

# beyond**borders**

at St. Jerome's University

**STUDENT HANDBOOK**

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## SJU'S APPROACH TO SERVICE LEARNING

Service learning is a values-based model of experiential learning that intentionally combines **education** and **community service** with **critical reflection**. At St. Jerome's, our programs are rooted in the values of solidarity, reciprocity, the dignity of all, and working together for the common good.

When a student engages with one of our service learning programs they can expect to receive training in topics such as: power and privilege; ethics; sustainability; interpersonal relationships; cross cultural competencies; personal resiliency; and more. Students are also trained in the art of personal reflection, and provided with individual mentorship throughout the experience. With this approach, we seek to equip students with relevant knowledge about complex social justice issues as well as the aptitude and (ideally) the habit of pausing to make meaning from their experience. This training occurs before, during, and after students engage in serving, so that students are empowered to respond to community partners with thoughtfulness and sensitivity throughout the experience.

From the perspective of our community partners, this training gives service learning students an excellent foundation to be active colleagues and allies in the pursuit of social justice both locally and abroad. And, because SJU has worked hard to foster direct, mutually beneficial, and collaborative relationships with our community partners, we are able to reflect and continually improve together in this shared vision.

## PROGRAM OBJECTIVES

As with other areas of Student Affairs at SJU, Service Learning programs seek to facilitate and encourage a transformative student experience. Specifically in Service Learning programs, this means that we seek to **build foundations for socially responsible and active citizens**.

We believe that stronger communities and authentic human connections are the foundation for social justice. We believe that by encouraging students to engage in meaningful experiences of **community**, develop in themselves a sense of **purpose** and **resiliency**, and **reflect critically** on the events taking place around them, that students will be equipped and prepared to respond wisely to the challenges and injustices in our world.

### Purpose

- Students develop a strong understanding of their own values and identity in relation to others
- Students experience a sense of belonging to a greater collective and responsibility to a common good

### Community

- Students learn from lived experiences and mentorship of community partners, who share our vision
- Students build meaningful relationships in solidarity with marginalized community members
- Students recognize impacts of their actions on others and make choices that contribute to greater equity

### Resiliency

- Students are invited to encounter significant social injustices and those affected
- Students identify strengths and opportunities for growth in themselves and others
- Students learn to navigate ambiguity, change, discomfort, and vulnerability, and respond with empathy

### Critical Thinking

- Students build habits in active learning and critical reflection
- Students seek to understand the complexity of interconnected social justice issues
- Students grow in awareness and understanding of their own experiences of privilege and/or oppression

## LANGUAGE MATTERS

One important step in avoiding the ‘voluntourism trap’ is to be intentional in promoting the dignity of everyone through our words and actions. This means that the way we talk about our experiences – the words we choose and the stories that they tell – must be as attentive to the spirit of reciprocity as the work itself.

### Helpful tips for talking about service learning

- **Highlight your relationship** when describing the people you encounter
  - Talk about your *friends, neighbours, allies, community partners, global citizens, people*
- **Focus on the situation** when describing realities of injustice
  - Educate yourself and others about *economic disparities, social inequity, environmental degradation, climate change*, etc. Be clear and specific about the problems you’re aware of and where your knowledge comes from
  - Use “people first” language to name *people who experience economic disparity, people who experience the strongest impacts of climate change, social inequity*, etc.
- **Use proper geographic names and demonyms** to describe places and people
  - Use actual names of cities, regions, countries; learn to pronounce and spell them, and educate those around you with patience and confidence
  - Donyms describe people from a given place: *Canadians, Peruvians, Ukrainians, Ugandans*, etc.
- **Highlight collaboration and credit leadership** when describing projects
  - *We will serve, work together, support, contribute, participate in x project lead by [name/title]*
- **Learn more about your own and others’ experiences of privilege and/or oppression**
  - If you experience white privilege (or if you don’t), try reading books like Layla F. Saad’s *Me and White Supremacy* to understand how well-meaning people often contribute to systems of oppression, and how this can be avoided
  - Seek out mentors you admire (these might be people you know in real life, or authors of inspirational books/media) and pay attention to *how* they practiced resilience and/or allyship
  - Ask yourself, how will your story sound to someone with a different lived experience of privilege and/or oppression than yourself?
- **Emphasize learning and relationships** as the purpose of your experience
  - Emphasize shared learning about: values, culture, language, specific skills, history, etc.
  - Emphasize and learn more about the value of the human relationships you develop along the way. Ask your hosts, why are these partnerships important? Ask permission to share their stories with your friends and family.

### What not to do:

- **Avoid labeling people** based on the systemic injustices they encounter
  - Don’t describe people as *disadvantaged, impoverished, poor, needy*, etc.
- **Avoid generalizations** that make it seem like everyone in one place has a similar experience or struggle
- **Avoid labeling places** based on Western narratives of development
  - Don’t say: *third world, or poor communities*; even the term ‘*developing country*’ has unnecessary connotations, as the UN Sustainable Development Goals show us that *all* countries are in a process of developing
- **Avoid being the hero of your own story**
  - Resist the temptation to tell a story about what you are building/fixing/teaching/etc.
  - Don’t miss the opportunity to celebrate the mutual learning, mentorship, and leadership you experienced in relationship with your community partners

## PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Fall	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Applications – September and October</li> <li>• Interviews and Letters of Offer – November</li> <li>• Orientation meetings – December</li> <li>• Placement Selection – December</li> </ul>
Winter	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Beyond Borders Course (RS 383) – Weekly readings, assignments, etc., as per syllabus</li> <li>• Local volunteering – Weekly commitments with a total of 20 hours over the term</li> <li>• Mentor meetings – Approximately once per month, or as needed</li> <li>• Reading Week Retreat – 3 days during February Reading Week</li> <li>• Travel Preparations – medical checks, paperwork, visa applications, fundraising, etc.</li> <li>• Pre-Departure Day – April</li> </ul>
Spring	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• International Placement – 90 days</li> <li>• Mentor meetings – biweekly or as needed</li> </ul>
Fall	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Re-entry Day – September</li> <li>• Mentor meetings – as needed</li> </ul>

## ACCESSIBILITY

### FINANCIAL SUPPORT AND FUNDRAISING

SJU believes that service learning opportunities should be available to everyone, which is why we make all efforts to minimize the costs of these experiences to students. As well, students with limited financial resources are encouraged to apply for a number of scholarships available to support international activity.

1. St. Jerome's Scholarships: <https://www.sju.ca/upper-year-scholarships>. Any *Beyond Borders* student may apply to SJU scholarships, regardless of whether or not they have lived or studied at SJU previously.
  - a. Students who are *co-registered* with SJU will automatically receive a \$500 travel bursary for *Beyond Borders*. This bursary will be deducted from their first *Beyond Borders* payment.
2. UWaterloo International Experience Awards: <https://uwaterloo.ca/student-awards-financial-aid/undergraduate-awards/international-experience-awards>. Some of the specific awards within UW's selection that are relevant to *Beyond Borders* are listed here. *Note that students only need to complete the one general application form to be considered for any of the IEAs.*
  - Drysdale *Beyond Borders* Travel Bursary: <https://uwaterloo.ca/student-awards-financial-aid/awards/drysdale-beyond-borders-travel-bursary>
  - Manulife Financial Community and World Service Awards: <https://uwaterloo.ca/student-awards-financial-aid/awards/manulife-financial-community-and-world-service-awards>
  - UW Community and World Service Awards: <https://uwaterloo.ca/student-awards-financial-aid/awards/uw-community-and-world-service-awards>
  - Winifred Hewetson Awards in Community and World Service: <https://uwaterloo.ca/student-awards-financial-aid/awards/winifred-hewetson-awards-community-and-world-service>
3. UWaterloo Student Awards Database: <https://uwaterloo.ca/student-awards-financial-aid/awards/search-results?level=All&type=39&process=All&affiliation=All&program=All&term=All&citizenship=All&keyword=>

Students may also choose to undertake personal fundraising initiatives to support their experience. SJU may be able to provide material or practical support for fundraising initiatives, such as space on campus, printing, etc. If students wish to write a fundraising letter for distribution in their networks, we ask them to collaborate with the Service Learning Program Coordinator. This is important so that students can produce the most effective fundraising letter possible, and so SJU can keep track of public communications with respect to Beyond Borders.

Finally, students should keep in mind the following tips when planning fundraising initiatives:

- Ensure that any donors understand that they will *not* receive a tax receipt for their donation
- Practice Gratitude – be ready to thank donors in a genuine way (i.e. thank-you cards, post-cards, etc.)
- Consider how to share the experiences with your supporters. How will donors learn about the value of this experience? Will you send email updates, post on social media, or invite them for a coffee when you return? Whatever you decide, keeping your supporters informed of your experience is essential.
- Be mindful of the language you are using to describe your experience – see the previous section on *Language Matters* – and be sure not to call into question the values or integrity of Beyond Borders.

## FOSTERING SAFER SPACES

The Beyond Borders program requires students to grow in their understanding of lived experiences of privilege and oppression. This understanding enables students to be sensitive and thoughtful in seeking to honor themselves and the community partners whom they will serve through community engagement. We understand and expect that each individual who joins the Beyond Borders program will bring with them different lived experiences, identities, and positionalities, and this diversity means that discussing experiences of privilege and oppression is complex. SJU is committed to fostering a safer and respectful space for all to engage meaningfully in this dialogue.

Beyond Borders facilitators are trained in both inclusivity best practices as well as Mental Health First Aid. Furthermore, Beyond Borders participants receive training in support of their own mental wellness tools as well as interpersonal relationship skills. Finally, the emphasis on 1-on-1 student support and mentorship allows Student Affairs staff to personally follow-up to regularly debrief with students individually as they navigate these complex topics of personal and interpersonal growth and development.

We cannot promise that these spaces will be easy, but we are committed to supporting all students through the process and ensuring that students feel respected and empowered as they reflect personally and critically about what it takes to be a socially responsible and active citizen.

Finally, we recognize that for some students, traveling abroad and to particular destinations may not be possible or wise due to issues of personal health, wellness, or disability. We also recognize that some countries have discriminatory policies which might make it unsafe or unwise for some individuals to travel there. Students must make a personal decision about their comfort level with adapting independently to an international environment in which they have limited control over their mobility, diet, communication, medical or mental health supports, etc. and in which they may encounter identity-based policies or stigmas. Students should discuss any concerns with the Beyond Borders Coordinator throughout the placement selection process, or as soon as possible. We will do our very best to accommodate additional needs to support students' learning and wellness throughout the experience. However, if accommodations are not possible such that an international experience is considered unsafe or unwise for an individual, a student may be given the opportunity to participate in a local placement.

## TRAINING AND MENTORSHIP

### ORIENTATION AND PRE-DEPARTURE

The first step in Beyond Borders is our Fall Orientation, which includes: time to get to know one another; important paperwork, processes, and expectations; workshops on key service learning skills and concepts; setting goals; and beginning the placement selection process. Schedules of orientations and trainings are made available throughout the application process.

Likewise, pre-departure meetings take place in the spring to equip and support students in preparing to travel.

### READING WEEK RETREAT

Another important pre-departure experience is Reading Week Retreat. This is a 3-day, off-campus, overnight retreat and is free to participants. This is a time where we deliver trainings in topics such as: power and privilege, cross cultural competencies, and conflict management. These retreats also include facilitated personal reflection and community building experiences. This retreat is typically held during the second half of Reading Week in February.

### MENTORS

Each Beyond Borders student will be assigned a mentor from within the Student Affairs team. These mentors become a part of the Beyond Borders circle of support by attending retreats and trainings, and meeting with students 1 on 1. Beyond Borders students will have regular structured meetings with their assigned mentor, and may also choose to reach out to any of the mentors at anytime for additional conversation. During pre-departure, mentors will guide students through reflecting on their local placement, and in preparing to travel. While abroad, mentors are key go-to people for students to reflect and make meaning from their experience, or trouble-shoot any challenges that may arise.

### ACADEMIC CREDIT

All Beyond Borders students must participate in the Beyond Borders course. This credit is awarded based on classroom performance, reflections on local placements, and other assessments or deliverables as per the course syllabus. Students' academic credit in RS 383 is not explicitly linked to their participation in the international placement. However, students' engagement, attitude, and work ethic in the course is a key component in building the necessary relationship of trust with SJU prior to the student's participation in the international placement.

There may be opportunities for students to arrange additional academic or other credit for the international component of their experience. For example, the Global Experience Certificate, EDGE, and Co-op programs can offer experiential learning credit, and academic programs such as Peace and Conflict Studies have options for international fieldwork credits. Any of these additional credits must be arranged separately at the student's initiative with an appropriate department or office at the University of Waterloo.

## RE-ENTRY

Re-entry is the process of returning home after spending time abroad. For many people it can be even more difficult to return home to one's own culture as it was to adapt to their host community. Inevitably, time and experiences have changed both the students' and their loved ones' routines and perspectives, and everyone must adapt to new social rhythms. After the initial excitement of being reunited with friends and family, it's common for students to experience feelings of frustration, anxiety, confusion, disappointment and/or depression. Participants will have the opportunity to learn about this process upon their return, share their experiences with one another, and continue working with their mentor (and/or additional resources) as needed while they navigate their unique re-entry experience.

Students are also invited to provide program feedback throughout their experience, and especially at the end as they reflect on their time in Beyond Borders as a whole. SJU is very interested in receiving all constructive feedback so that we can continue to improve the Beyond Borders experience for future students and our community partners alike. Program feedback can be sent to the Service Learning Program Coordinator, a Beyond Borders Mentor, and/or the Director of Student Affairs. In person meetings can also be arranged as needed.

Students are also invited to stay engaged in Beyond Borders by sharing their stories and experiences with future participants. This can be extremely meaningful for both the alumni and the incoming participant, as alumni have the chance to reflect in new ways, and new students benefit from the lived experience and learning of their peers.

## COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

### RECIPROCITY AND SOLIDARITY

Creating Beyond Borders partnerships begins by identifying grassroots, not-for-profit organizations that serve one of the UN Sustainable Development Goals. Every country has people and circumstances that fall into these categories, and the Beyond Borders experience is about learning to act in solidarity with allies around the world to address common development challenges. We recognize that issues such as poverty, pollution, and discrimination exist everywhere and this is a program where we encourage students to step into the shoes of those most affected, seeking to understand and lend dignity to this experience as part of a longer-term vision for a relational approach to sustainable development.

We seek to understand the goals of each potential partnership to ensure that we are well aligned in our desire to collaborate in mentoring students as socially responsible and active citizens while seeking sustainable justice work in our communities. Our partners believe in the value of mutual learning that takes place through the Beyond Borders experience. They know this learning goes significantly beyond the volunteer work because the experience of living and working in a new environment forces us into deeper reflection about who we are as people. This shared vision is essential so that the relationships we have with community partners around the world can be truly reciprocal – equally beneficial for everyone involved.

Beyond Borders has established partnerships with a limited number of like-minded organizations that are able to provide a high standard of student support and safety while also benefitting from the skills that students bring. Currently Beyond Borders has partnerships in Peru and Uganda. For more information about each community partner, visit [www.sju.ca/beyond-borders](http://www.sju.ca/beyond-borders).



## LOCAL PLACEMENTS

As part of their pre-departure training, Beyond Borders students will be placed with a local community partner. Students will be required to carry out approximately 20 hours of local volunteer service in the Winter Term prior to their travel – while they are taking the Beyond Borders Course, RS 383. The placements will be selected by the Service Learning Program Coordinator based on a) the student’s interests and international placement assignment, b) the availability and needs of SJU’s community partners, and c) a balance of students’ interests and needs within the cohort.

The objectives for this local volunteer assignment are twofold:

1. Provide students with an opportunity to encounter particular social justice issues and learn about the experience of those most affected. Students practice the art of reflecting on the human experience, root causes, and possible ways to demonstrate meaningful solidarity in this context.
2. Provide students with an opportunity to demonstrate their reliability, resilience, and professionalism in serving as an ambassador of SJU with our valued community partnerships. In essence this placement is a chance for students to demonstrate their skills in stewarding professional relationships, which will be an essential component of their role in Beyond Borders during the Spring Term.

The local placement is intertwined with the Beyond Borders course RS 383 so that students have a formal venue to learn and practice their reflection skills. Students are also strongly encouraged to discuss their local placements with their mentors.

## INTERNATIONAL PLACEMENT SELECTION

Determining the appropriate placement of each student with an international community partner is a pivotal moment in the service learning process. SJU takes great care in maintaining close relationships with community partners, and getting to know each student’s goals and interests as well as possible prior to these decisions.

- 1) During the application and orientation process, students are encouraged to explore information available online to familiarize themselves with all of SJU’s community partners and ask questions
- 2) SJU encourages and facilitates students to reflect deeply on their goals for the experience, and share these with their mentor or with the Service Learning Coordinator
- 3) Students fill out a placement selection survey during orientation, which prompts students to share their interests and goals, as well as any personal needs or supports they may require for a positive experience
- 4) The Service Learning Coordinator gathers the surveys and requests follow-up conversations with students to clarify any aspect of the survey as needed
- 5) Once sufficient information is gathered and clear, the Service Learning Coordinator will make a final decision about each student’s placement. This decision is made in collaboration with other Student Affairs staff that may be supporting the program (e.g. Beyond Borders mentors), and takes into account a balance of each student’s goals and needs as well as the goals and needs of each community partner.

While every effort will be made to consider the student’s preferences in assignment and location, under no circumstances will SJU guarantee a particular placement for any student. Final placement destinations are based on the needs of the community partner, health and safety concerns in the host country, as well as balancing the interests and abilities of all students in a particular cohort.

## STUDENT COMMITMENT

### CONDITIONS

All offers to the Beyond Borders program are conditional. To remain in Beyond Borders, students must:

- Maintain good academic standing.
- Deliver their personal contribution of \$2500 (by e-transfer, credit, or debit) by the specified deadline in January.
- Successfully complete the Beyond Borders course (RS 383)
- Complete 20 hours of local volunteer service at their assigned placement in Kitchener-Waterloo.
- Deliver their second payment of \$4000 (by e-transfer, credit, or debit) by the specified deadline in April.
- Complete all required forms and documentation requested by St. Jerome's University, the University of Waterloo, the Government of Canada, and the Government of the destination country.
- Participate in all mandatory orientation, pre-departure, and reintegration workshops and retreats.

Students who fail to meet any of these requirements may be asked to leave the program at the discretion of the Program Coordinator.

### FINANCIAL CONTRIBUTION

Students are responsible to pay St. Jerome's University **\$6,500**, which is used to purchase flights and cover direct program expenses which community partners incur related to the student's placement. This fee will be paid in two installments – one at the beginning and the other at the end of the Winter Term before they travel.

The \$6500 paid by the student covers their cost associated with:

- Flights
- Accommodations
- Most meals (Note: meal expense coverage is negotiated differently for each placement)
- Pick up and drop-off from the airport in their *host country*
- Travel within the host country required for placement (*not* daily commuting)
- Placement related expenses billed by the community partner (e.g. contributions to expenses such as office space, office internet, hydro, supervision fees, etc.)

St. Jerome's University will pay for additional placement-related expenses, including:

- All pre-departure retreat expenses.
- Personalized supports in travel preparation and general mentorship.

Additional program costs, not included in the totals above, remain the responsibility of the student. These include:

- Police records check for local volunteering, if needed
- Fees associated with health consultations prior to traveling and obtaining travel health insurance
- Fees for immunizations, immigration documents, and necessary travel Visas (dependent on placement)
- Passport Renewal fees (must be valid for 6 months upon return)
- Any travel supplies participants would need (ie. luggage, clothing, water sanitation tablets, etc.)
- Pick-up and drop-off from the airport *in Toronto*, and baggage fees not covered by the airline
- In country ground transportation (e.g daily public transportation to-and-from placement)
- Personal communication expenses (phone/internet)
- Some meals (depending on the host arrangement)
- Any extra-curricular activities students engage with on their own time

Under no circumstances, will students be allowed to begin their International Placement without first completing all administrative and financial obligations to Beyond Borders.

Students who are not able to fulfill their financial obligations according to the schedule due to circumstances beyond their control will be allowed to defer their international placement until the following year in order to raise the required amount. Similarly, students who do not feel able to complete their international placement according to the schedule for other reasons may consult with the Coordinator about the possibility of deferring for one year.

## EXPECTATIONS OF PERSONAL CONDUCT

St. Jerome's university takes great care and pride in maintaining long-term mutually beneficial relationships with our international partners abroad. The continued strength of these relationships requires the full cooperation and attentiveness of every person engaged in this program, whether student, staff, faculty, or otherwise. By signing up for the Beyond Borders program, students are taking on an enormous responsibility as international ambassadors for Beyond Borders, St. Jerome's University, and the University of Waterloo.

During orientation, students will be asked to sign a personal conduct agreement to abide by the principles of respect, service, and community. Key components of the agreement include the commitment to act in a mature and professional manner, acknowledge that participating in Beyond Borders is a privilege as well as a commitment, and agree to act as a role model and leader at all times. It also includes a commitment to take initiative in appropriate, honest, and respectful communication. Furthermore, students acknowledge that their local placement is an opportunity to continue building a relationship of trust with SJU and prepare themselves for their international placement. And finally, the agreement includes a commitment to upholding recommended safety and security protocols.

This means that we are asking students to recognize that they are entering into something that is bigger than themselves, and that their behavior will have real world consequences for others. We are inviting students to step up to the plate, and think about how their presence and day-to-day choices in Beyond Borders can have a positive impact on everyone involved in this experience: not only themselves, but their community partner, the populations they serve, potentially their host family, their family and supporters at home, and finally the entire St. Jerome's community.

## HEALTH AND SAFETY

### ASSUMPTION OF RISKS

The Beyond Borders Program involves students traveling in small groups to a foreign country. There are always risks associated with travelling to a foreign country, including but not limited to property damage, loss of property, personal injury, disease and even death.

Students in the Beyond Borders program are upper-year undergraduate students who are of legal age to assess this responsibility, and who display the exceptional maturity that we believe is necessary to make wise choices while navigating the risks associated with international travel and service in a cross-cultural not-for-profit setting. As such, Beyond Borders students are asked to voluntarily assume any risks associated with their participation in the program and with all travel relative to the program.

In order to participate in the international placement, students must demonstrate their voluntary assumption of risks by signing the Waiver Release and Assumption of Risks as well as the Acknowledgement of Responsibilities paperwork in the Beyond Borders Orientation Documentation package.

## RISK MANAGEMENT

Every student who participates in an international placement with Beyond Borders is made fully aware of the types of risks their placement environment poses for them, including but not limited to disease, contaminated food or water, personal safety issues, power dynamics, limited appreciation for diversity, limited access or support for those with disabilities or wellness needs, environmental concerns, political instability, and so forth.

In order to ensure that we are meeting our obligations to provide due diligence on student safety, we give preference to partners we have visited ourselves and maintain frequent and open lines of communication with these community partners. This augmented risk management is in addition to utilizing all safety and security resources, services, and protocols required for international travel with the University of Waterloo, including trainings, access to a third party security briefs and emergency response, and registering students' travel with the Canadian Government. Students must also engage in medical screening and preparation as described below.

The mentorship program described earlier in this manual likewise provides an additional avenue for identifying challenges in a timely manner while the students are abroad. Regular check-ins with a consistent mentor ensures students receive appropriate and individualized coaching as they navigate the inevitable mental, emotional, spiritual, and interpersonal challenges that arise in contexts of cross-cultural and international service.

Finally, SJU will provide each Beyond Borders student with an individualized emergency contact card, including the student's own information as well as key details about their hosts and in-country emergency resources. Students should carry a copy of this emergency card with them at all times while abroad.

## CANCELATIONS AND WITHDRAWELS

Students can make the decision to withdraw from Beyond Borders at any time if they feel like they are unable to complete in their placement. This decision should be made after much discernment and exploration of all options in conversations with the Service Learning Program Coordinator and/or the student's mentor.

St. Jerome's University may cancel a Beyond Borders placement or make the decision for an early return if:

- The student is being asked to leave due to a contract/code of conduct violation, behavioral issue, or on request by the partner,
- The student's health (mental or physical) is in a critical state and their risk cannot be managed,
- The geographical location of the placement becomes critical/unstable to the point where the student's risk cannot be managed.

Fees for flight changes/cancellations are the student's responsibility in the following situations:

- The student is being asked to leave by the International Partner or St. Jerome's University due to a violation of the contract or code of conduct.
- The student decides to end their placement early for personal reasons (ie. family emergency, feelings of unsafety that are not reflected in SJU's risk analysis of placement, physical or mental health issues that are not deemed critical by program administration or physicians, etc.)

St. Jerome's University will work collaboratively with insurance providers and students on a case-by-case basis to determine fee coverage for flight changes/cancellations in the following situations:

- The student’s health (mental or physical) is in a critical state and their risk cannot be managed,
- The geographical location of the placement becomes critical/unstable to the point where the student’s risk cannot be managed.

Charges for non-refundable placement fees will be determined on a case-by-case basis.

In the event that there are geo-political issues that affect the risk management of a location to the point where placements must be cancelled or students must be removed early from the placement, Beyond Borders administration will work with the student to determine an alternative location based on factors of availability, proximity, remaining time left in placement, compatible vaccine requirements, etc.

Students will be required to participate in a one-to-one meeting upon their return to provide a statement and offer their feedback in an evaluation, close loops in the processes, and engage in reintegration activities.

## EMERGENCY RESPONSE PROTOCOL

### Critical Emergencies

In the event of a critical emergency (such as a natural disaster, critical medical situation, civil unrest, or other immediate safety concern), Beyond Borders students should contact the following services for immediate 24/7 professional supports:

- a) **Local police or support system**
- b) **UW Police Services** (001+519-888-4911)
- c) **ANVIL Group** – UW’s external international safety experts  
Phone: (44) 2038594459 Email: [uwaterloosupport@anvilgroup.com](mailto:uwaterloosupport@anvilgroup.com)

\*For medical emergencies, students should **first** call their **travel insurance provider**.

This information can also be found at: <https://uwaterloo.ca/international/who-contact-emergency>

ANVIL or UW Police will automatically contact the University of Waterloo’s International Safety Abroad Manager as well as St. Jerome’s University officials.

### General Safety and Support (non-urgent)

For all other concerns that do *not* require immediate emergency response (such as lost travel documents, need for debriefing conversations, or other safety and security inquiries) Beyond Borders students should contact:

Michelle Metzger  
Service Learning Program Coordinator  
Work: **001+519-884-8111 ext.28282**  
Email: [michelle.metzger@uwaterloo.ca](mailto:michelle.metzger@uwaterloo.ca)

Waterloo International Safety Abroad Team  
Email: [safetyabroad@uwaterloo.ca](mailto:safetyabroad@uwaterloo.ca)

## TRAVEL HEALTH

In preparation for travel, it is very important for students to make wise, thoughtful, and personalized preparations concerning their health. This includes taking careful stock of all the resources that the student might need to remain healthy, and finding out as much as possible about whether comparable resources might be accessible while abroad or portable enough to bring from home. Many of us take for granted the healthcare supports and stability we often experience here in Canada, but it is absolutely critically essential that students do not take these resources for granted while traveling abroad, and prepare accordingly.

Likewise, it is essential to take note of potential triggers for the student's physical and mental health. For example, a student with mild asthma might rarely find the need to use their inhaler in Canada. However, a new environment might come with new irritants requiring the student to use their inhaler more regularly. Similarly, a student with a history of mental health challenges may encounter triggers in the context of international travel, which they had previously managed to control or avoid in their home environment. By reflecting carefully on their medical history and bringing these questions to their doctor in advance, students can make a personal wellness plan that will prepare and equip them with the necessary health and safety resources to manage their personal health risks.

To enable students in navigating their personal wellness preparations, SJU requires the following steps:

1. Attend a travel clinic, during which students will ask their personal wellness questions and receive individualized advice concerning their health and safety for their specific destination and context.
  - a. *Students should go to this meeting prepared with a map marking their travel destination(s), any notes about their own medical history, and their personal travel health questions.*
  - b. Students must receive any immunizations that are legally required for travel to their destination
  - c. Students must then make personal choices regarding optional immunizations or health and safety protocols recommended in their travel clinic, based on their personal needs and risk tolerance.
  - d. If students are unsure about their needs and risk tolerance, students are encouraged to engage in further conversation with their doctor, their loved ones, folks who previously traveled to the same location, a Beyond Borders mentor, and/or the Service Learning Coordinator in order to make a thoughtful and informed decision. Note that we can listen and help you reflect, but only a health care professional can offer medical advice.
  - e. Record and submit their personal wellness plan via the Wellness Plan Form. The information on this form is shared only with the Service Learning Coordinator or their designate for the purposes of supporting the student in their wellness plan. Along with this form, students should also submit a confirmation of travel health insurance (whether through the WUSA health plan or a personal provider)

These precautions are important not only for the student's own safety, but for the safety of our community partners as well. It is essential that students be in good physical and mental health so as not to spread disease or strain the resources of their host communities.

## TRAVEL PREPARATION TO-DO

✓	Description/Item	Due Date
	Sign and submit Orientation Documentation: Waiver Release and Assumption of Risks; Acknowledgement of Responsibilities; Expectations for Personal Conduct	December 4, 2024
	Emergency Contact Information (Email to Michelle)	December 13, 2024
	Copy of Passport, Health Card, and Drivers License (Email to Michelle)	December 13, 2024
	Complete Placement Survey	Bring to 1:1 chat with your mentor
	Goal Setting Reflection	Bring to 1:1 chat with your mentor
	(If needed) Submit Police Check Application Online at: <a href="https://recordcheck.wrps.on.ca/Live/RecordCheck.aspx">https://recordcheck.wrps.on.ca/Live/RecordCheck.aspx</a>	Not required for the Working Centre St. John's Kitchen
	Non-Refundable \$2500 Payment	January 6, 2025
	Letter of Interest for Placement	January 6, 2025
	Research visa/entry requirements for your placement country	<i>Your visa is your responsibility!</i>
	Winter Retreat Attendance	February 20-22, 2025
	Contact a travel health clinic and book your consultation	February 20, 2025 (min 6-8 weeks before travel)
	Email Michelle to confirm you are enrolled in WUSA student health plan. <u>OR</u> Email Michelle confirmation of your own travel health insurance	February 20, 2025
	Submit Personal Wellness Plan Form	April 7, 2025
	Non-Refundable \$4000 Payment	April 7, 2025
	Pre-Departure Training Attendance	April 7, 2025
	Completion of Learn Travel-Abroad Course	Deadline set by WI or Co-op offices
	Waterloo International (OR Co-op) Required forms and checklists (Including registration at <a href="http://travel.gc.ca/travelling/registration">travel.gc.ca/travelling/registration</a> )	Deadline set by WI or Co-op offices
	Copy of Country Visa / Any other required travel documents (If Applicable)	April 7, 2025
	Pre-Departure Checklist	April 7, 2025

## TRAVEL ARRANGEMENTS

The Service Learning Program Coordinator will book all airline tickets in consultation with students and community partners.

In all cases, students will depart during the first three weeks of May and return after a stay of no more than 90 days in the placement location.

Students may request a different return date or different return destination, should they desire to carry out personal travel after their placement is completed and/or travel home to a region other than Waterloo afterwards. In these cases, St. Jerome's University agrees to cover the costs of the lowest-available fare for a return ticket from Toronto for the official placement dates. Students desiring another point of departure, an extended stopover, or a return ticket to another destination will be informed of the difference in fare (if their request is more expensive) and asked to pay the difference. For example, if a return ticket from Toronto to Nairobi costs \$2400 and a student wants a return ticket from South Africa that costs \$2800, the Service Learning Program Coordinator will confirm the cost of both tickets, and request that the student pay the difference in fare of \$400 at the time of payment for their final Beyond Borders fees.

If flight changes are required due to emergency circumstances, students must contact their travel insurance provider for instructions and work collaboratively with the Service Learning Coordinator to arrange changes and repayments. St. Jerome's will not be held accountable for any travel not associated with the fieldwork location.

## CLOSING STATEMENTS

Participating in Beyond Borders is a responsibility, a privilege, and the opportunity of a lifetime. It is our sincere hope that students in this program truly have a transformative experience that equips them with foundations for future learning and service. Our intention as a Catholic university is to support students in their growth journey as responsible and active citizens. There are no promises that this journey will be an easy one, but when approached with an attitude of empathy and openness, our alumni tell us that it can be truly life changing.

We hope that you will be open to us journeying alongside you. The more that you open yourself to mentorship and reflection along the way, the greater the opportunity for growth and transformation. May we all share this journey and the learnings that come.