

Office of the Vice-President Academic and Provost

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DATE: April 30, 2021

TO: Deans' Council, Associate Deans, Chairs, Directors and Faculty Administrative Directors
CC: Carolyn Russell, Director, Global Engagement & Joel Lynn, Executive Director, Student Services
FROM: Susan Lewis, Acting Vice-Provost

RE: International student mobility programs for fall 2021

Please share with your faculty members

Dear faculty colleagues,

On behalf of the Provost, I'm writing to update you on UVic's international student mobility programs for the fall term (September-December 2021). Programs include incoming and outgoing international exchanges as well as UVic-sanctioned international co-ops, internships, field schools, volunteer opportunities, practica, and other study abroad opportunities offered by academic faculties, departments and schools.

As you'll know, UVic is currently planning for a [return to in-person education for the fall](#), as per the provincial government's direction, while also recognizing significant travel restrictions worldwide. Global Affairs Canada (GAC)'s current travel advisory remains at [level 3](#), advising Canadians to avoid non-essential travel; travel insurance is currently limited or offered at a high cost. There are also quarantine, self-isolation and testing protocols in place for all individuals traveling or returning to Canada.

As such, and as per previous terms impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, **outbound mobility programs** remain on hold until GAC changes its travel advisories to level 1 or 2. Deans should waive, substitute or defer requirements for mandatory international travel in their degree programs during this period. Students may continue to request [special authorization](#) to travel, which will be approved on a case-by-case basis.

Inbound mobility programs continue to be offered with consideration given to academic program capacity and in compliance with travel, immigration and public health requirements. Inbound exchange students and inbound fee-paying students wishing to travel to Victoria and attend the UVic campus during fall term 2021 may do so, provided all health and safety requirements put in place by the Provincial Health Officer and UVic are met. There may be additional restrictions for inbound international travel into Canada enforced by GAC that are beyond UVic's control.

A changing health landscape

Recognizing that vaccination programs continue to roll out and that the national and global situation could change in the coming months, outbound and inbound mobility will be supported in the fall term if GAC's official travel advisory for the destination country changes to level 1 or 2 and the other conditions outlined in the attached document are met. While it's still too early to make predictions about the spring term, we are optimistic that we will be able to offer more opportunities to our students at that time. We will keep you updated as the situation evolves.

Opportunities and contact information

The university remains committed to maintaining and encouraging international engagement of faculty, librarians, staff and students as much as possible during the current pandemic, while prioritizing the health and safety of all our UVic community members. Academic units and program leads who have global partners interested in supporting virtual student mobility experiences are encouraged to advance those opportunities for students.

Please contact the Office of Global Engagement via ioglobal@uvic.ca if you have any questions or would like further information about UVic's student mobility programs, virtual programming opportunities and/or available resources.

International student mobility programs remain an important priority for our university, and we look forward to once again offering our full programming when health and safety allows.

Sincerely,

Susan

Susan Lewis, PhD

Acting Vice-Provost

University of Victoria

Attached: Inbound/Outbound Student Mobility Fall 2021

MEMO

DATE:	March 31, 2021
TO:	Dr. Catherine Krull, Special Advisor International
FROM:	Student Mobility Recovery Team
RE:	Inbound/Outbound Student Mobility Fall 2021

Background

As stated in the Inbound/Outbound Student Mobility Programs Fall 2020 Memo from the Provost in June 2020, the Office of Global Engagement established the Student Mobility Recovery Team (SMRT). Membership is noted below and includes academics and experts working in international programs and activities.

Student Mobility Recovery Team Membership:

- Carolyn Russell, Executive Director, Global Engagement (Chair)
- Marc Bavin, Associate Director –Global Partnerships, Office of Global Engagement
- Tricia Best, Director, International Student Services
- Jenni Carswell, Executive Director’s Assistant, Office of Global Engagement
- Heike Edam, Global Engagement Coordinator, Office of Global Engagement
- Andrea Giles, Executive Director, Co-operative Education and Career Services
- Meeta Khurana, Associate Director, Engineering and Computer Science Co-op
- Brian Leacock, Associate Director International, Gustavson School of Business
- Ben McAllister, Manager – Risk, Insurance & Continuity Planning, VPFO
- Dr. Cameron Owens, Associate Teaching Professor, Department of Geography
- Dr. Lisa Surridge, Associate Dean Academic, Faculty of Humanities

As a first task, the SMRT reviewed the Provost’s Inbound/Outbound Mobility Programs Fall 2020 Memo and the subsequent Winter 2021 and Summer 2021 Memo and discussed recommendations for Fall 2021.

SMRT confirmed that the circumstances and information available that inform decision-making regarding inbound/outbound mobility for Fall 2021 have changed since October 2020 and are noted below:

- As of Monday, March 8, 2021, BC’s Provincial Health Officer has advised heads of all BC public post-secondary institutions to prepare for the return of face-to-face instruction for Fall 2021.
- There are currently significant travel restrictions in Canada (Global Affairs Canada (GAC) level 3 Global Travel Advisory) and all countries around the world. However, the rollout of vaccination programs in BC, other Canadian provinces and territories and in some countries across the globe

has signalled the possibility that some travel restrictions in Canada and for other countries may change in the coming months.

- Other BC post-secondary institutions are mixed on whether their student mobility programs will run in Fall 2021, with most indicating they are currently reviewing the situation.
- Availability of travel medical and trip cancellation insurance for Canadians' global travel is currently limited or offered at a high cost. SMRT anticipates this may change as adjustments take place with travel restrictions.
- Information is provided by [International SOS](#) regarding emergent developments in other countries.

For the purpose of these recommendations, the term 'student' refers to a current UVic domestic or international student whether located in Canada or abroad. Outbound or inbound mobility, therefore, refers to travel relative to the University of Victoria and not the current location of the student.

Recommendations

The University remains committed to maintaining and encouraging international engagement of faculty, staff and students as much as possible during the current pandemic, while acknowledging the priority of health and safety of all university community members.

As of March 31, 2021, SMRT recommends that:

- outbound mobility remains on hold until such time GAC travel advisories change to GAC level 1 or 2; students may continue to request special authorization approval to undertake such travel on a case-by-case basis;
- inbound mobility continues to be offered with consideration given to academic program capacity and in compliance with travel, immigration and public health requirements.

As vaccination schedules continue to roll out in BC, in Canada, and globally, and in the anticipation of reduced travel restrictions over time, the SMRT recommends a proactive principles-based approach to inform decision-making for inbound/outbound student mobility programming for Fall 2021 as changes to travel restrictions occur. Specifically, UVic-sanctioned inbound/outbound mobility will be supported if **all** of the following conditions are met:

1. Outbound Mobility
 - a) Canada's travel advisory for the destination country is in line with UVic travel safety policy. Specifically, [GAC's official travel advisory](#) must indicate level 1 or 2 for the destination country. According to the [Off-Campus Travel Risk Management policy](#), authorization to travel to countries with "Avoid all non-essential travel" (GAC level 3) and "Avoid all travel" (GAC level 4) will not normally be authorized and requires special authorization to travel. Special consideration will be made for international students planning to participate in an outbound mobility activity in their country of citizenship.
 - b) Students are aware of and understand their obligation to satisfy, and continually monitor, health and safety requirements established by the official health offices from all levels of government of the destination country, International SOS and other authorities or sources.
 - c) Students are able to acquire travel medical insurance to the desired destination that meets their personal health requirements.
 - d) Students are informed of the possibility that program disruption due to pandemic escalation in-country may occur and are prepared for the potential for logistical and financial risks that may suddenly occur. Students are further informed that the University cannot financially support a return trip home or the cost of other circumstances that may arise (e.g., additional costs of travel and quarantine requirements, increased costs associated with a regional lockdown, etc.).

- e) UVic's partner institution, ground operators and/or collaborating organizations or communities in the destination country have confirmed their support for receiving international mobility students from Canada.

Exception: When a student meets all of the above principles, except for item 1.a, individual students who have special circumstances or are participating in graduate programs in an international location can request permission to continue in a UVic-sanctioned program or activity abroad (see Outbound Special Authorizations below).

2. Inbound Mobility

- a) Inbound exchange and fee-paying students wishing to attend on campus at UVic during Fall 2021 agree to, and comply with, all travel, immigration, health and safety requirements put in place by the Government of Canada, BC Provincial Health Officer and UVic.
- b) Inbound mobility students are informed and understand there may be additional restrictions for inbound international travel into Canada enforced by GAC and IRCC beyond UVic's control.

Please note:

- These recommendations are aligned with the Off-Campus Activity Risk Management Policy.
- These recommendations do not place any restrictions on academic units or program leads in facilitating virtual student mobility experiences. Academic units and program leads who have global partners interested in supporting these experiences and the internal capacity to support students are encouraged to advance these opportunities for students.

Implementation

The implementation of the Fall 2021 Inbound/Outbound Student Mobility recommendations are as follows:

Outbound Mobility

- Academic units are best positioned to determine the importance of international mobility for their students/programs. As such, each outbound mobility program lead will ensure adherence to the recommendations in this document. Due to overlapping programming across UVic's 220+ partner institutions, coordination of practices across the various program leads will take place through SMRT.
- [CBIE's Code of Ethical Practice](#) will be used as a guideline for UVic outbound mobility – particularly section seven on *Cross-Border Projects, Programs, Campuses*.

Outbound Special Authorizations (GAC level 3 or 4)

- As above, academic units are best positioned to determine the importance of international mobility for their students/programs. As such, students who wish to participate in a UVic-sanctioned program or activity where international travel is necessary will need to complete a Special Authorization for Travel Form, signed by their supervisor/program lead and their Dean/Co-op Executive Director. A copy of the signed form must be sent to the Office of Global Engagement (OGE) 6 weeks before the student's travel. If the OGE has any concerns, they will contact the relevant Dean and program lead within one week. If there are no concerns, the student is notified by OGE of their special authorization to travel. The OGE will also follow up with the student to ensure that they are registered in International SOS and advise them of current restrictions relating to international travel. As well, students will be made aware of the current limitations on the university's ability to support them while abroad. It is the student's responsibility to ensure they have adequate travel and medical insurance.

- For students requesting support to participate in a UVic-sanctioned program or activity in the country they are currently located, a Special Authorization to Participate in an International Academic Program must be completed by the student and signed by their supervisor/program lead and their Dean/Co-op Executive Director. A copy of the signed form must be sent to the OGE 6 weeks before the commencement of the student's program or activity. If the OGE has any concerns, they will contact the relevant Dean and program lead within one week. If there are no concerns, the student is notified by OGE of their special authorization to participate in an international academic program. The OGE will also follow up with the student to ensure that they are registered in International SOS and advise them of the current limitations on the university's ability to support them while abroad.

Inbound Mobility Programs

- Program leads to ensure prospective inbound mobility students are referred to relevant information regarding travel and public health requirements and restrictions and safe arrival procedures set out by the governments of Canada, BC and by UVic.
- All inbound students are sent communication of their requirement to participate in the UVic Self-Isolation Program in accordance with UVic's requirements as an approved Designated Learning Institution (DLI) eligible to receive international students.

Other

- The Office of Global Engagement will continue to work closely with the SMRT to develop and propose key recommendations to the Special Advisor International that anticipate the new realities for student mobility programming beyond Fall 2021.
- The global situation is being constantly monitored by the Office of Global Engagement and program leads involved in outbound/inbound student mobility. Should the global situation shift in the coming weeks/months in ways that challenge the current recommendations, the SMRT will develop and propose further recommendations.