

UNDERGRADUATE MEDICAL EDUCATION
SCHULICH SCHOOL OF MEDICINE & DENTISTRY
INTERNATIONAL ELECTIVES AND RISK MANAGEMENT

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Next revision: 2026

PURPOSE

Schulich medical students may participate in international electives. This statement sets a framework for ensuring safety of Schulich Medicine and Dentistry undergraduate medical students undertaking electives abroad.

STATEMENT

Types of International Electives:

- Pre-clinical Electives:
 - Students enrolled in pre-clinical Year 1 and Year 2 of the MD program may participate in an International Health Equity Learning (IHEL) experience.
 - Students will be supported by the Internationalization Office and the Undergraduate Medical Education Office to arrange a non-credit elective at a partner site acceptable to IHEL.
 - Electives must be more than 30 clinical hours and are recommended to be a minimum of four weeks long.
 - All pre-clinical international electives are non-credit. Refer to Schulich Internationalization [Medicine \(MD\) - Internationalization - Western University \(uwo.ca\)](https://www.uwo.ca/medicine/md/internationalization/).
- Clinical Electives year 4
 - Clinical electives are completed during the designated clinical elective period in year 4 of the MD Program.
 - Students enrolled in Year 4 of the MD program may participate in an International Health Equity Learning (IHEL) experience. Students will be supported by the Internationalization Office and the Undergraduate Medical Education Office to arrange a Clinical Elective at a recognized partner site acceptable to IHEL and that meets the student's learning objectives.
 - Electives are up to a maximum of four weeks in duration.

- Risk Management
 - The following conditions must be met for all international pre-clinical and clinical electives:
 - Security of Country: The Schulich Internationalization Office and UME follow the travel advisory reports from the [Government of Canada Travel Office](#). Electives to locations where the rating is “Avoid Non-Essential Travel” or “Avoid All Travel” will not be approved. In the interest of student safety, an elective may be cancelled or changed at any time leading up to or during the elective should the security rating of the country or the local situation, in the opinion of the student or the school, change in an unsafe manner.
 - Host Confirmation: The Schulich Internationalization Office confirms directly with all hosts the details (dates, departments, schedule, preceptor) of all international clinical electives. Schedules and approvals from the host are required by the Internationalization Office at least 60 days prior to the planned departure date.
- Travel Health Requirements
 - Before departure the student must:
 - Provide proof (to the Schulich Internationalization Office) of a visit to a travel clinic or physician who advises on vaccination, travel health measures and medications that are relevant to the location of the elective.
 - Provide proof (to the Schulich Internationalization Office) of out-of-country personal travel health insurance that meets the criteria recommended by the [Government of Canada Travel Office](#).
 - Please note it is the student's choice if they want to purchase trip cancellation and/or trip interruption insurance, however, the University will not be responsible for any costs associated with changes in travel plans even if the changes are a result of a University policy.
- Personal Protective Equipment
 - Post Exposure Prophylaxis (PEP):
 - Each student must follow the Office of Internationalization Guidelines on HIV-PEP.
 - N95 Masks:
 - Each student must be fitted with an N95 mask and take an appropriate number of N95 masks with them if they will not be available at the host site.
 - Gloves and eye protection:
 - Each student must inquire about locally provided personal protective equipment. If they are not provided it is the student's responsibility to arrange to take appropriate supplies with them.
- Student registration requirements:
 - Before departure:
 - Each student **must** enroll in Western International's Travel Registry (registration is confirmed by the Schulich Internationalization Office). The Travel Registry tracks all traveler information across Western and enables Western to monitor student safety and update students on travel advisories

from the Government of Canada.

- Register with the Registration of Canadians Abroad (ROCA). This is a government of Canada service that enables government officials to contact students and assist them in case of an emergency abroad. The student is responsible for completing the online registration ([Registration of Canadians Abroad - travel.gc.ca](https://travel.gc.ca)) and provides confirmation to the Schulich Internationalization Office prior to travel.
- Register with International SOS ([International SOS](https://www.international-sos.com)), download the ISOS in-country support app., and provide the Schulich Internationalization Office with a copy of their travel plans (including flights, in-country transportation and living accommodations).
 - ISOS is a worldwide service available 24 hours a day, 7 days per week providing students with emergency assistance. Before departing students must also review ISOS guidance for their destination. As per Western's Administrative Policies and Procedures Policy 1.53 - Safety Abroad, Western International provides resources and support services aimed at facilitating safe travel for students. The office will support Activity Sponsors (i.e., Undergraduate Medical Education and Internationalization Office), departments and faculties to identify and take steps with respect to health and safety issues so that student travel is as safe as possible. However, it must be clear that the University cannot ensure that all travel will be problem free or account for all of the potential risks that might be experienced during international travel.
- Pre-Departure Training Requirements:
 - Each student completing an international elective is required to complete Western International's virtual pre-departure modules and achieve at least 80% in the final quiz from a maximum of two attempts.
 - The Schulich Internationalization Office ensures that this has been completed by each student.
 - For International clinical electives only, students are required to complete an additional three-hour session Pre-Departure Training via the Schulich Internationalization Office that includes topics on medical safety, language, the use of medical interpreters and ethics. Pre-Departure training is designed to meet the Canadian Federation of Medical Students (CFMS) guidelines on pre-departure training.
 - The Internationalization Office reserves the right to have students complete further additional training sessions either on-line or in-person in the year of travel as new training becomes available or if the student is considered to need additional pre-departure training as determined by the UME or Internationalization Office.
- Health and Safety Incident Reporting:
 - The student is required to report any health and safety concerns related to workplace injury or exposure to the Schulich Internationalization Office, International SOS and Western International as well as to the preceptor at the host site as soon as possible. This should not delay the student seeking immediate local

- medical care.
- For workplace related health concerns the student is required to report to the host site occupational health and safety department (or equivalent) or after-hours equivalent for immediate medical attention.
- For non-workplace related health concerns the student is required to seek medical attention as recommended by their travel health physician at their pre-departure travel medicine assessment.
- Student Individual Responsibilities:
 - Apply for the elective, ensure eligibility criteria/program requirements are met by the elective, and cover all international electives costs.
 - If any academic concerns arise prior to the student's planned departure date, it will be at the discretion of the Vice Dean, Medical Education to determine if the student is able to participate in the international elective. All students are made aware of this at the point of application and are reminded regularly throughout the pre-departure stages.
 - Review the Western Safety Abroad policy and procedure ([Safety Abroad Procedure](#))
 - Sign and return a code of conduct, liability waiver, and emergency contact form to the Schulich Internationalization Office
 - Check in via email with the Schulich Internationalization Office upon arrival to their destination and at least once during their elective away
 - Complete the post-elective debrief with Schulich International and the elective evaluation.