



# Education Abroad Risk Management in Canada's Colleges and Institutes

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# 1. Introduction

Part of a project designed to build the capacity of the Colleges and Institutes Canada (CICan) membership to undertake effective risk management practices in education abroad programming, this report analyzes CICan members' current practices and states of readiness for outbound international mobility. Throughout, the report details gaps in coverage, but it also celebrates best practices and promising innovations that both allow participants of education abroad to engage in safer travel and protect institutions from legal liabilities and excessive financial risk.

To facilitate the assessment of CICan membership, we secured interviews with staff at 17 institutions across Canada.<sup>1</sup> Ultimately, from the 17 participating institutions we interviewed over 30 college employees in January and February 2021 and conducted reviews of relevant internal documents, such as official policies, emergency plans, and liability waivers, to name just a few.

We sent invitations to participate in this review to a total of 33 institutions selected from across the country and home to varying levels of outbound mobility. The total of 17 acceptances represents a response rate of slightly above 50%.<sup>2</sup>

The institutions consulted exhibit significant variation in the size and scope of their mobility capabilities. This is especially apparent in the range of students travelling abroad. Prior to the Covid-19 pandemic, these numbers ranged from a low of 20 students to a high of 800 annually. Institutions rarely set targeted goals for the number of students travelling abroad, but those that set goals tend to choose ambitious ones. These included tripling the numbers of students going abroad within a few years and, in the case of two institutions, setting targeted percentages of total enrolment going abroad each year (3% and 7% of total enrolment). At the vast majority of institutions, less than 1% of total student enrolment travels abroad for educational purposes in any given year. Though setting specific goals for the expansion of outbound mobility is rare, all institutions consulted in this review have witnessed growth in outbound mobility in recent years and hope to continue growing their capabilities once safe international travel is once again possible.

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<sup>1</sup> *The following institutions graciously participated in the review: Algonquin College; Bow Valley College; British Columbia Institute of Technology; Centennial College; Durham College; Fanshawe College; George Brown College; Humber College; Langara College; Medicine Hat College; Mohawk College; Nova Scotia Community College; Saskatchewan Polytechnic; Selkirk College; Seneca College; Sheridan College.*

<sup>2</sup> *The following institutions received multiple invitations to participate, but their representatives either declined or elected not to respond: Confederation College, Conestoga College, Dawson College, Douglas College, Georgian College, Kwantlen Polytechnic, Lethbridge College, Mohawk College, NAIT, Norquest College, North Island College, Okanagan College, Red River College, SAIT, Vancouver Community College, and Vanier College.*

All of the institutions consulted offer a range of mobility programs. These include semester exchanges, summer institutes, work opportunities (such as work-integrated learning, internships, and co-op), and, especially, faculty-led international trips. Due to the condensed and highly structured nature of many college programs, opportunities for semester-long exchanges are less common. Most frequently, faculty-led international trips constitute the bulk of an institution's outbound mobility and offer the most promising potential for significantly growing in the number of students travelling abroad.

With some exceptions, risk management staff and outbound mobility staff are housed in separate units. For employees in dedicated risk management units, outbound mobility is generally a very small element of their total portfolio, whereas risk management pertaining to international travel tends to be a more substantial portion of mobility staff's workload. There is no consensus on where best to house mobility staff. International education units with risk management responsibilities are slightly more likely to report to the VP Academic or its equivalent than they are to the VP Finance or its equivalent. Very rarely, these units can be found elsewhere, such as in Corporate Strategy or Human Relations.

In general, relatively few staff members work on risk management. Though the staff members in multiple offices might be likely to touch on some aspect of mobility, interviewees most often indicated that just two or three employees work on risk management. With this minimal staff complement, sector-wide tools and resources hold particular importance for increasing mobility capabilities while mitigating risk.

This report is the first step toward creating these sector-wide tools and resources. To highlight the relative prevalence of specific tools or practices currently employed by CICan institutions, this report uses a colour-coded scale throughout. Items coloured green indicate that these tools or practices are employed at 90% or more of institutions; yellow indicates that between 65% and 89% do so; while red means that a tool or practice is in use at less than 65% of the institutions included in this review. As a general rule, the categories involved in these colour-coded charts highlight tentatively recommended standards of practice.

This report is oriented around specific topics, each of which receive their own section. It covers pre-departure training, liability waivers, assessing and mitigating risk, strengthening governance and policy, emergency and crisis response, and system integration. It follows these sections with suggestions for how to both drive compliance with risk management procedures and promote "risk sense" among students, staff, and faculty involved in study abroad. The report's penultimate section details the specific needs that college staff have identified in the areas of safety abroad and risk management and follows this with a gap analysis that identifies other needs and potential ways forward.

One such way forward is included in this report. Section 10 consists of a guidelines document for managing risk in outbound mobility. This section is written largely in a checklist style, but

it includes lengthier text sections explaining the rationale for adopting specific policies, procedures, and practices that can help mitigate risk for the institution and promote safer travel for all participants. It includes more foundational practices (“Foundations for Excellence”) as well as suggestions for institutions with high outbound mobility capacities that are looking to promote a culture of continuous improvement (“Improving on Excellence”). To aid institutions in choosing what to prioritize, this latter category is frequently divided into “quick wins” and endeavours that require lengthier time and/or more resource intensive commitments.

## 2. Pre-Departure Training

One of the most important ways that institutions communicate the risks involved in travel to participants and provide strategies to mitigate them is through pre-departure orientation sessions. These sessions provide an opportunity to go over all relevant policies and alert participants to resources, while functioning as proof of an institution’s duty of care. The widespread use of pre-departure training among CIGan institutions underlines that it is not enough to just have risk management policies and procedures, but that individuals must know how and why to use them. Because these pre-departure sessions are important for both students and participating staff and faculty, we look at the training provided to each of these groups in turn.

### 2.1 For Students

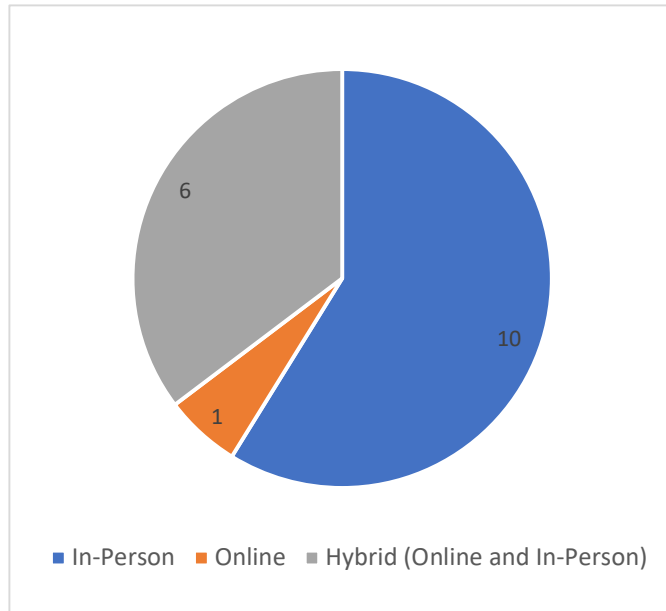
Every institution in this review officially requires that students attend a mandatory pre-departure orientation session. For some institutions, this requirement is a recent development. In one case, an institution piloted its first mandatory session just prior to the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic. It has since made it permanent. While there has been concern about students with international work placements potentially falling through the gaps at some institutions, all students participating in international faculty-led study trips are required to attend pre-departure orientation in order to be allowed to travel.

With a single exception, pre-departure orientations are centralized, with a specific staff member or team charged with developing and delivering the sessions for the entire college community. A mobility coordinator or manager generally delivers sessions. In many cases, other institutional resources are drawn upon to deliver these sessions. These have included programming from relevant faculty and inviting offices of diversity or their equivalents to assist with orientations for certain destinations. Just one institution does not have a set program. At this institution without a central pre-departure program for all students, each program or unit is in charge of determining what gets included in pre-departure orientation.

Sessions ranged considerably in length. Most commonly, sessions are approximately a few hours in length. For lengthier travel programs involving more remote travel, such as the

Government of Canada’s International Youth Internship Program (IYIP) involving several CIG institutions and a broad range of destinations, pre-departure training can last up to a week.

Figure 1: Pre-Departure Orientation Delivery Format



### Promising Practice: Online Modules as a Backup

While faculty-led international trips have timelines established well in advance, students engaging in international work experiences may secure their placements or inform their institution about their plans with little time to prepare. To ensure that students involved in WIL can always receive pre-departure orientation, Seneca College is preparing fully online modules as a last resort. While it intends to maintain in-person sessions, these online modules will ensure that every student travelling abroad receives a baseline level of information.

As the chart above reveals, a majority of these sessions are delivered exclusively in person. A hybrid approach is becoming more common, with institutions combining online elements with an in-person session and many indicating a desire to move more elements or even the entire programming online. Currently, just one of the 17 institutions offers pre-departure orientation exclusively online, though at least two other institutions are considering making the shift toward exclusively online orientations. Notably, the institution with an exclusively online orientation is the only one that does not include destination-specific material. Institutions considering exclusively online orientations would be well-advised to include strategies for ensuring that destination-specific material remains a significant component.

Pre-departure sessions cover a wide range of material. They commonly include material on accessing healthcare (including mental health services), travel safety tips, behavioural expectations, intercultural competencies, setting realistic travel expectations, financial information, and discussions of political situations in the destination country. Less commonly, these pre-departure sessions include targeted information for students from

equity-seeking groups such as those with disabilities, racialized students, and LGBTQ2S+ students. The inclusion of all of these categories of information is a standard of practice that CICA institutions should strive to meet.

The chart below indicates whether material is likely to be covered in pre-departure sessions. Green indicates that at least 90% of institutions include this material in their sessions; yellow indicates that between 65 and 89% do so; red means that fewer than 65% of institutions include such information.

Figure 2: Pre-Departure Session Content for Students

Healthcare/ Mental Health	Intercultural Competencies	Travel Safety Tips	Realistic Expectations	Financial Matters	Behavioural Expectations	Political Situations	Info for Equity- Seeking Groups
100%	94%	100%	88%	88%	100%	82%	41%

As the chart reveals, the most notable omission in pre-departure orientation sessions involves targeted information for equity-seeking groups. There are a number of reasons for this. In many cases, what might be sensitive topics for some are likely to be broached at the application and evaluation stages, where students meet one-on-one with program coordinators. However, not all students will self-identify. In most cases, LGBTQ2S+ students will not receive targeted information relating to their destination in pre-departure orientation sessions. Depending on laws and prevailing attitudes in the country or countries of destination, this omission could become a personal safety issue. Omissions are also related to a lack of experience or in translating institutional policies to outbound mobility opportunities. For example, though all institutions have accessibility policies, there has been limited work on making study abroad endeavours accessible or publicizing accessibility options, which affects the composition of the cohorts of student travellers and the pre-departure programming they receive.

There is an absence of formal standards for what to include in pre-departure orientation sessions. Among the institutions consulted, 94% have developed their orientation sessions in-house. The sole exception contracted out the development of all of its outbound mobility risk management policies to consultants, including the content of its pre-departure sessions.



In the absence of formal standards across the sector, staff have cobbled together programming from past experience and formal and informal communities of practice. Many of the individuals involved in creating and delivering pre-departure sessions have themselves studied abroad and have used that experience to inform the content of their programming. Most of the individuals hired within this area possessed significant experience, whether as a participant in study abroad opportunities or having worked in the field at another institution. Staff stay abreast of best practices through Canadian Bureau of International Education (CBIE) conferences, presentations, independent research, and establishing or maintaining connections with colleagues across the sector. They also typically depend on post-program student feedback in order to determine strengths and weaknesses of the current content and approach to pre-departure orientation and to identify any gaps in their programming.

### **Promising Practice: Risk Sense as a Learning Outcome**

As part of the pre-departure process, both Selkirk College and Nova Scotia Community College require students to complete their own risk assessment assignments. Students complete their own risk assessments based off of independent research from the Global Affairs Canada website and other sources. Students not only explore issues relating to healthcare and general travel safety, but questions of racial and religious tolerance and the culture's acceptance of homosexuality, producing destination-specific information and positioning risk sense as an active learning outcome.

As we will see, many institutions have contracted third-party service providers to coordinate portions of their emergency response and risk assessment processes. Institutions who use third parties for these services receive detailed country-specific information from the company and often incorporate this material into their pre-departure sessions.

## **2.2 For Staff and Faculty**

The prevalence of faculty-led international study trips in the college sector has led many of the colleges and institutes surveyed to develop training for faculty and staff involved in these trips. In all cases, staff and faculty travelling abroad with students receive some pre-departure training. 82% of institutions provide this training in-person; the remainder provide faculty and staff with written materials. All but two institutions indicate that faculty travelling abroad receive instructions about specific processes and established procedures to follow in specific situations, but how this is done varies widely. Some institutions report that this instruction is provided in-person, while others say this knowledge is delivered through

printed material or the approval process, or some combination of all of the above. Of the two institutions who do not provide specific instructions to faculty, one relies on an app to manage its emergency response, which staff claims frees faculty from these responsibilities, while the other lacks centralized coordination of its education abroad risk processes, leaving individual departments free to instruct or not instruct their staff and faculty as they see fit.

Our conversations with staff highlighted five key elements included in faculty and staff training. They are spotting and responding to mental health concerns; health issues, including accessing local medical help; emergency and crisis response; legal issues and concepts; and intercultural competency. Using the same colour-coded scale as above, the following chart indicates whether these issues are likely to be included in pre-departure training.

*Figure 3: Pre-Departure Session Content for Staff and Faculty*

<b>Spotting and Responding to Mental Health Concerns</b>	<b>Health Issues, Including Accessing Local Medical Help</b>	<b>Emergency and Crisis Response</b>	<b>Legal Issues and Concepts</b>	<b>Intercultural Competency</b>
59%	82%	88%	53%	41%

As the chart above reveals, training for staff and faculty tends to have more gaps than the training provided to students. On the more comprehensive end, 88% of institutions provide staff and faculty with specific training or instructions relating to emergency and crisis response and 82% cover health issues, including accessing local medical help.

Just 59% of the institutions surveyed provide training to staff and faculty on spotting and responding to mental health concerns. In our discussions with education abroad staff, a few noted a desire from faculty and staff to receive more training in this area. Only 53% of institutions instruct faculty and staff in legal issues such as duty of care and liability. Many of those that do instruct faculty in this area have indicated that they do so in part because of faculty concerns and questions about their personal liability.

### **Promising Practice: Pre-Departure Refreshes**

Many institutions require faculty and staff travelling abroad to retake orientation sessions each year. At Bow Valley College and Niagara College, all staff travelling abroad is required to do an annual refresher each year. In other cases, faculty and staff participate in student pre-departure sessions, ensuring that their knowledge remains fresh and up to date.

A majority of faculty and staff travelling abroad receive no training in intercultural competencies, with just 41% receiving such training. Institutions are divided into two camps on the necessity of providing this training. In the majority are institutions which assume that faculty are already experts in this area. Adherents of this position point out that faculty tend to be quite well-traveled, well-educated, and in many cases are from the regions to which they take students. Other institutions do not assume that faculty are experts when it comes to intercultural competencies and offer a base level of training, frequently in tandem with the students they will be accompanying abroad.

In many cases, there are professional development opportunities at institutions that provide additional training in some of these areas. Staff and faculty are likely to have access to training or resources to help them spot and respond to student mental health concerns. Furthermore, many large colleges have large numbers of international students, suggesting that faculty may have developed intercultural competencies through practice and/or additional training opportunities. This said, care must be taken to determine whether staff and faculty involved in education abroad activities have accessed and benefited from these resources.

It is quite unlikely that faculty and staff would have received training elsewhere on legal issues and concepts such as duty of care and liability that specifically apply to managing risks in education abroad. Nor would any of the other broadly relevant training available on campus be optimized toward an international learning situation. Including all of these informational categories in the formal training provided to staff would likely produce better prepared trip leaders and, by extension, provide a better prepared first-line of support to student travellers.

### **Promising Practice: Clearly Alerting Students to Rights they are Waiving**

Waivers used by Algonquin College, Durham College, George Brown College, Nova Scotia Community College, and Selkirk College immediately alert students to the rights that they are waiving at the beginning of the waiver through the use of highlighted, enlarged, or bolded text that is free of legalese. In the context of dangerous activities, a simple waiver requirement alone may not be enough to protect institutions. With courts looking at specific ways that providers alert participants to the more onerous aspects of waivers and ensure their comprehension, immediately alerting students to the rights they are waiving may add an extra layer of protection.

# 3. Liability Waivers

Every institution consulted in this review requires students to sign a liability waiver prior to travelling. In general, these waivers are largely boilerplate with not much variation. Most often, institutions require students to sign an assumption of risk agreement, agree to indemnify the institution, and to release the institution from all liability. It is important to note, however, that if an institution engaged in truly negligent behaviour, a waiver would not stop it from being held responsible. A comprehensive liability waiver is never a substitute for upholding an institution’s duty of care.

In general, assumption of risk agreements, indemnity clauses, and liability releases amount to pretty much the same thing, though the courts may not always agree. In the United States courts have occasionally struck down waivers and indemnity clauses at the same time that they have upheld assumption of risk agreements. In light of this, institutions are wise to incorporate as many of these elements into their waivers as possible.

Where liability waivers tend to differ is to whether or not they enumerate specific risks and whether they immediately alert students to rights they are waiving in language free of legalese. The chart below indicates the likelihood of a liability waiver to include these elements.

Figure 4: Liability Waiver Elements

Enumerate Specific Risks	Assumption of Risk	Indemnify Institution	Release of Liability	Immediately Alert Students to Rights they are Waiving
70%	100%	90%	90%	50%

Seventy percent of liability waivers alert students to specific risks. Most of these alert students to the risk of illness, injury, and death. Several also point out transportation risks, which tend to be the riskiest activities involved in international travel in terms of incident frequency.

Only rarely are waivers accompanied with an in-person discussion of specific risks that students may face abroad. In many cases, students are expected to sign the waiver quickly. This can be a potential issue as courts often require proof that participants have had an opportunity to consult parents or others who they trust (including legal advice) and have had time to properly internalize the content of the waiver. This issue is mitigated somewhat by the half of institutions that use waivers which immediately alert students to the specific rights they are waiving, such as the right to sue, in highlighted, bolded, or enlarged text.

## 4. Assessing and Mitigating Risk

When considering international travel, institutions first assess and then attempt to mitigate risk. This particularly occurs in three key areas: the student approval process, the risk assessment process, and the insurance requirements imposed on program participants.

### 4.1 Approval of Student Travel

An important way that many institutions seek to mitigate risk is through the student approval process. All but two institutions in this review include an interview or vetting process before giving students approval to travel abroad. Among the most common requirements for students to receive approval is that they be enrolled full-time and be in good academic standing.

Many institutions require more than good academic standing for a student to receive approval. In 59% of institutions, the approval process includes checking a student's record for any behavioural or misconduct issues. In most of the institutions that include a scan for past instances of student misconduct, serious misconduct issues make students ineligible for travel. However, many other institutions reject this practice. In one institution that scans for past instances of misconduct, these issues are "not a significant factor" in the approval discussion. A staff member at another institution stated that "behavioural issues don't put you on the top of the list," but that these students would still be able to travel if there are available spaces. Other institutions purposely do not explore whether a student has a past history of behavioural issues or misconduct, feeling that there are privacy issues at stake or the potential for personal biases to affect student records and staff approvals.

Students are rarely vetted for study abroad opportunities on the basis of health. Just two institutions in this review require students to sign an attestation of good health. Another two institutions talk about the need for student fitness, with one of these institutions requiring students to make an appointment with an international travel health clinic. One college's outdoor adventure program requires students to be in good health, but this requirement forms the basis for entry into the entire program. Any of its students applying to study abroad would have already completed their health requirements. In general, it is not recommended to evaluate eligibility on the basis of health. Institutions possess a duty to accommodate students with special health needs and are subject to the Human Rights Code of Canada.

Institutions rarely have clear accessibility policies available for students with disabilities interested in travelling abroad. While all of the institutions consulted have campus-wide accessibility policies, they lack clearly defined accommodations policies for education abroad purposes. Staff at 65% of institutions consulted have staff described their disability accommodations policies or procedures for education abroad as being “ad hoc.” Typically, when a student self-identifies as needing accommodations, mobility staff seek to work with trip partners to see what accommodations they can provide and liaise with campus services to explore options. Occasionally, these ad hoc procedures have led to student aides accompanying students with physical disabilities abroad, but these decisions are made on a case-by-case basis. It is noted that discrimination based on disability is against the human rights code.

In determining any policies or practices around student approvals, including accessibility accommodations and student eligibility, institutions would be well advised to consult legal counsel to determine whether their proposed actions could be seen as discriminatory in any way or a violation of the Human Rights Code of Canada.

### **Promising Innovation: Identifying Accessible Travel Options**

Centennial College is currently exploring ways to identify accessible study abroad options up front. It plans to include an accessible icon on website links and other promotional materials. Such a move, it is hoped, will both allow students with disabilities to travel safely and promote study abroad opportunities to students who might instinctively self-exclude.

## **4.2 Risk Assessments**

All institutions consulted attempt to assess destination- and activity-based risk as part of the approval process. In addition to the assessment of student participants, the partners, locations, and activities involved in education abroad are all assessed from a standpoint of potential risk. How this is done varies widely, particularly with regard to whether or not formal tools are employed and to whether multiple sources of information are used in the assessment process.

Just 53% of institutions use formal tools such as risk registers/matrices or site visit questionnaires to assess and mitigate risk. The majority of institutions that use formal tools make use of risk assessment tools developed in house. Two institutions require site visits for approval and make use of templates designed for this purpose. These tools can be more or less extensive. The forms used for site visits ask dozens of questions, covering routine matters such as available accommodations and banking facilities as well as questions geared toward potential crises, such as the presence of travel advisories, political unrest, and the availability of local medical facilities. In general, site visits and detailed questionnaires tend to require

significantly more legwork on the part of staff than do most risk assessments. Site visit templates and tools that require more inputs are more capable of gearing specific questions toward potential risks facing certain types of students, such as racialized students or LGBTQ2S+ students.

Risk registers vary significantly in complexity. At the low end, they may only ask faculty whether or not there is a travel advisory and whether students will be engaging in any high-risk activities, however defined (or not defined, as is often the case). On the more complex end is Centennial College, which uses a risk matrix that provides clear definitions of certain types of risk, a partner assessment form that mirrors what is generally found in site visit questionnaires, and a global experience risk assessment form that is first filled out by faculty and then reviewed and added to by the international team. This final form includes several categories of risk, asks for the development of strategies to mitigate risk, and includes clear definitions indicating which types of risk the institution is willing to accept.

### **Promising Practice: Defining and Comprehensively Assessing Risk**

Among participating CICan institutions, Centennial College possesses the most developed risk assessment process. Centennial makes use of a risk matrix, a new program/partner assessment form, and a global experience risk assessment form. The risk matrix clearly defines specific levels of activity- and destination-based risk. The partner assessment form asks for security and regional advisories, the likelihood of extreme weather situations, the location of the nearest medical facility, and about the existence of 24/7 student support. The global experiences form is a template with several risk categories: health and safety; political issues; social/cultural issues; security issues; and other. For each category, faculty first fill in identified risks, their risk reduction strategies, the likelihood of the risk occurring, and the institution's willingness to accept this level of risk.

Most institutions come nowhere near this level of comprehensiveness, particularly the 47% of institutions not making use of formal tools or processes. In these cases, the risk assessment process tends to reside in a manager's head. The process can be more or less complex, with staff occasionally making use of multiple sources of information. More often than not, however, only a single source of information is used: Global Affairs Canada. As the chart below reveals, this is common for both institutions with developed risk assessment tools and those without.

Figure 5: Sources of Information Used in Risk Assessments

Global Affairs Canada	Third-Party Service Providers	International Partners	Other International Government Advisories
100%	35%	29%	12%

In addition to Global Affairs Canada, a small but significant percentage of institutions make use of information from third-party service providers. This mainly refers to third-party partners, such as those capable of providing detailed real-time risk assessments of individual countries to its clients. Other sources of information used are existing institutional partners and, more infrequently, other international government advisories. The use of more than one information source, depending on the situation, allows for greater risk awareness and help mitigate against potential oversight.

### 4.3 Insurance

All institutions in this review require students to be insured while abroad. At 59% of institutions, students are required to be covered by a specific policy. In many cases, institutions purchase this insurance for students directly. In one case, the institution purchases this insurance for students, but subsequently bills it to them through their student accounts. Institutions that manage the purchasing of insurance for students gain significant advantages in ensuring that all of their students are covered. By purchasing insurance for students, the institution knows that a student is covered. Institutions that require students to purchase a specific policy can be provided with an institution-specific portal and are informed of which students have purchased the policy. Some institutions have built in a two-step verification of coverage, receiving both a list of purchasers from the insurance provider and requiring students to upload proof of purchase.

Of the 41% of the institutions consulted that do not require a specific policy, 57% have established minimum coverages. These include between \$1 and \$2 million in required coverage, plus specific repatriation and evacuation components. Two of the three remaining institutions have clear recommendations about the types of insurance students should purchase but fail to specify minimum coverages. One college possesses a decentralized approach, with individual programs able to set standards. This has led to varying requirements and no set standard of monitoring coverage.

How institutions without a required provider monitor insurance coverage varies considerably. In one case, students are simply required to sign a form indicating that they have insurance, but staff were unable to confirm whether or not the accuracy of this confirmation is actually monitored. There is considerable concern from a number of staff members at institutions without a mandatory provider about their ability to ensure that



students are all covered, particularly around confirming purchases and understanding what is covered by each policy. There are also potential issues surrounding the coordination of emergency response, particularly around evacuation, if participating students and staff are covered by different providers.

### 4.3.1 PROCUREMENT STANDARDS FOR INSURANCE AND OTHER THIRD-PARTY PROVIDERS

Institutions generally approach specific risks through one of four strategies. They are risk avoidance, risk mitigation, risk retention, and risk transfer.<sup>3</sup> Respectively, these strategies entail not engaging in a specific activity, changing aspects of the activity to reduce its risk, accepting all of the risks involved in an activity, and shifting the responsibility for the activity to another service provider. This latter strategy is employed when institutions contract third-party service providers.

Overall, it is clear that many individual institutions had little input into the minimum insurance coverages they require for education abroad activities. In general, institutions that have established minimum coverages have done so by looking at the insurance other institutions use. Furthermore, several staff noted that they are not experts when it comes to insurance. As a result, the minimum coverages established within the sector are driven mainly by what insurance companies choose to offer more than what specific institutions are demanding. In this situation, there is an opportunity for CICA to provide guidelines on minimum standards of coverage for the sector as a whole, allowing institutions to seek out insurance from a position of heightened expertise.

#### Promising Practice: Purchasing Insurance for Students

Increasing numbers of institutions are not only requiring students to be on a specific insurance policy but are purchasing the policy for students themselves. This is by far the easiest way to ensure that students are adequately covered, as it can be time consuming if everyone is on a different policy and staff are not trained in the details of specific insurance policies to ensure coverage requirements are met. With insurance typically no more than two dollars per day, the cost is negligible for short faculty-led international trips, though institutions can still require reimbursement from students.

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<sup>3</sup> For more, see Lynne Mitchell and Wayne Miles, *Risk Sense: Developing and Managing International Education Activities with Risk in Mind* (Guelph: University of Guelph, 2009).

### Promising Practice: Launching Relationships with Established Partners

When Durham College first looked to establish agreements with third-party service providers, it only considered relationships with service providers that had worked with Canadian partners before. As part of the vetting process, Durham reached out to the provider's existing Canadian partners to discuss their working relationship. Such an approach allows institutions seeking to either launch or significantly expand their capabilities to ensure they enter into relationships with well-regarded and established providers who are familiar with Canadian institutions and travellers.

When contracting third-party providers, all institutions are beholden to formal procurement policies, whether set by provincial and/or institutional policies. However, in many cases the expense of these agreements falls well below the thresholds triggering RFPs. International travel insurance for outbound mobility, in particular, is often an add-on to an existing relationship. Frequently, the institution already worked with the

company on providing healthcare to international students and considers providing insurance to students travelling abroad as simply broadening a relationship with a trusted partner.

In general, institutions have not developed formal requirements for what they are seeking in a third-party provider. Much like their approaches to developing pre-departure orientation, institutions first look to see what their fellow institutions are doing. In many cases, when it comes to developing procurement standards the process is more akin adopting a fellow institution's practices than it is to setting individual standards. In a singular exception, one institution entered into agreements based off of suggestions from a hired consultant. However, that consultant's recommendations were based largely off of what other institutions were doing. For smaller institutions or those just in the process of launching sizeable mobility programs, this technique of adopting the practices of institutions with more sizeable mobility capabilities has clear advantages, ensuring that relationships are built with companies with proven track-records and experience working with Canadian clients. There remains room, however, for CICan institutions to collectively articulate a sector-specific minimum standard of coverage.

# 5. Strengthening Governance and Policy

Most institutions have experienced significant governance or policy changes within the last five years. Almost all of these major changes relate to two developments: either the unit in charge of education abroad risk management has shifted (i.e., from academic to finance, or vice-versa) or the existence of formal education abroad risk policies is a new development.

Our review has found that there are three major ways that institutions seek to strengthen their governance and their individual policies and procedures. They are: 1) Conducting policy reviews; 2) Responding to events or unforeseen circumstances abroad; and 3) Receiving targeted feedback from participants. The chart below indicates the likelihood an institution uses these strategies.

Figure 6: Strategies for Strengthening Governance, Policy, and Procedures

Policy Reviews	Regularly Scheduled Policy Reviews	Events Occurring Abroad Inform Policy or Procedural Changes	Post-Program Debriefs for Participants	Post-Program Debriefs Designed to Inform Policy/Procedures	Post-Program Debriefs Ask Specific Questions About How Risks and Incidents were Handled
59%	18%	47%	88%	76%	29%

As the chart reveals, 59% of institutions consulted engage in reviews of their policies and procedures. This low total is due more to the relative newness of many institutions’ policies than any other factor, with many institutions only instituting policies within the last few years and having yet to commit to a full review. What is most notable is how few institutions – three, accounting for just 18% of the total – commit to regularly scheduled policy reviews. In practice, policy reviews have occurred following new hires or a decision to hire an external consultant. Relatively rare are policies specifying that an institution must conduct reviews according to a set schedule.

Nearly half of institutions report that events or unplanned incidents occurring abroad have led to policy or procedural changes going forward. These matters can range from choosing to no longer use a hotel with cleanliness issues to matters pertaining to student health that have led to changes in insurance policies. Of the institutions who have not experienced incidents abroad that have led to changed policies or procedures, some give credit to robust policies, but most acknowledge the importance of luck. Given the potential of incidents abroad to lead to policy changes, many institutions’ staff highlighted the value of sharing the responses to

these experiences within the wider CICA community, allowing all to learn from one's misfortune.

Most institutions conduct post-program debriefs for participants. Usually these are conducted in person, whether in a group or one-on-one. Occasionally, they consist only of a survey. These sessions and surveys can be geared toward updating policies and procedures. However, while 88% of institutions hold post-program debriefs, just 76% report that these debriefs include elements designed to inform policies and procedures. Most commonly, such feedback is used to strengthen pre-departure orientation sessions, particularly in cases where a student or group was the first from the institution to travel to a specific destination or was among the first to be engaged in a new program.

### **Promising Practice: Uncovering Unreported Incidents**

During its post-program debriefs, Centennial College asks students if they experienced any incidents that they did not report or felt were not serious enough to report. Through asking specific questions and teasing out uncomfortable moments in discussions, Centennial has found out about serious incidents and has been able to put preventative measures in place (including ending a specific partnership) going forward.

It is exceedingly rare for post-program debriefs to be designed to ask specific questions about risks experienced abroad and how incidents were handled. Despite this, most staff feel that they would follow up with students who have experienced incidents abroad, and many were able to provide examples of doing so in the past. A more serious gap exists around teasing out specific experiences that made students feel uncomfortable or unsafe but that students neglected to report for various reasons. Occasionally, institutions that ask these more probing questions have found out about serious incidents and have taken action going forward to protect the health and safety of future travellers.

In addition to the strategies detailed above, institutions attempt to keep up with best practices through a number of avenues. These include through making use of resources provided by associations like the Canadian Bureau for International Education (CBIE), The Forum on Education Abroad, and NAFSA: Association of International Educators, as well as by reading journals, purchasing web training, establishing informal or formal professional learning communities, and by establishing or maintaining relationships with colleagues at other institutions.

# 6. Emergency and Crisis Response

Even with the best planning and the strongest policies, any travel entails significant risks. This section explores institutions’ capacity for emergency and risk response, focusing particularly on how institutions keep track of students and staff abroad, the resources provided to travellers in an emergency, formal crisis response procedures, knowing when something constitutes an emergency that requires action, and strategies for continuous improvement in emergency response.

## 6.1 Monitoring

A key element of emergency response is knowing where students and staff are in the first place. The following chart indicates how institutions keep track of their travellers.

Figure 7: Monitoring Travellers Abroad

Institution Possesses Itineraries	Registration of Canadians Abroad (Mandatory)	Third-Party App
100%	71%	47%

All of the institutions consulted maintain copies of student itineraries or note students’ general dates of travel. Beyond this, a majority of institutions require travellers who are Canadian citizens to register with the Government of Canada’s free Registration of Canadians Abroad (ROCA) service. In the event of an emergency abroad or a personal crisis at home, ROCA provides important communications to travellers. With ROCA only available for Canadian citizens, many institutions suggest (but do not require) that international students register with a comparable service from their country of citizenship, should one be available.

Increasing numbers of institutions are using third-party apps capable of contacting students in emergencies and monitoring their location. The awareness of such apps is most pronounced among larger institutions; a number of smaller institutions were unaware that

### Promising Innovation: Developing Policies for Side-Travel

At a majority of institutions, staff report that they do not have official policies pertaining to side-travel or to students who extend their trips beyond their program's finishing date. Uniquely, Centennial College is in the process of approving an Extended Travel Plans and Side Trip Agreement spelling out the rights and responsibilities of students who are engaging in additional travel, including specific requirements pertaining to extending travel insurance and securing trip approval from the college.

using apps was a possibility. Several apps are currently in use by CIGan institutions, each of which is designed to aid students in emergency situations. In general, students are not required to use an app's geolocating features, but they are often required to check in on a regular schedule. In all cases, downloading the app becomes a mandatory requirement for travelling abroad. One additional institution makes use of an app for faculty and staff travellers, but it does not use it for students.

Using apps can help institutions get in touch during emergency situations with students who may be

taking side-trips on the weekend or engaging in other travel that is unknown to their home institution. While most institutions ask students to update them about their additional travel plans, many staff members believe that students often neglect to do so. Though students may elect not to be geolocated, having an app ensures that students can receive crisis communications so long as they regularly connect to Wi-Fi. While the use of apps may not be possible at institutions with more limited volumes of outbound mobility, their use is recommended for larger institutions and particularly those with extensive exchange portfolios because of scale of work required to locate and potentially repatriate travellers in emergency situations.

## 6.2 Resources for Students/Staff in an Emergency or Crisis Situation

In all cases, students at the institutions consulted receive emergency contacts as part of their pre-departure procedures and instructions on when to use them. Approximately half of the institutions in this review possess 24-hour phone lines. In some cases, these phone lines are staffed and operated by staff at the home campus; in others, they are provided by a third-party service that the institution contracts.

Additionally, staff noted that for faculty-led study trips, students can always ask faculty members for help or make use of partner resources. While at first glance there appears to be fewer resources available for students on exchange, exchange students are generally encouraged to use campus resources available through their host institution and can make use of services at home as well, if needed. However, because not all partner institutions will necessarily see providing these services as their responsibility, CIGan institutions should ensure that the roles of partners in emergency situations are agreed upon in advance.

Our conversations with college staff included a hypothetical situation where an accompanying faculty member falls ill or is perceived by students as being unfit. We found that approximately 1/3rd of institutions have guarded against this concern by not sending lone employee with student groups; at a minimum, faculty travel abroad in pairs. In other cases, institutions have developed guidelines on acceptable faculty-to-student ratios. In some cases, institutions will send just one faculty member if there are four or fewer students travelling

### **Promising Practice: Active Learning and Emergency Response**

Niagara College has students create their own emergency plans for matters such as mental health, personal safety compromised, financial issues, and natural disasters. As part of the process, students also detail what actions they expect from the college. Under this initiative, students both consent to specific emergency response procedures and engage in active learning around risk response.

abroad. Going forward, one such institution is planning to identify a student lead on every trip who will receive additional training and responsibilities in an emergency situation, possibly in exchange for an enlarged bursary. Staff at another 1/3rd of institutions admitted that they had never considered the possibility of a faculty member falling ill or becoming incapacitated while accompanying students abroad. Despite this, a majority of these institutions feel prepared and point to the presence of active partners in the region as being capable of providing emergency assistance. However, other institutions within this group now plan to address this gap in planning more concretely.

## 6.3 Established Crisis Response Procedures

Every institution in this review possesses an institution-wide emergency response plan. Usually, these institution-wide plans are not explicitly linked with matters pertaining to education abroad risk management. In many cases, staff know that the institution has an emergency response plan, but they do not know what exactly it covers. Just one institution has meaningfully inserted specific education abroad risk response procedures into its larger institutional emergency plan.

While larger institutional emergency response plans are not often written with education abroad in mind, the chart below illustrates that a 76% majority of institutions have developed formal emergency response plans for outbound mobility.

### Promising Practice: Integrating International Travel into the Institutional Emergency Plan

Bow Valley College incorporated its international safety policy into the governance structure of its institutional emergency plan. At Bow Valley, all deans and senior managers have a copy of the education abroad emergency plan in their emergency plan binders.

Figure 8: Emergency Response Plan Details

Formal Emergency Plan for Outbound Mobility	Plans Clearly Define What Constitutes an Emergency	Regular Emergency Training
76%	41%	6%

The 24% of institutions that do not possess a formal emergency response plan for outbound mobility include two institutions with draft emergency plans that have yet to be approved as well as those relying on a third-party to manage their emergency response.

Emergency response plans vary widely in terms of detail. Sometimes plans are little more than a call tree or specific instructions on how to convene an emergency response team. In other cases, they are quite detailed and contain instructions for specific events and checklists. But overall, it is quite rare that an emergency response plan provides detailed instructions for specific events.

## 6.4 Defining an “Emergency”

Part of an effective emergency response procedure is understanding what constitutes an emergency and when it is an institution’s responsibility to respond. As the chart above



indicates, just 41% of institutions provide a clear definition for what constitutes an emergency or crisis.

Within this 41%, crises can be more or less well-defined. In one case, an emergency is anything that is listed as such on the Global Affairs Canada site. In other cases, institutions take a “no problem is too small” approach. This approach is more common among institutions that use apps and third-party service providers as part of their emergency response. In the case of some institutions that use a third-party app, students are encouraged to contact the service provider for anything ranging from homesickness to life-threatening injury, with the company responsible for managing the appropriate response.

### Promising Practice: Providing Clear Definitions

While it is somewhat rare to define what constitutes an emergency, both George Brown and Centennial College provide clear guidance. George Brown has developed specific response protocols for specific circumstances, helping to clearly lay out what an emergency is and the appropriate levels of response for each occasion. Centennial helpfully provides faculty with a colour-coded indication (in red, yellow, and green) of the seriousness of various emergency situations and specific response levels.

## 6.5 Strategies for Improvement

With rare exception, there is little regular training on emergency policies and procedures relevant to education abroad at the CICan member institutions included in this review. Just one such institution conducts regular tabletop training exercises, though a second institution had planned such a session prior to the pandemic which ultimately did not occur. With some clear exceptions, a general pattern of unfamiliarity with emergency policies

### Promising Practice: Regular Emergency Response Tabletop Training Exercises

Bow Valley College conducts an emergency response tabletop training exercise on an annual basis. Staff gather in a boardroom and receive calls from colleagues detailing specific scenarios, with a recent exercise including a discussion about whether or not to fly-out parents if a student was in hospital in South Africa. Such training, it is felt, keeps the staff fresh, aids in training new staff members, and allows for gaps in existing policies to be identified and acted upon, if found.

emerged in discussions with staff. More than once, an interviewee would say that a plan did not exist or that a certain element was not covered only for a relevant document to arrive in our subsequent document request that contradicted the claim.

In addition to a pronounced absence of training, this overall pattern of staff unfamiliarity with emergency plans has numerous causes, including the current pause in outbound mobility due to Covid-19, the low numbers of students travelling abroad at many institutions, and the good fortune of many institutions that has allowed them to engage in outbound mobility without any significant crises. However, the introduction of regular mandatory training would ensure staff is better prepared to handle crises and emergency situations should they occur.

## **7. System Integration**

Our conversations with college staff attempted to ascertain whether or not their institutions' overall risk management systems for education abroad (encompassing the policies and procedures around purchasing, approvals, emergency response, etc.) are well integrated, meaning that the various policies and procedures cohere well and align with other college policies. First, we applied a basic test, asking whether travel approval is required prior to purchasing. In all cases, it is, though staff at the one institution with a decentralized approach to education abroad risk management indicated that they could not speak for all faculty-led programs.

Overall, we found that staff at just 8 out of the 17 institutions consulted attest that their policy and procedure apparatus is well integrated. The staff that did not feel that their safety abroad systems were well integrated pointed to a number of possible reasons. Common issues included:

- Ad hoc policies and practices that may not be written down.
- Old agreements and longstanding relationships that may have different procedures than others, such as individual faculty or departments having complete control over select study abroad programs.
- An unfamiliarity with the policies that do exist (particularly at institutions with more limited volumes of outbound students).

100% of institutions whose staff identify their education abroad risk management policies and procedures as being well integrated either conduct policy reviews or wrote all of their policies and procedures at the same time.

Occasionally, we heard that the policies may not always work well together but that the staff is able to. Though collaborative and collegial teams go a long way, such a reliance on their existence may be unsustainable following periods of staff turnover.

Analyzing the 8 institutions whose staff reported that their systems are well integrated immediately reveals a clear pattern. Seven of the 8 institutions conduct policy reviews, while the eighth operates with brand new policies that were all written at once. Considering that just 10 of the 17 institutions in this review engage in policy reviews, whether or not staff

indicate their systems are well integrated is highly correlated with whether their institutions review their policies and procedures.

In speaking with staff, we received the following tips for ensuring high levels of system integration:

- Authoring and/or reviewing all relevant policies and procedures at the same time, or close to it, in order to ensure that each policy works well with the others.
- Having representatives from all affected areas involved when authoring or updating policies. Institutions should commit to collaboration and ensure that representatives from Human Resources, Academics, Public Safety, and Finance are all at the table.
- Make sure that everyone involved in outbound mobility understands liability and duty of care and is committed to placing an emphasis on safety.
- Centralization of approval and resources is key. Decentralization creates a plethora of policies that are liable to be written in a vacuum.

System integration also requires the integration of domestic policies with international travel policies. As previous material on disability accommodations indicates, this process is generally incomplete across the sector. In addition to their accessibility policies, institutions would do well to review whether their emergency management, privacy of information, procurement, and human rights policies are fully integrated into their international travel policies.

## 8. Driving Compliance and Promoting Risk Sense

Despite a sector-wide commitment to ensuring safe international travel, institutions still face some challenges with policy compliance. Typically, these challenges primarily involve faculty going abroad without informing relevant units or the long-standing programs that have fought against the centralization of education abroad risk management procedures to maintain their own program-specific policies that do not comply with institutional standards. At institutions without a robust monitoring apparatus, there are also challenges with ensuring that every student travelling abroad not only has insurance, but appropriate insurance.

Institutions have developed strong strategies for ensuring compliance. These strategies include:

- Making requirements mandatory and having strategies to monitor compliance and prohibit participation from students who do not comply with requirements.
- Centralizing education abroad risk management. By imposing blanket standards for all international travel, institutions can ensure that all programs are complying with an institution's set safety standards.
- Informing faculty of their personal liability if they avoid, ignore, or fail to comply with existing policies.

While these strategies help ensure compliance, they fall somewhat short of producing commitment to education abroad risk management policies and "risk sense" on the part of students, staff, and faculty. Strategies to promote risk sense and move beyond a state of grudging compliance with education abroad policies include:

- Active learning on the part of students. Having students do their own research beforehand to produce items like risk assessments or individual emergency plans prepares students for safer travel abroad and positions risk sense as a learning outcome.
- Embracing the shared risk model. In pre-departure programming, institutions can acknowledge the duties that institutions have to keeping students safe and can indicate all of the work that has gone into ensuring their safety. But institutions should also underline how students are responsible for their own decisions and actions as well.

- Getting top leadership involved:
  - Elevate internationalization as an institutional strategy in strategic planning discussions.
  - Provide targeted outreach programming for both senior leaders and faculty. This is particularly important in institutions without a strategic commitment to internationalization. Outreach to institutional leaders should involve case studies that emphasize the financial implications of failing to uphold duty of care responsibilities. Programming for faculty should emphasize the supports in place to help support safe international travel and limit their individual liability.
- Establishing formal learning communities and resources for staff involved in education abroad risk management. CICan has an opportunity to facilitate a central hub that hosts standards of practice, best practices, and policy assessment tools. It could also consider regular conferences, discussions, and presentations that are capable of fostering a more formal inter-institutional education abroad risk management community, including experiences with third-party apps and companies.

## 9. Gap Analysis

In determining the gaps in the CICan community's education abroad risk management policies and procedures, we canvassed the needs and wants of institutional staff and conducted our own gap analysis based on our research findings.

### 9.1 What We Heard from Staff

Staff spoke candidly about their particular institutional needs and the types of resources that would aid them. They identified the following as being of particular use:

- A centralized database of resources for CICan institutions to access. Staff suggest that such a collection of resources include:
  - Standards of practice and toolkits for developing and evaluating policies.
  - A collection of best practices that can be updated as needed to account for new developments in the sector.
  - Templates for specific documents (i.e., waivers, risk assessments).
  - Lists of material that should be covered in pre-departure sessions.
  - A sector-wide scan of the insurance market.
  - A sector-wide risk assessment framework.

- More formal communities of practice surrounding how to safely engage in international mobility. This community could first entail convening sector-wide meetings and discussions about how to safely reengage internationally following Covid and then broaden to facilitate discussions and presentations encompassing all aspects of risk in education abroad.
- A sector-wide general online pre-departure safety and risk awareness training featuring modules that can be targeted to both students as well as the faculty and staff who are travelling abroad. More institution- and destination-specific material would remain the responsibility of individual colleges.
- New risk assessment tools capable of looking at safety issues from the perspective of more potentially vulnerable travellers, such as racialized students, LGBTQ2S+, and women.

Although some of these identified needs may be beyond the scope of this project, they are nevertheless worthy of consideration as CICA institution’s look to promote a culture of continuous improvement in education abroad risk management.

## 9.2 What our Analysis has Identified

Throughout this report has identified significant gaps both in policy and practice. These gaps are placed here in a basic gap analysis template, with proposed partial solutions that have both informed this project and could provide suggestions for future action.

Focus Area	Desired Future State	Current Gaps	Potential Actions
Pre-Departure Training	Pre-departure training adequately prepares all students and participating staff to engage in travel safely and to respond appropriately in moments of crisis or uncertainty.	Little programming for students from equity-seeking groups.	Establish formal recommendations for what should be included in pre-departure training for students and staff.
		Absence of set standards of practice for determining what is included.	Provide self-assessment tool for institutions to evaluate whether their current or planned future

Focus Area	Desired Future State	Current Gaps	Potential Actions
		<p>Incomplete training for faculty and staff, particularly around spotting and responding to mental health crisis, understanding legal issues and concepts, and intercultural competencies.</p>	<p>offerings adequately address the established standards of care.</p>
<p>Liability Waivers</p>	<p>Liability waivers and any formal discussions around them adequately guard institutions against liability and effectively communicate the risks involved in travel to participants.</p>	<p>Many waivers do not immediately or prominently highlight the rights students are waving in language free of legalese.</p>	<p>Establish formal recommendations for what should be included in liability waivers based on advice from legal counsel (external or internal) as well as insurance providers – including protection for the institution against any activity that a participant might undertake that is outside of the program, i.e. side trips, high risk outdoor activities, etc. as well as instances of misconduct.</p>
		<p>Participants are often not given meaningful time to digest the contents of the waivers and acquire legal advice.</p>	<p>Provide self-assessment tool for institutions to evaluate whether their current or planned future offerings adequately address the established standards of care, and to understand the residual risk left on the institutions (i.e. what liability waivers will not cover).</p>
		<p>The concept of shared risk is irregularly introduced to students.</p>	

Focus Area	Desired Future State	Current Gaps	Potential Actions
Student Approval and Accessibility Policies	Student approval and travel accessibility policies ensure the safety of all international travellers and align with domestic policies pertaining to accessibility, student conduct, and confidentiality.	Lack of clear expectations and policies around disability accommodations. Accessibility options likely unclear to students. Staff unclear on obligations under the Human Rights Code	Establish formal recommendations for applying domestic accessibility and student code of conduct policies to international travel opportunities.
		Divergent standards for whether or not past cases of student misconduct make students ineligible for participation in study abroad.	Provide self-assessment tool for institutions to evaluate whether their current or planned future offerings adequately address the established standards of care.
Risk Assessment	The risk assessment process makes use of formal tools, multiple sources of information, and is guided by written policies and procedures	Typically, only a single source of information is used.	Establish formal recommendations for conducting risk assessments, including multiple sources of information and set policies and procedures.
		Policies and procedures are often not written down.	Provide a potential template for assessing destination- and activity-based risks.
		Frequent absence of formal tools or templates	Provide self-assessment tool for institutions to evaluate whether their current or planned future offerings adequately address the established standards of care.
Insurance	All travellers are insured according to set minimum standards and the institution	Frequent absence of minimum standards for insurance.	Establish sector-wide recommendations for minimum standards of insurance coverage.



Focus Area	Desired Future State	Current Gaps	Potential Actions
	<p>possesses robust monitoring capacity to ensure compliance.</p> <p>All travelers understand the purpose of travel insurance and the basic inclusion and exclusions of their policy, and the process of how to submit claims.</p>	<p>Potential for uninsured or underinsured students to fall through gaps when institutions fail to use a single provider.</p> <p>Lack of basic understanding of travel insurance coverage, exclusions and claims process.</p>	<p>Encourage institutions to require a single insurance provider for all participating students, staff, and faculty in order to aid monitoring and coordination during emergencies.</p> <p>Develop a sector-wide training module on travel insurance.</p>
<p>Policy and Governance, including System Integration</p>	<p>Institutions routinely update their policies and procedures through multiple means, including through regular policy reviews, sector-wide consultations, and feedback from participants. Policies and procedures are well integrated and align with existing on-campus policies.</p>	<p>Lack of regularly scheduled policy reviews.</p>	<p>Establish formal recommendations for conducting regular policy reviews, including timelines, and for ensuring that on-campus policies and procedures are upheld to the fullest extent possible when abroad.</p>
		<p>More effort needed to use post-program debriefs to inform and update policies and procedures.</p>	
		<p>Major gap in asking participants about specific risks and incidents experienced, especially ones that students neglected to report.</p> <p>Domestic policies (i.e., those pertaining to accessibility, emergency response, etc.) are not always integrated with, or reflected in, education abroad risk management capabilities.</p>	<p>Provide suggestions for techniques to ascertain whether participants experienced serious but unreported incidents that compromised their safety or could compromise the safety of future participants.</p>

Focus Area	Desired Future State	Current Gaps	Potential Actions
Emergency and Crisis Response	Institutions possess robust emergency and crisis response capabilities, including formal policies and procedures, strategies for continuous improvement, specific guidelines tailored for specific situations, and the ability to monitor and contact students abroad when required.	Institutions lack formal policies around side-trips and extended travel and frequently lack the ability to contact students whose plans diverge from their known itineraries.	Establish formal recommendations for the content of emergency policies and procedures, including specific actions for the most common and the most damaging situations. Assess the institution's international footprint and its exposure to risk, and determining whether it should enter into an agreement with a crisis response provider.
		Occasional absence of built-in fail-safes for when a travelling faculty member is unwell or otherwise unfit.	
		Detailed instructions for how to respond to specific situations are often lacking or nonexistent.	Provide an evaluative tool for assessing an institution's existing emergency response plan that incorporates specific crisis scenarios.
		Frequent absence of definitions of what constitutes an emergency and how institutions know when they are required to respond.	
		General lack of training and unfamiliarity with emergency response procedures.	Establish formal recommendations for ensuring regular training that involves all relevant staff.

### 9.3 Next steps

As our discussions with college staff and the general willingness of institutions to participate in this review revealed, there is significant appetite for expanding colleges' outbound international mobility capabilities throughout the sector. Through an analysis of institutions' expressed needs and discussions with this project's steering committee, it was determined that a checklist-style document that identifies and explains the need for specific policies and procedures, one doubling as a self-assessment and risk readiness tool, would be the most appropriate resource to emerge from this project.