

## **Guidelines for the Design and Initial Approval of International Field Schools**

**Field Schools Working Group of the Provost's Advisory Council  
(Shane Gannon, Vince Salyers, Paul Varella, Dianne MacDonald,  
GeriLyn Gouglas, Jim Zimmer - Chair)**

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### Definition of International Field School

- The Canadian Bureau for International Education defines Field School as *a structured group learning experience which takes place outside the classroom in a location which acts as a "home base" for studies. Learning centres around topics which are enhanced by the resources (cultural, environmental or academic) available at or near the field school location. (from Canada's Education Abroad Lexicon, available online). At Mount Royal University, international field schools may: entail a classroom component, before and/or after the field component; range in duration from several weeks to a full semester (class time and field experience combined); incorporate a variety of experiential learning forms including community service learning, undergraduate research, clinicals and practica; and, may be offered in collaboration with other universities.*

### Rationale for Guidelines

- to foster rigour in the design and implementation of international field schools
- to formalize approval mechanisms for greater consistency across MRU
- to regularize approval and implementation of international field schools and to reduce administrative complexity
- to ensure that international field school courses are readily identifiable by students in the calendar
- to provide students with easily accessible and timely information about available international field schools, when they are offered, and what is required in order to participate
- to improve logistical clarity related to International Field Schools from conception through implementation for all stakeholders
- to enhance the likelihood of transfer of course credits to other institutions

### Principles Underlying the Recommendations

- Build on existing strengths and effective practices in this area
- Balance structure with flexibility
- Produce guidelines that enable, not constrain
- Create processes that are clear and transparent

## Recommendations: Conception, Design and Approval

### Platform

- Normally, international field schools will be developed as standalone courses in the MRU calendar with course name, number and description
- These courses may be developed as location-independent shells that can be deployed for different iterations of the course over time in various settings
- Where selected sections of a multi-section course are offered periodically in international settings (e.g. nursing practica):
  - calendar descriptions should specify same and encourage students to contact the Program Chair for details; or
  - calendar may contain two distinct course numbers for the same course, one for the standard offering, and one for the international offering (e.g. NURS 4412 – Clinical (Local); NURS 4413 – Clinical (International). Students would take either/or, but not both.

### Approval

- initial approval of the international field school as a credit course in the MRU calendar will follow MRU curriculum approval policies and procedures.
- each specific iteration of the course must be approved separately following the steps outlined in the *International Education Field School Handbook*
- consultation with International Education is essential during both initial approval of the course, and subsequent approval of each iteration.

### Alignment with Program Outcomes

- proposed international field schools must demonstrate alignment with program-level learning outcomes and substantively contribute to their attainment. For international field schools in Gen Ed, alignment with cluster goals and substantive contribution to their attainment must be demonstrated.

### Credit Weighting

- international field schools will normally be weighted at 3 or 6 credits, depending on duration of the experience and amount of student time/effort required to complete course requirements (see Credit Accounting report as a guide)

### Course Outline

- a detailed course outline will be developed as part of initial course approval and for each subsequent iteration of the course
- course outline will address intended learning outcomes, assessment methods, required learning resources, schedule of activities, add/drop and withdrawal dates, etc. (*course outline requirements are to be in keeping with MRU policy*)

### Section Size

- as a guideline, student/instructor ratio of 12-15: 1 shall be the norm
- ratio may be adjusted upwards or downwards in response to factors such as:
  - intended outcomes and activities
  - level of supervision required (e.g. clinical)
  - constraints around transportation and accommodation
  - level of risk
  - availability of additional supervisory resources
  - total cost to students

NOTE - 80% of the target enrollment must be achieved in order for the international field school to run

### Faculty Workload

- International field school instruction may be assigned to full-time faculty as part of normal workload, or as overload (in keeping with articles 14.4.6.1 and 14.5.7.1)

### Financial Viability

- International field school budgets are to be developed in consultation with International Education and must be approved by the relevant Chair and Dean, the Manager of International Education, and the AVP, Teaching & Learning
- With the exception of instructional costs, all costs associated with the international field school are borne collectively by students
- Reconnaissance and advance planning costs will not normally be borne by students
- Cost over-runs are the responsibility of the Dean of the Faculty offering the field school, not the Provost's Office or International Education

### Frequency of Offering and Coordination of Scheduling

- normally, an individual international field school will not run more frequently than every 2 years to enable "audience" to build, and so as not to cannibalize participants from other field schools in the university
- where appropriate, Faculties and departments are encouraged to develop and make public a rotational 3-5 year schedule for upcoming international field schools
- a process should be put in place for university-wide information sharing re: international field school offerings (e.g. yearly report at Deans Council)
- a master international field school schedule with a 2-3 year horizon should be prepared and made available to students on the MRU website

### Formative Assessment of International Field Schools

- mandatory, post-field school debrief meetings will be conducted by International Education with 1) participating students; 2) faculty member(s), Chair and Dean