelling, use the resources provided as much as possible, or reach out to trusted friends, family or Concordia International for advice.

If you have a strong reaction to a potential hazard you've identified (e.g., thinking "there is no way that will happen to me" or a strong sense of fear or anxiety that it will happen), pay attention. Ask yourself if you are possibly overestimating or underestimating the risk. Get a second opinion from a few other people on how they would evaluate and manage the hazard.

- 3. Identify Risk Management Strategies:** There are three main strategies to manage risk: 1) Avoid the hazard entirely, 2) Manage it by taking steps to reduce the probability you experience the hazard, and 3) Plan for what you will do if you experience the hazard and how you can reduce the impact of the hazard. Use the resources listed above to help you identify appropriate steps to manage and plan for the hazards you identify.
- 4. Create a Response Plan for High or Very High-Risk Hazards:** High or Very High-Risk hazards are hazards that, if encountered, could have significant, long-term, negative impacts on your quality of life. If you identify one or more High- or Very High-Risk hazards, you should re-evaluate the safety of your travel plans. We strongly encourage you to discuss your travel plans and the risks you've identified with your activity lead and the Concordia International team. We can help you strategize how to manage or avoid these risks. If you cannot manage or avoid High- or Very High-Risks, you should reconsider your current travel plans, especially if there are multiple hazards at this level.

Risk Assessment Matrix

	Acceptable Impact Little to no negative effect	Tolerable Impact Some negative effects but not critical	Unacceptable Impact Serious negative effects	Intolerable Impact Catastrophic negative effects
Remote Probability Risk unlikely to occur	Low Risk	Low Risk	Medium Risk	Medium Risk
Possible Probability Risk is likely to occur	Low Risk	Medium Risk	Medium Risk	High Risk
High Probability Risk will occur	Medium Risk	Medium Risk	High Risk	Very High Risk

Location-Based Risks:

	PL	IL	Risk Score	Risk Reduction Strategies
Hazards - Specify, if applicable	Remote, Possible, High, or N/A	Acceptable, Tolerable, Unacceptable, Intolerable, or N/A	Low, Medium, High, Very High	What steps will you take to avoid or manage this risk? What steps will you take to reduce the impact of this risk if you experience it?
Bug and animal bites				
Everyday Environmental Concerns e.g., water quality, smog, climate, food safety, etc.				
Natural Disasters				
Opportunistic Crimes				
Political or Social unrest				
Laws and Judicial System				
Alcohol and Drugs				

Transportation/Road Conditions e.g., walking, public transit, driving, etc.				
Quality of Health Care				
Vaccine-Preventable Diseases				
Non-Vaccine Preventable Diseases				
Other:				
Other:				
Other:				

Activity-Based Risks:

	PL	IL	Risk Score	Risk Reduction Strategies
Hazards - Specify, if applicable	Remote, Possible, High, or N/A	Acceptable, Tolerable, Unacceptable, Intolerable, or N/A	Low, Medium, High, Very High	What steps will you take to avoid or manage this risk? What steps will you take to reduce the impact of this risk if you experience it?
Driving				
Outdoor rock climbing				
Other:				
Other:				

Contingency Plan for “High” or “Very-High” Risk Hazards. If you are impacted by this risk, how will you respond? We strongly encourage you to discuss these hazards, your risk reduction strategies, and your contingency plan with your activity lead and the Concordia International team before departure. If you have identified several high or very high-risk hazards, you should reconsider the safety of your current travel plans.

Health and Wellness Planning

The prompts below will help you to anticipate, reflect on, and prepare for your medical and mental health needs while abroad. We encourage you to spend time developing your plan before you leave.

Resources for Health & Wellness Planning:

- [Health and Safety outside Canada](#)
- [Sexually transmitted infections \(information for travellers\)](#)
- [Resilient Traveling – Managing Stress & Enhancing Your Experience Abroad](#)
- [Emotional Health and Study Abroad – Guide for Students leaving on Short-term Study Abroad Program](#)
- [Concordia Health and Wellness - Building Good Mental Health](#)

Medications:

If you are on prescription medication(s) for health/mental health conditions, consider the following:

- Medications can go by different names in different countries.
- The legal status of medication can change in different countries. Verify if your medication is legal in your destination.
- It can be illegal to bring some medications into countries. Verify that you can transport your medication into the country. You should also check if there are limits on the amount you can bring.
- When travelling, prescription medications should be kept in their original packaging or bottle, with the original labeling.
- For short trips (4 weeks or less), consider bringing extra medication (if legally allowed) in case your return is delayed.
- If you run out of or lose your medication, what are the potential impacts? Do you have a plan for how you will replace your medication if you lose them or run out? Have you researched how easy it is for a visitor to see a doctor and get a prescription for your type of medications?
- If you have an ongoing condition or an unusual treatment plan, will a doctor who is not familiar with your medical history be willing to refill your prescription?
- Bring prescriptions, letters from your doctor, and other supporting medical documents as they may be helpful when trying to fill a prescription locally.
- If you will be abroad for an extended period, let your doctor at home know and confirm the best way for you to get in contact with them while abroad if necessary.

Planning for Physical Health Considerations:

Health Consideration	Risk reduction steps What steps will you take to avoid, reduce, or manage this risk?	Response Plan If you are impacted by this risk, how will you respond?
Example: Asthma	Will discuss with my doctor if I should bring additional medication. Will inform my group leader about my condition. Will bring additional medication with me. Will have medication on my person at all times. Will give backup medication to my group leader to carry at all times.	Will identify the nearest hospital to my accommodations and activity areas and verify that these hospitals are served by my health insurance provider. Will carry an emergency card on me with information in Polish. If treatment is required, I will go to the hospital and ask the group leader to notify my health insurance provider.
Food Allergies (if applicable)		
Medical Allergies (if applicable)		

Mental Health Considerations:

Everyone travelling abroad should evaluate the impact travel may have on their mental health and well-being. This plan will help you reflect upon and anticipate potential challenges and identify supports and coping strategies.

Important Note:

[Concordia's Counselling and Psychological Services](#) **cannot provide therapeutic support** to students who are not in the province, even if you are currently using their services. However, students **may** be able to access tele-counselling services while abroad through our wider network of providers.

Tele-counselling health services in our wider network of providers are free and available 24/7. These services can offer short-term counselling by phone or video. Access to these services is governed by student health insurance plans. Tele-counselling is a great first step in addressing your mental health needs. For a list of services that are available to Concordia students, please read through the [Phone and text support section of Concordia's Mental Health website](#).

NOTE: Not all services on this list will be able to support students who are abroad. **Before you leave, you must contact these services directly to verify if you can access them while abroad.**

Planning for Mental Health Considerations:

Description of my current mental health and any existing or previous mental health conditions I have experienced:
Impact of Travel: How will travelling impact my mental health and any existing or previous mental health conditions I have experienced? What specific things could travel trigger? What do “normal” levels of stress look like? How will I recognize if the stress I am experiencing is at an unhealthy level?
Early Warning Signs: What signs (e.g., behaviours, patterns, physical symptoms, etc.) am I aware of that indicate my mental health may be worsening, that the symptoms of my current mental health condition are becoming harder to manage, or that a previous mental health condition may be recurring?
Activity Lead / Host Organization Support: What kind of support would I want from the activity lead or host organization if I need it? What information should they be aware of to support me effectively? (
Sources of Support: Who (people/organizations) can support me while I am abroad? Make sure to verify: a) that they can provide support while you are abroad, b) how you will contact them, c) that they know the dates you will be travelling.

Name & Role:
(e.g. friend/family/therapist/sponsor/org.)

Phone/WhatsApp:

Email:

Name & Role:
Email:

Phone/ WhatsApp:

Name & Role:
Email:

Phone/WhatsApp:

Coping Strategies: What do I currently do to cope if my mental health is worsening? How can I replicate these activities while traveling? What new coping strategies can I use in my new destination (e.g., if the team sport you play to help you stay active is not available, is there a different sport you can try instead?)

Daily, Preventative, Stress Management Plan: What practices can I implement daily to help reduce my stress while abroad? Check out Health & Wellness service's [Building Good Mental Health](#) webpage for information and ideas.

Identity-Based Risks

Your various identities may shape your experience abroad. It can affect how you are generally perceived and can be a compounding factor in your likelihood of experiencing hazards and/or the level of harm you experience as a result. For some, the idea of experiencing negative identity-based experiences while travelling may be surprising, while for others, the fear and anxiety that a negative identity-based experience will happen may already be present.

"Evaluating" or "reducing" the risk associated with identity-based hazards can be difficult or not always possible. However, there are things you can do to help you navigate identity abroad. Students who have gone abroad for global learning were asked to share their tips, which we've summarized below:

Six Tips for Navigating Identity Abroad

1. Create a support network that you can lean on to help you process any identity-related experiences you may have. If possible, talk with them before hand to discuss your concerns, get advice, and identify coping strategies.
2. Be aware that you may get intrusive questions, or be asked to explain topics as a "representative" of your communities. Preparing answers in advance can be helpful to navigate these situations. Don't hesitate to set boundaries by changing the subject or declining to answer. Practice your answers with friends or family before you leave to get comfortable using them.
3. Facilitate conversations about your identities and the communities you belong to according to your comfort level. In some cases, you may find it empowering to have these discussions. However, it is not your job to educate others while you're abroad. Don't feel pressured to explain things about yourself.
4. Consider how you will present yourself abroad. Some students may choose to remain private about some or all of their identities. Others may be comfortable with being more open with just a few individuals or with everyone. Some may also choose to alter their physical presentation for a variety of reasons. There is no right or wrong way to navigate how you present yourself abroad. Do what feels the most comfortable for you and don't hesitate to adapt your approach along the way.
5. Personal safety should always be the priority. Trust your instincts and if you feel your situation is becoming unsafe, let Concordia International, your activity supervisor (if you have one) or your host organization know.
6. Keep things in perspective. Although it's a reality that you may experience identity-based risks abroad, it is not the guaranteed either. There are travellers of many different types of identities who go abroad and have positive experiences. Researching potential hazards and preparing for them can help ensure a great experience for you too!

Identity-Based Resources for Traveling Abroad:

- [Travel and your sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, and sex characteristics – Government of Canada](#)
- [Toronto Metropolitan University – Identity Abroad Webpages](#) (includes resources and guides for Racialized Travellers, Indigenous Travellers, Travellers of Faith Communities, Queer Travellers, and more).

- [Advice for women travellers – Government of Canada](#)
- [Trans Legal Mapping Report](#)
- [A trans* guide for staying safe while traveling](#)
- [IFSA Student Stories](#) (IFSA is a US organization that helps students study abroad. Students will often write about their experiences from the perspective of their various identities.)
- [Resources for LGBTQ+ Study Abroad Students](#)
- [Resources for Supporting Diversity and Inclusion in Education Abroad](#) (includes resources for first generation students, LGBTQ students, racialized students, students of faith communities, and more).
- [Return Trip Magazine](#) (Return Trip explores the relationship between travel and identity through personal essays, stories and more.)
- [Bani Amor – Decolonial Travel Writer](#) (Bani Amor is a genderqueer travel writer who explore the relationship between race, place and power.)

Identity-related questions to ask yourself before travelling:

- What is my destination culture's attitude toward my various identities? What types of stereotypes exist? How are people of my identity treated?
- Are there identity-based organizations in my host country that can provide support?
- What other support systems can I draw upon to help me overcome barriers or cope with incidents?
- How important is being part of a community (or communities) that I identify with to me? How will I find similar community(ies) abroad? If finding a community(ies) I identify with abroad isn't possible, how will I cope?
- How important is it to me to find other students who share my identity while abroad? How prepared am I to create these relationships?
- How are friendships and emotions expressed in my destination? What are the body language norms that I should be aware of?
- What is considered typical male and female social behaviour? What are the gender norms I should be aware of?
- What are my safety needs and how can they best be met abroad?
- What is the relationship between my destination country, my home country, and/or my place of racial/ethnic origin?
- What types of experiences do students of my identity typically have in the program and country I am considering?

Students with Disabilities

If you are participating in a university-related international education activity, we encourage you to communicate your accessibility needs to the staff/faculty member leading the activity, and/or the organizing office or department. If you receive support through the [Access Centre for Students with Disabilities \(ACSD\)](#), you should inform them of your participation in these activities as well.

The activity lead and/or the ACSD will be able to work with you to ensure that your accessibility needs are being met while abroad. Please be aware that should you choose to disclose your needs shortly before you go abroad or when you are abroad, it may be too late to arrange adequate accommodations.

Before you go it is important to find out as much as you can about your destination, how they view disability, and what level and types of accommodations are typically provided. Be prepared to deal with different ways of accommodating your disability.

Resources for students with disabilities travelling abroad:

- [Government of Canada – Travelling with disabilities](#): Basic information and advice for planning to travel with a disability.
- [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention – Traveling with a disability](#): Information, tips, and recommendations for planning and travelling with a disability.
- [Mobility International USA \(MIUSA\) Resource Library](#): MIUSA is a disability-led non-profit organization that is advancing disability rights and leadership globally by empowering people with disabilities around the world to achieve their human rights through international exchange and development. They have a resource library with articles, guides, and other resources on a wide range of topics related to participating in international education programs and international travel.
- [Gallaudet University – Deaf Identity Abroad](#): A resource page specifically for deaf-identified students looking to travel abroad by Gallaudet University.

Important questions to research before departing:

- What is my destination culture's attitude toward individuals with disabilities?
- What are my legal rights as a person with a disability in my destination country?
- What barriers might I encounter in planning to go abroad?
- What barriers might I encounter while abroad?
- What support systems will I have access to at home or in my destination country to help me overcome these barriers?
- Will the resources and supports I use currently be available to me while abroad? If not, can I access other resources here, or in my destination country, to replace the ones I'll no longer have access to?
- In what ways should I prepare to adjust to living in a foreign country? (re: housing, food, culture, language, healthcare, etc.)
- How many on-site resources (offices, staff, hospitals, counseling centers, note-taking assistants, books on tape, etc.) are offered in my host city/university?

- How different is the academic environment, and is there flexibility for longer test times, reduced workloads, mandatory excursions, etc.?

Specific considerations for physical disabilities:

- Overall, what are the physical environment and terrain like of my destination city?
- Are the locations I will be visiting in general accessible?
- If local transportation such as buses, trains, and planes are available (and corresponding bus or train station and airport), are they accessible?
- Are there accessible housing options close to the activities I will be participating in? If there are dining areas, laundry rooms, and study areas, are these accessible as well?
- Are bathrooms in key areas (classrooms, housing, libraries) accessible?
- Are local businesses (banks, shopping centers, markets, grocery stores) accessible?
- Will I need an adapter for charging my electrical mobility equipment?
- Can I bring mobility aids with me to increase accessibility?
- Can I bring spare parts for my mobility devices in case of damage?
- What accessibility supports and services are available from the transportation services I will be using?