

Risk Management Handbook for Service-Learning at PolyU

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Introduction

Service-Learning (SL) subjects/projects involve out-of-classroom activities in diverse settings and locations. PolyU staff, students, and related parties, such as service recipients, may be exposed to risky situations that warrant special attention.

The Service-Learning and Leadership Office (SLLO) has worked closely with the Sub-Committee on Service-Learning Subjects and other relevant departments/units to develop guidelines and procedures for risk management in SL subjects/projects at PolyU, and to raise awareness among SL subject/project teachers about risks that may affect all parties involved.

The offering department and the subject/project leader¹ should observe the guidelines and procedures developed by the SLLO, to draw up and update their risk management plan, and monitor and review the implementation of risk control measures for their SL subject/project.

This handbook aims to provide the SL subject/project leaders with essential information and resources **to develop practical and effective risk management plans for SL activities, prioritizing the safety and well-being of students and other stakeholders.**

Chapter 1 states the risk management guidelines and procedures developed by SLLO. SL subject/project leaders should read them carefully, and establish and implement a risk management plan for their SL subject/project.

Chapter 2 covers different types of potential risks, including accidents, health, illegal acts, ethics, personal information leakage, civil instability, bad weather and natural disasters, along with recommended strategies/actions to anticipate and mitigate these risks. A section on risks related to non-local SL activities is also included.

Chapter 3 introduces useful risk management resources available at PolyU and beyond.

Chapter 4 lists out assistances available on campus, in Hong Kong, and outside Hong Kong.

This handbook does not present an exhaustive list of possible risks, and the recommended strategies/actions are suggestions for general reference only. It is important to note that, although some SL activities may have similar risks, solutions can in fact vary by context. Therefore, the subject/project leaders are responsible to assess the potential risks thoroughly for their own SL project, take appropriate preventive measures, and formulate a feasible contingency plan before the commencement of the SL activities. SLLO is available to collaborate on these plans, providing tailored support on a case-by-case basis. All of the risk management processes should be recorded and reviewed from time to time to ensure their effectiveness.

¹ "Subject leader" refers to a subject leader of a credit-bearing SL subject. "Project leader" refers a staff member who is responsible for carrying out or supervising the SL activities of a credit-bearing or non-credit-bearing SL subject. In some cases, a project leader can be a qualified staff member from an external collaborating partner invited by the subject leader.

Chapter 1 – Risk Management Guidelines and Procedures

1.1 At the subject proposal stage

- The subject proposers must conduct a preliminary risk assessment and draw up a risk management plan for the subject proposed. The information provided in the *“Preliminary Risk Management Plan for Service- Learning Subjects”* (to be sent out with the subject proposal forms) assists the Sub-Committee on Service-Learning Subjects (SCSLs) in evaluating its suitability. SCSLS may request the subject proposers to provide further information for clarification, if necessary.

1.2 Before commencement of the service projects

(a) For both local and non-local SL² activities:

- At the beginning of every semester when a SL subject is offered, the subject leader is required to complete and submit the *“Risk Management Checklist for Service-Learning Subjects”* to SLLO. The Checklist will be sent out to the subject teachers with other important information by SLLO via email.
- For service projects with extreme/high risks that lack sufficient and effective measures to minimize or manage those risks, subject leaders are strongly encouraged to consult with SLLO to explore further risk management strategies before the commencement of the SL activities.
- Subject leaders should remind all students to read carefully *“The Code of Conduct for Students Participating in Service-Learning Activities”* (Appendix 1. It is also available in the e-Learning Module on Service-Learning and Service-Learning Handbook for Students) to ensure they are fully aware of the importance of ethical, responsible and professional behaviors. Subject leaders may add specific guidelines for a particular project, if needed.
- A briefing session and written guidelines must be provided to students to cover key information about the risks that may arise from the SL activities, such as health, accidents, bad weather etc., and the corresponding risk control measures, insurance, and contingency plan.
- Necessary and sufficient training, such as preparatory workshops, experiential activities, or cultural sensitivity training, should be provided for students prior to service delivery to enhance their awareness of existing and potential risks that may arise from the SL activities and to equip them with practical risk management skills.
- The subject/project leader needs to monitor and review the implementation of the risk control measures before the commencement of the SL subject and during the implementation of the SL activities.

(b) For non-local SL activities only:

- When conducting a pre-service site visit, medical facilities near the service location and means of transportation for emergency should be identified and arranged.

² Including Chinese Mainland and overseas SL activities.

- PolyU has engaged International SOS (ISOS) to provide emergency assistance for our staff and students who are going to university-authorized non-local activities (including SL trips organized by SL subjects). The subject/project leader is strongly advised to seek pre-travel advice from ISOS at 2528 9900, prepare the team by browsing through their various medical and security online tools and signing up for the alerts. ISOS also has a 24/7 resource on call, online and on the ground to help with any medical, security and logistical questions, concerns and situations that may arise. Please download ISOS mobile app or go to the website: <https://www.internationalsos.com/member-zone>, login with PolyU membership no.: 07AYCA550139 for the service.
Note: The agreement with ISOS will be updated from time to time. Please visit the FO website for the most updated details (FT Staff > Policies & Guidelines > Insurance).
- If the service destination is in developing countries or in underdeveloped areas, it is advised that travel advice should be sought from ISOS or medical practitioners **at least SIX weeks** before departure, to address health-related issues, including disease outbreak alerts, protection against insects, animals, or other disease vectors, safety in diverse environmental settings, and recommended vaccinations. Prior to departure, students should be advised on receiving the required vaccinations and/or medication.
- For students traveling to **low-health-risk countries/regions (e.g., China, Taiwan, Japan)**, they **must** complete the online travel health e-learning module and quiz in the **Non-Local CAR and SL Management System** (<https://www.polyu.edu.hk/sllo/nlsl/>)
- For students traveling to **medium- or high-health-risk countries/regions (e.g., Southeast Asia, Africa)**, they **must** complete the online travel health e-learning module and quiz in the **Non-Local CAR and SL Management System** (<https://www.polyu.edu.hk/sllo/nlsl/>). Students **must also attend a Travel Health Consultation (THC) at the University Health Service (UHS)**. Students who fail to complete **these requirements may be excluded from the project**. However, students reserve the right to **opt out of vaccinations during the THC session**.
- At the beginning of every semester, **subject leaders must ensure that students complete** the “Undertaking and Declaration Form for Students Participating in Non-local Service-Learning Activities” **in the Non-Local CAR and SL Management System. Subject leaders must review** the completed forms and **assess whether** any health-related **conditions** preclude or restrict students’ participation in **SL activities**.
- The university-authorized non-local activities (including SL trips organized by SL subjects) for staff and students will be covered by the University’s Group Travel Insurance. Details can be reached in FO website (FT Staff > Policies and Guidelines > Insurance). Please inform all your members the insurance policy, policy no. and the 24-hour emergency hotline etc.
- All staff members’ emergency contacts should be provided to SLLO (for overseas projects) / uploaded to the [Outbound Activity Information System \(OAIS\)](#) by the subject-offering department **at least TWO weeks** before the trip, for emergency assistance.
- Contact information, such as ISOS hotline, travel insurance assistance hotline, phone

number of the trip leader, collaborating agency staff, local police etc., at the service destination should be provided for students prior to departure. For contacts by students and parents/guardians in emergency situation, the subject/project leaders are advised to provide at least one phone number in Hong Kong and one phone number that can be reached at the service destination during the trip.

1.3 During and/or after implementation of the service projects

- If a suspected or confirmed case of an infectious disease, including all communicable diseases such as SARS, Avian Flu (H5N1), T.B., Influenza A (H1N1), etc., is identified among students, PolyU staff, agency staff or service recipients, the subject/project leader is required to notify the subject-offering department, the Health & Safety Office (HSO) and SLLO immediately, and follow the handling guidelines as stated in *Appendix 2*.
- In case of death, serious physical injury, or serious illness of one or more team members, the subject/project leader should report to the SLLO emergency WhatsApp hotline (+852 5463 5710) and the subject-offering department as soon as possible and no later than 24 hours after the accident or incident.
- The subject/project leader is advised to keep record of the risk management plan of the SL subject for the purpose of quality assurance and management review when required.

Chapter 2 - Potential risks and risk control measures

Staff, students, and service recipients may face various risks during SL activities, particularly in SL subjects involving large group of PolyU students and service recipients, or those conducted outside Hong Kong for more than two weeks. This chapter outlines key risks associated with SL activities and the recommended risk control measures.

2.1 Risks related to accidents

Accidents that may occur when conducting services are:

- Accidents caused by unsafe conditions
- Accidents caused by unsafe acts of people
- Other accidents such as animal/insect attacks, road/car accidents, fire accidents

2.1.1 Accidents caused by unsafe conditions

Unsafe conditions:	Recommended strategies/actions
Defective, inferior or unsuitable tools, machinery, equipment or materials that are being used to deliver services	<p>Subject/project leaders should inspect all the tools, machinery, equipment and materials before use. Each student should receive training in the safety rules and instructions, e.g. the use of protective equipment.</p> <p>☞ <i>The Risk Survey Table for the Use of Personal Protection Equipment, HSE Form 18 can help identify the needs and management of Personal Protective Equipment. It can be found on the website of PolyU's Health & Safety Office (HSO): https://www.polyu.edu.hk/hso/ (Staff & Student Corner > Guide & Forms > H&S Forms).</i></p>
Hazards of surroundings in the service location including but not limited to poor housekeeping and security conditions	<p>Subject/project leaders should conduct pre-service visit(s) to investigate all working areas of the service location(s). The investigation aims to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Identify physical hazards that may cause accidents, such as inadequate machinery/equipment guarding, misplaced blocks of cartons or obstruction.• Evaluate security conditions near the service location, such as quiet or poorly lit streets at night, or old buildings without security guards for home visits. <p>☞ <i>A Self Inspection Checklist, HSE Form 13-W can be used to conduct safety inspections of the working areas. It can be found at https://www.polyu.edu.hk/hso/ (Staff & Student Corner > Guide & Forms > H&S Forms).</i></p>

Inadequate guidance or supervision during service delivery	<p>All service activities must be supervised by teaching staff or qualified designated officers.</p> <p>SLLO staff are available to assist with project supervision upon request. Subject/project leaders may also consider involving the staff of the collaborating agencies to provide project supervision.</p>
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2.1.2 Accidents caused by unsafe acts of people

Unsafe acts:	Recommended strategies/actions
Failure to follow instructions or proper procedures	<p>Safety training is the most effective way to prevent unsafe acts. Subject/project leaders must ensure adequate training and instructions are provided before service delivery, including essential knowledge, safety-conscious attitudes, and habits of safety practice.</p> <p>Strict enforcement of safety practices, supported by prompt corrective action, is essential, as violations of safety principles often cause accidents. Therefore, on-site supervision during service delivery is very crucial. It is highly recommended that every service activity is supervised by teaching staff members or qualified designated officers.</p> <p>SLLO staff can assist in project supervision on request. Subject/project leaders may also consider involving the staff of the collaborating agencies to provide project supervision.</p>
Taking unsafe position or posture	
Failure to use available personal protective equipment such as gloves, goggles, hard hats	
Failure to wear safe or proper personal attire	<p>The subject/project leaders should provide sufficient details of the related services including service location, weather, and if there are any outdoor or physically demanding activities. Suggestions of proper attire should be given.</p> <p>For example, long hair should be tied back when machinery is being operated; long-sleeved clothes, long pants, and a hat or scarf to protect face and neck should be worn if the service is conducted in outdoor or forest areas.</p>

2.1.3 Other accidents

Other accidents	Recommended strategies/actions
Animal/insect attacks	<p>Service projects taking place in sub-urban areas, locally or abroad, may involve the risk of participants getting attacked by insects, reptiles or other animals, such as bees, mosquitoes, snakes or dogs. Some cases can be fatal due to the transmission of diseases, such as yellow fever, Japanese encephalitis and rabies. Students should avoid having close encounters with animals and learn what to do in case of an attack.</p> <p>Students must complete online travel health lectures and a quiz via the Non-Local CAR and SL Management System to prepare for SL activities.</p>

Road/car accidents	<p>Subject/project leaders must arrange safe transportation for students, particularly for remote or non-local service locations. Where possible, students should use public transportation (e.g., buses, subways, or licensed taxis).</p> <p>Traffic laws differ significantly in different cities and countries; road conditions vary dramatically and can be particularly dangerous in developing countries. Students should be forbidden to travel alone, to drive or to ride motor bikes when abroad.</p>
Fire accidents	<p>Fire safety conditions in the service location should be investigated in advance.</p> <p>Means of escape must be available and kept free of obstructions. The subject/project leaders and students should acquaint themselves with the escape routes and the locations of fire extinguishers and fire blankets in the service areas.</p>
Accidents related to service recipients or other people	<p>Additional insurances, such as accident insurance for service recipients or third-party insurance, should be considered if any outside campus visits/adventure activities, or large-scale exhibition are involved.</p> <p>For some cases, these may be covered by the collaborating agencies or the venue owners. The subject/project leader can check with the parties concerned and seek advice and quotations from insurance brokers via the Insurance and Projects Unit of Finance Office (FO).</p>

2.2 Health-related risks

Potential risks:	Recommended strategies/actions
Hidden or insufficient information about students' physical and mental health conditions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> For subject/project with non-local SL activities, all students should complete and submit the <i>"Undertaking and Declaration Form"</i> available in the Non-Local CAR and SL Management System https://www.polyu.edu.hk/slo/nls/. For students under 18, the form must be signed by their parent/guardian. <p>The subject/project leaders are advised to go through the completed forms and evaluate if there are any health-related reasons or problems that preclude or restrict students' participation in the SL activities.</p>

Hidden or insufficient information about service recipient groups	<p>The subject/project leaders should gather necessary information about the physical or mental health and special needs of service recipients to evaluate their suitability for participation in SL activities. Medical advice must be sought if needed.</p> <p>For SL activities involving service recipients with special needs, patients suffering from infectious diseases, or ex-convicts, subject/project leaders are highly recommended to work closely with the collaborating partner(s) to conduct safety evaluations, sort out appropriate measures in advance and communicate regularly. If possible, staff from the collaborating agencies can hold briefing sessions for our students about the backgrounds of the service recipient groups.</p>
Personal, food and environmental hygiene	<p>The subject/project leaders should study and evaluate the environmental hygiene of the service destination(s) in advance.</p> <p>Students should be aware of their personal hygiene. The subject/project leaders should advise on the proper use of personal protective equipment including but not limited to surgical masks, surgical gloves, hand sanitizers, disinfectant wet towels if students are required to serve the sick.</p> <p>Students should be aware of food and water hygiene, especially when abroad. Students should consume only thoroughly cooked food and avoid raw eggs or raw meat.</p> <p>A health talk conducted by ISOS or a professional medical staff from the UHS can be arranged to give more information about infection control measures.</p>
Injury or suddenly ill	<p>A medical kit with basic medications for minor health problems, and first aid supplies (e.g. disinfectant, wound dressing material) should be prepared for all SL activities. A first aid kit can be purchased from the UHS.</p> <p>It is advised to identify staff and students with valid and recognized first aid certificates issued by the HKSAR Government, so that they can assist with basic and necessary first aid procedures during an emergency situation.</p>
Suspicion of infectious disease DURING and AFTER service provision	<p>If any student, staff member of PolyU, agency staff member or service recipient is suspected or confirmed to be suffering from a statutorily notifiable infectious disease, such as SARS, Avian Flu (H5N1), T.B., or Novel Influenza A, the subject/project leader is required to notify the hosting department, HSO and SLLO immediately and follow the handling guidelines as stated in <i>Appendix 2</i>.</p>

Direct contacts with insects, reptiles and other animals	Direct contacts with insects, reptiles or animals should be avoided. For example, due to the outbreak of Avian Influenza H5N1/H7N9/H9N2 in Asian countries, contacts with birds, poultry (live or dead) or their droppings and eggs should be avoided.
Direct contact with patients in hospital or medical centers	For SL activities conducted in hospital or medical centers, all members should attend the “Infection Control Training Course” before the commencement of the SL activities. This course will be organized in local hospitals regularly and it is a requirement for people who would like to serve in hospitals.

2.3 Risks related to illegal acts

Students may commit an offence due to ignorance or become victims during the service period. Common potential risks include sexual harassment, invasion of personal privacy, drug related offenses and theft. Subject/project leaders must provide clear instructions to prevent these risks and guide students on appropriate responses

Students should be told clearly that they must bear all the responsibility for any illegal and risky behaviors.

Potential risks	Recommended strategies/actions
Committing an offence or a crime	<p>Before service delivery, students should be briefed on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Circumstances that may lead to accusations of committing an offense or crime, • Clear guidelines on how to avoid committing an offence or a crime in the service setting, • The legal and disciplinary consequences of illegal acts or misconduct. <p><i>☞ For non-local SL activities, students should be aware of the rules and regulations outside HK or in other countries.</i></p> <p>Students should not be allowed to leave the team without prior approval during the service period.</p> <p>If a student commits an offense or illegal act, subject/project leaders must take appropriate action, such as notifying the relevant agency, reporting to the PolyU Student Disciplinary Committee, contacting the student’s parents or guardians, or involving local authorities if necessary. SLLO is available to provide case-by-case guidance on handling incidents.</p>

<p>Personal privacy infringement</p>	<p>According to the Personal Data (Privacy) (Amendment) Ordinance 2012, <i>“It is an offence for a person to disclose any personal data of a data subject obtained from a data user without the latter’s consent and with an intent to (i) obtain gain for himself or another person, or (ii) cause loss to the data subject. It is also an offence if the unauthorized disclosure, irrespective of its intent, causes psychological harm to the data subject. The maximum penalty for these two new offences is a fine of \$1,000,000 and imprisonment for 5 years.”</i></p> <p>The subject/project leaders should discuss with the collaborating agencies how to protect service recipients’ privacy (e.g. personal data, photographs and videos) and collect consent from them in advance if appropriate.</p> <p>Students should be taught to be aware of protecting service recipients’ rights to privacy from being disclosed, either intentionally or unintentionally.</p> <p>The subject/project leaders should avoid letting students handle or collect personal data from the service recipients directly. A designated staff member should be responsible for this task or seek assistance from the collaborating agencies.</p> <p>☞ <i>Details of the Ordinance can be found from the Office of the Privacy Commissioner for Personal Data (PCPD): https://www.pcpd.org.hk/</i></p>
<p>Being accused of sexual harassment or assault</p>	<p>Sexual harassment includes unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, or other verbal, non-verbal, or physical conduct of a sexual nature. It is a criminal offense, and violators will face disciplinary action by PolyU and potential legal consequences under Hong Kong law.</p> <p>The subject/project leaders should provide examples/cases for students to understand what may constitute sexual harassment before service delivery. It is possible that a student can be the harasser or harassed.</p> <p>Students should be forbidden</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To have any intimate physical contact with the service recipients; • To participate in sexual activities or sexual contacts with the service recipients. <p>The exchange of personal contact information between students and the service recipients should not be encouraged.</p> <p>When delivering service, students should always be paired up or work in a group and not to have one-to-one interaction with the service recipients.</p>

	<p>All students must complete the sexual harassment unit in the e-learning module, “Learn to Serve, Serve to Learn: Introduction to Service-Learning” developed by SLLO.</p> <p>In handling matters related to sexual harassment, staff members are advised to follow the University’s policies on Sexual Harassment. Staff members or students can also seek advice from the University’s Advisors/Conciliators for resolving allegations concerning sexual harassment and violation of the Code of Ethics.</p> <p>☞ <i>The approved list of Advisors/ Conciliators can be found in PolyU’s Policy on Sexual Harassment:</i></p> <p>https://www2.polyu.edu.hk/ethics/Polyu/sexhars/</p> <p>☞ <i>For more details, please visit the website of Prevention and Elimination of Sexual Harassment, Equal Opportunities Commission:</i></p> <p>https://www.eoc.org.hk/en/about-the-eoc/eoc-policies/sexual-harassment-between-external-parties-and-eoc-staff</p>
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2.4 Risks related to ethics

In a service setting, service recipients are often vulnerable groups, such as the elderly, individuals with disabilities or young children. As responsible service providers, staff and students should strive to keep a high ethical standard in practice. Students should follow the instructions and regulations set by the collaborating agencies whenever possible. Proper actions should be taken by the subject/project leaders to prevent unethical or harmful acts.


☞ *PolyU policies on governing staff's and students' ethics and discipline can be found in:*

Student Handbook - <https://www.polyu.edu.hk/ar/web/en/for-polyu-students/student-handbook/>

Staff Handbook - https://www2.polyu.edu.hk/Staff/staff_handbook/

Unethical acts	Recommended strategies/actions
Conflict of interest	<p>At the subject proposal stage, all staff members involved in the subject proposal are required to declare any actual, potential or perceived conflict of interest in the proposed subject, including but not limited to the selection of collaborating partner(s) or beneficiaries for the subject.</p> <p>The subject leader should declare immediately to the Sub-Committee on Service-Learning Subjects (SCSLs) if an actual, potential or perceived conflict of interest arises during the offering of the SL subject.</p> <p>Students should be warned not to give or loan service recipients money or other personal belongings.</p> <p>Staff members and students should not engage in any type of business with service recipients during the service period.</p>
Insulting the service recipients, using harmful language or showing discriminative attitudes	<p>The subject/project leaders should emphasize the importance of ethics and the possible consequences of any unethical acts or misbehaviors. A pre-service briefing should be provided to explain the Code of Conduct (<i>Appendix 1</i>) and give clear guidelines to students on the following topics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Positive attitudes on Service-Learning, • Showing respect to service recipients, • Dos and don'ts during the service period, • Learning culture and taboos if the service recipients are from different cultural backgrounds or ethnic minorities. • Students should complete the ethics and cultural sensitivity units in the e-learning module, "Learn to Serve, Serve to Learn: Introduction to Service-Learning,"

2.5 Risks related to civil instability and terrorism

Potential risks	Recommended strategies/actions
Outbreak of strike, riot, civil/political gathering or commotion in the destination country	<p>Before departure, the subject/project leaders should check if the service destinations are affected by any unrest and to what extent. If necessary, suspension of the service project should be considered.</p> <p>If there are regional riots in the country, the subject/project leader should instruct all team members to avoid going to the affected areas.</p> <p>Please check the outbound HK government travel alert under Risk Management in the Non-Local CAR and SL Management System (NLSL).</p> <p>The subject/project leader should instruct students to avoid discussing with local people the political situation, religious or other sensitive topics which may provoke sentiments.</p>
Civil/political unrest involved exchanges of gunfire and the use of various explosive devices near the service location(s)	Suspension of the service project is strongly advised.
Terrorism/Hijacking	<p>Call ISOS or the local police or Chinese embassy in the country for assistance whenever possible.</p> <p>The subject/project leaders should assess the situation carefully before making any decisions because this may affect the whole team's safety.</p> <p> A list of Chinese Embassies can be found at: http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/eng/ziliao/wjgmc/</p>

2.6 Risks related to personal information leakage

The university respects the personal data privacy of all individuals and pledges to comply with the requirements of the Personal Data (Privacy) Ordinance of Hong Kong ("PDPO"). A "Personal Data Compliance Manual" has been developed by PolyU as a compliance guide to staff members when carrying out their duties. The Manual applies to personal data that the University collects or creates during its operation. It can be found at: https://www2.polyu.edu.hk/DAG/PD_Manual.pdf. Each department has a Departmental Personal Data Officer (DPDO) as the point of contact for privacy related queries within the department and consulting central departments/units for advice.

Compared to other subjects, staff members in SL subjects may need to handle more personal data (especially for non-local projects) and are hence exposed to a higher risk of data leakage.

Potential risks	Recommended strategies/actions
Disclose clients' personal data by students	Some SL projects need students to collect personal information (e.g., family background, health condition, etc.) from community partners or clients to prepare them for performing individualized services. Clear guidelines and close monitoring should be exercised by the subject/project teachers to minimize personal data leakage caused by students.
Collect and expose unnecessary student information	Personal information (e.g., date of birth, ID or passport number, expiry date, emergency contacts) will be required for logistical arrangement or required by the university or the host partners. The purpose of collection and how the information will be handled in the process and after use should be clearly delivered to students beforehand. Only essential information should be collected.
Pass data to community partners/service providers	<p>In developing regions, data privacy awareness and regulations may differ from Hong Kong standards.</p> <p>Subject/project leaders must engage with community partners or service providers to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Understand the purpose of collecting personal data and their data handling procedures. 2. Share PolyU's data protection practices (e.g., encrypting data files, collecting only essential data, handling by authorized staff, deleting data immediately after use). 3. Confirm whether data will be shared with third parties and the purpose of sharing.
Marketing and publicity	Obtain consent or blur their faces before putting clients on social media channels, regardless it is a private or public account. Avoid mentioning their names or other personal information.
Personal data breach	The subject/project leader shall report personal data breach to their Head of Department (HoD) and their DPDO within 24 hours or as soon as practicable. The procedures of handling data incidents can be found at the "Personal Data Compliance Manual" mentioned above.

2.7 Risks related to bad weather and natural disasters

Bad weather and natural disasters occur globally each year, causing varying degrees of damage and, in severe cases, significant loss of life. As these events are often unpredictable, subject/project leaders must implement preventive measures and provide clear guidelines to students before SL projects.

Potential risks	Recommended strategies/actions
Natural disasters (such as volcanic eruption, flood, tsunami, landslide, hurricane, tornado or wildfire)	At the subject proposal stage , if the natural disaster has happened within a year/is happening/ has frequently happened in recent years in the planned service destination(s), the subject/project proposer should conduct a risk assessment carefully. Alternative service destination(s) should be identified.



	<p>A comprehensive risk assessment should be done again one month before departure. Any updated information should be sent to SLLO for record purposes.</p> <p>During the service period, the subject/project leaders must suspend all SL activities, and bring the team to a safe place or call for assistance immediately.</p> <p>The subject/project leaders should ensure the team in the service location can communicate with the relevant parties (such as the collaborating agencies, the University, local police, etc.) or call for emergency assistance. If the service is to be conducted in rural/remote areas where communication networks are unstable or impossible, a copy of the team's accurate service location and detailed schedule should be given to relevant parties in advance.</p> <p>Subject/project leaders must identify at least two emergency gathering points that are accessible 24/7 and share this information with students and SLLO.</p>
Earthquake	<p><i>☞ Apart from the above, for a place with a risk of earthquake, a manual, developed by PolyU, for dealing with earthquakes can be obtained from:</i></p> <p>http://sn.polyu.edu.hk/filemanager/common/collaborations/disaster/booklet_final.pdf</p>
Typhoon signal no. 8 or above, or black rainstorm warning	<p>For SL activities conducted on campus, the University's arrangements should be followed.</p> <p>If SL activities are to be conducted outside PolyU campus and typhoon signal no. 8 or above is hoisted, or a black rainstorm warning is issued two hours before the service time, all activities should be suspended immediately.</p> <p>The service can be resumed two hours after the lowering of typhoon signal No. 8, or the cancellation of black rainstorm warning, if weather conditions permit. The resumption announcement should be made to all students properly in due course.</p> <p>If SL activities are to be conducted in a remote area (e.g. an outlying island), the subject/project leaders should consider canceling or suspending the service if inclement weather is expected before it is started or at least at an advance a time which is sufficient to allow the team to return safely.</p>

2.8 Risks related to non-local Service-Learning activities

For SL subjects/projects taking place outside Hong Kong, PolyU staff and students may be exposed to relatively higher risks. Therefore, the subject/project leaders who are new in conducting non-local service project are advised strongly to conduct pre-service site visits, collaborate with reliable

local partners in the service destination(s), and get advice from the relevant parties (such as ISOS, UHS, SLLO) and more experienced SL subject/project leaders.

2.8.1 Common risks related to non-local Service-Learning activities

Potential risks	Recommended strategies/actions
Outbound Travel Alert (OTA):	<p>Students' safety should always be the top priority. It is recommended to have an alternative service location identified as a back-up in case the situation at the original service location becomes concerning.</p> <p>Keep track of the OTA announcement, especially one month before the SL trip.</p> <p> <i>For the up-to-date list of countries with OTA in force, please check:</i> http://www.sb.gov.hk/eng/ota/</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> For overseas projects, when the Black OTA is in force 	<p>Adjusting to the alternative service location, or suspension of SL project should be considered.</p> <p>If there are strong reason(s) for continuing with the SL project in a country with a Black OTA, endorsement must be obtained from SLLO in advance.</p> <p>Moreover, a specific undertaking regarding the situation should be prepared for students to sign, with parent's/guardian's signature for all students regardless of age. Possible consequences and responsibilities should be clearly communicated to all students. Students should be allowed to make their own decisions about whether to participate.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> For overseas projects, when the Red or Amber OTA is in force 	<p>Possible consequences and responsibilities should be clearly communicated to all students. Keep track of the OTA announcements and news released by the airline/travel agent and the insurance company and keep close contact with the overseas partners for advice.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> For Chinese Mainland projects 	<p> <i>Travel alert can be obtained from local news or the Ministry of Culture and Tourism of the PRC (Chinese only):</i> http://www.mct.gov.cn/</p> <p>If travel alert has been announced for the service location or regions near the service location, the subject/project leader should seek advice from the Mainland collaborating agencies for appropriate action. Respective actions similar to those for overseas projects should be taken according to the level of travel alert.</p>

Health and travel history declaration	<p>Two weeks before the non-local trip, the subject/project leader should require students and others in the project team to report immediately: 1) if they feel sick or develop any symptoms of a disease; and 2) if they just return from a country or region with prevailing notifiable infectious disease during their travelling.</p> <p>It is important to make sure all team members are healthy and suitable for the trip, and not to put the team and their clients at increased risk for infection.</p> <p>Indeed, the subject/project leader can consider requesting their students and other team members to avoid non-essential travel and stay in Hong Kong for at least two weeks before departure, preferably when accepting them into the non-local SL trip.</p>
Loss of travel identity document	<p>Before departure, students are advised to make two photocopies of their travel identity document's identification page: one copy should be given to their family member at home, while the other should be kept by themselves in a safe place separately from their travel identity document when traveling. In case of loss, this can help shorten the process of re-issuance.</p>
	<p>Report to the local police immediately and request documentary proof of the report. Students outside HK can seek help from the HKSAR Immigration Department's 24-hour hotline (852) 1868.</p> <p>☞ <i>For Chinese Mainland SL activities, assistance can be obtained from the HKSAR Immigration Department or the Economic and Trade Office in Beijing, Guangdong or Chengdu. Details can be found at:</i></p> <p>http://www.immd.gov.hk/pdforms/id938e.pdf</p> <p>☞ <i>For overseas SL activities, students who are Chinese nationals may also contact the Chinese Embassy/Chinese Consulate-General in the country. Information on Chinese diplomatic or consular missions to international organizations and representative offices can be obtained from the HKSAR Immigration Department on (852) 2824 6111 or its website:</i></p> <p>http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/eng/ziliao/wjgmc/</p>
Economic crime/property loss	<p>Popular tourist places, including railroads and airports, have particularly high incidents of economic crime.</p> <p>Students should take responsibility for their own personal safety and avoid wearing or bringing expensive belongings.</p> <p>If a student's property is stolen, the incident should be reported immediately to the local police and documentary proof of that report should be requested for later travel insurance claims.</p>

<p>Being arrested or detained for any charge of criminal offence, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Crossing border with antiques or drugs or other restricted items • Entering restricted area without permit 	<p>Students should obey the laws and regulations of the countries they are in and respect the local rules and customs.</p> <p>Students should be reminded not to carry other people's baggage or any restricted items when crossing borders.</p> <p>The subject/project leader should seek help from the local partner to find a local legal representative or seek legal advice. The subject/project leader can also request the authorities concerned to meet the consular officers of the Chinese diplomatic or consular mission.</p>
<p>Going to a place with high altitudes</p>	<p>The low oxygen levels at high altitudes (~8,000 feet above sea level) can cause problems for some people. The symptoms of altitude illness including headache, feeling tired, lack of appetite, nausea, and vomiting.</p> <p>Mild cases can be treated according to symptoms and should be gone within a few days after getting used to high altitude. In the worst situation, a person whose symptoms are getting worse while resting at the same altitude must descend quickly or risk serious illness or death.</p> <p>Medicines are available to prevent altitude illness or shorten its duration; therefore, medical advice must be sought before the trip. Moreover, the team should avoid ascending quickly. Staff or students with chronic diseases should get medical advice about whether it is safe to travel to a high altitude before participating.</p>
<p>Other common risks, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Separated teams in different service sites 	<p>Collaborate with international NGOs or large-scale local agencies and/or those with good reputations.</p> <p>Sufficient staff members should be arranged to oversee the service teams. The recommended ratio for local SL activities is 1 staff : 20 students; for non-local SL activities is 1 staff: 15-20 students.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Length of the trip is more than 2 weeks • Harsh physical environment • Home-stay in rural area for more than a week <p>Going to a place with poor sanitation</p>	<p>Collect adequate information about medical facilities, embassy and emergency contacts at the service place(s) from ISOS or collaborating partner, especially for the rural area with no modern infrastructure nearby.</p> <p>Provide pre-service training/ experiential activity prior to service delivery to prepare students for living in a challenging environment.</p> <p>A safety assessment should be carried out by the staff members of the University or by the local collaborating partners, such as visiting all the host families and informing the local authorities.</p> <p>The group is required to seek travel health advice from ISOS or professional medical practitioners, and students are required to take appropriate vaccinations.</p>

2.8.2 Pre-service site visit

Pre-service site visits should be conducted every time before a SL subject is offered if non-local SL activities will be involved, especially if any change of partner, site and service target. During the visit, there are many things to look into depending on the service setting. The following are some important items for reference:

- 1) Is the water source safe? (e.g. tap water, well water vs rain water)
- 2) Is there any sewage management system in the site of residence?
- 3) Is there potential exposure to animal (and what kind of animal – farm animals or wild animals)?
- 4) Is there any mosquito net or air-conditioner in the place of residence?
- 5) Sanitation of food – will participants eat with local people or in restaurants (the conditions of the restaurant)? Is there a refrigerator for food storage?
- 6) Where is the nearest medical center/hospital (easy to access? how far? standard of service?)
- 7) What are the service recipients' physical and mental health conditions?

2.8.3 Travel advice

If the service destination is in a developing country or an underdeveloped area, the subject/project leaders should seek travel advices from ISOS or medical practitioners **at least SIX weeks** before departure, to go through any health and safety related issues. Students must be advised to obtain the required vaccinations, if any, before departure.

☞ *The agreement with ISOS will be updated from time to time. Please visit the FO website for the most updated details (FT Staff > Policies & Guidelines > Insurance).*

Important information about travel health can be found in the following websites:

Local	<ul style="list-style-type: none">☞ Department of Travel Health Service: http://www.travelhealth.gov.hk/eindex.html.☞ Outbound Travel Alert System, Security Bureau: http://www.sb.gov.hk/eng/ota/☞ Registration of Outbound Travel Information, Immigration Department: http://www.gov.hk/en/residents/immigration/outsidehk/roti.htm
Chinese Mainland	<ul style="list-style-type: none">☞ National Health Commission of the PRC: http://en.nhc.gov.cn/
International	<ul style="list-style-type: none">☞ World Health Organization (WHO)<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Disease outbreak page: https://www.who.int/emergencies/disease-outbreak-news▪ International Travel and Health: http://www.who.int/ith/en/▪ International Health Regulations (IHR): https://www.who.int/health-topics/international-health-regulations▪ Weekly Epidemiological Record: http://www.who.int/wer/en/☞ Centers for Disease Control & Prevention, USA<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Travelers' Health: http://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel

2.8.4 Group Travel Insurance

All University's staff and students travelling abroad for trips authorized by the University (including non-local SL projects) will be covered by the University's Group Travel Insurance. The premium will be centrally borne by the University. For more details of the Group Travel Insurance and the travel insurance claim form, please refer to the FO website (FT Staff > Policies & Guidelines > Insurance).

2.8.5 Hospitalization outside Hong Kong

- Hospitals in the Chinese mainland or in other countries may be self-financed. Patients may be required to pay a deposit before they can receive treatment, including surgery. Students and subject/project leaders should prepare a certain amount of money for emergency use to avoid delay in treatment.
- Admission deposit can be paid by cash, cheque or sometimes credit card. This is usually used for self-financed items, such as drugs, meals and any items agreed to by patients.
- Identity proof, such as Home Return Permit or Passport, is needed when going to hospital. Failure to provide identity proof will affect the normal admission procedure.
- Students should make sure the information provided for hospital admission is consistent with their valid identity documents to facilitate the reimbursement procedures afterwards.
- Students should verify the following before paying the bill and checking out:
 - ✓ Completion of checks and therapies
 - ✓ Any medicines should be given
 - ✓ Fee details and amount payable
- After receiving hospital discharge notice, please remember to obtain the deposit invoice and relevant identity documents.
- Students should seek appropriate medical attention when symptoms arise. If students are hospitalized or get sick during the trip, they are advised to visit a doctor again upon return to Hong Kong, to make sure there are no hidden risks or after-effects.

Chapter 3 – Resources and Support

3.1 Service-Learning and Leadership Office (SLLO)

The Service-Learning and Leadership Office (SLLO) has the responsibility to develop guidelines and procedures on risk management for SL subjects/projects at PolyU and raise awareness of the SL subject/project leaders of possible risks from the SL activities.

SLLO provides briefings, workshops and sharing sessions to support the subject/project leaders in creating effective risk management plans for their subjects/projects. Additional advice and case-by-case assistance are available upon request. Subject/project leaders are strongly advised to share good practices and effective strategies or risk control measures with SLLO; these can be a useful and practical reference for the PolyU community.

3.2 University Health Service (UHS)

University Health Service (UHS) operates a Travel Health Clinic to provide comprehensive travel health services for eligible users, supporting SL activities, particularly non-local projects. UHS doctors conduct risk assessments tailored to each itinerary, evaluating endemic infectious diseases, travel alerts, and safety concerns, and recommend vaccinations and prophylactic medications as needed.

The following services are available through the UHS Travel Health Clinic:

- **Travel Health Consultation: Personalized advice** based on individual traveler or group itineraries, **addressing health risks** specific to SL destinations.
- **Health Briefings for SL Groups: Tailored sessions** covering travel health risks, infection control, and preventive measures, **ideal for SL teams**.
- **Vaccinations: Recommended vaccines** for travel-related health risks, **administered per itinerary needs**.
- **Prophylactic Medications: Medications for conditions** like malaria or high-altitude sickness, **prescribed as needed**.
- **Travelers' Medicine Kit: Pre-prepared kits** for minor health issues during SL activities.
- **First-Aid Kit: Essential supplies** for emergency medical needs, **available for purchase**.
- **Insect Repellent: Products to protect against insect-borne diseases**, recommended for high-risk areas.

Useful Information and references can be found on the UHS website:

<https://www.polyu.edu.hk/uhs/en/preventive-care/travel-health-clinic>.

3.3 Insurance

The University has a Group Personal Accident (GPA) Insurance Policy for all registered students against bodily injuries and deaths arising from accidents while engaging in activities endorsed by the University on-campus or off-campus, local or abroad, subject to certain conditions. On top of the regular GPA insurance, the University has procured a top-up GPA insurance covering students participating in community service activities organized or arranged by the University, including the servicing activities organized by individual SL subjects. This top-up GPA Insurance covers only ACCIDENTAL medical expenses, injuries and deaths.

Moreover, the University has procured a Group Travel Insurance policy for all registered students going overseas for activities or internships endorsed by the University outside Hong Kong. However, students are strongly advised to consider purchasing additional insurance prior to travel.

In addition, PolyU has public liability insurance to protect the legal liability of the University, its staff and students against claims brought by third parties for accidental physical damage to third party property and/or personal injury incurred in the course of the University's business operations, including the service activities organised by SL subjects.

The certificate of insurance, the claim procedures, claim forms, emergency contact numbers, etc. can be found at the FO website: http://www.polyu.edu.hk/fo/FO_Web/index.php. The policies will be updated annually. For details of the insurance coverage, you may contact the Finance Office through email at fo.insurance@polyu.edu.hk.

It is highly recommended that the subject/project leaders read the above-mentioned insurance policies thoroughly before the commencement of service projects. If some SL activities are not covered, such as construction and hazardous work, the subject/project leaders should seek advice from the Insurance and Projects Unit of FO at the earliest possible stage. Specific arrangements for extensions of cover for the activities may be provided by insurers on a case-by-case basis and an additional insurance premium may be required. Alternatively, the subject/project leaders may consider purchasing insurance for additional protection based on the specific needs or settings of their SL subjects.

3.4 Campus Facilities and Sustainability Office (CFSO)

The Campus Facilities and Sustainability Office (CFSO) provides guidelines and procedures for handling emergency situations on campus, including fire, personal injury, electric shock, being trapped in a lift, spillage of hazardous substances, hazardous gas leakage, crimes, and other incidents when life or property is endangered.

Please visit the CFSO website: <https://www.polyu.edu.hk/cfso/#01> for details.

3.5 Campus Control Centre (CCC)

Events of emergency on campus should be reported promptly to the 24-hour manned Campus Control Centre (CCC) for assistance. CCC provides assistance and coordination of the following:

- Dispatch security personnel to the incident scene to render on-the-spot assistance on campus
- Assess the incident and verify if it is a false report or alarm
- Provide first-aid service or Automated External Defibrillators (AED)
- Cordon off the area and coordinate evacuation
- Help the emergency departments to reach the incident scene
- Contact local Government departments or utility companies, e.g. Fire Services Department, Police, Towngas, CLP, etc.
- Contact the emergency teams of the UHS or HSO, where appropriate
- Contact the maintenance teams of CFSO

3.6 Health & Safety Office (HSO)

The Health & Safety Office (HSO) advises on health, safety and environmental policies, procedures and practices, and monitors and coordinates their implementation to maintain a healthy, safe and environmentally sustainable campus for every student and staff member. Guidelines, checklists and HSO forms can be found on its website: <http://www.polyu.edu.hk/hso/>.

For any comments and suggestions, please email to safety.hso@polyu.edu.hk or contact the HSO General Office on (852) 3400 8396 during office hours.

Chapter 4 Emergencies and Assistances

4.1 Emergencies outside Hong Kong

It is important to collect adequate information about emergency assistance and check carefully what emergency services are available before embarking on a service trip. In case of emergency, this can help to decide quickly where to seek the most appropriate assistance.

- **SLLO Emergency WhatsApp Hotline (+852 5463 5710):**

Contact SLLO for immediate support to emergency matters during the service trip, available 24/7.

- **Emergency Assistance Hotline: ISOS (+852 2528 9900)**

ISOS is an international security risk management firm, it is advised to call ISOS Assistance Center first in case of emergency outside HK, their 24 hours Assistance Center has physicians, multilingual coordinators, operations managers, and logistics support personnel and medical and security professionals on hand to help you.

☞ *For details, please go to FO website (FT Staff > Policies & Guidelines > Insurance).*

- **Emergency Assistance Hotline: Group Travel Insurance**

In case of emergency outside HK following accident, illness or serious loss, and/or with the advice of ISOS Assistance Center, you can call the 24 Hours Emergency Hotline provided by the insurer and remember to quote the PolyU Policy No.

☞ *The policy will be updated annually, please go to FO website (FT Staff > Policies & Guidelines > Insurance).*

- **HKSAR Government [852-1868]**

HK residents who have accidents or are arrested or detained for being involved in criminal cases outside HK may request help from the Assistance to Hong Kong Residents Unit of the Immigration Department. More details on the assistance that can be provided are available at: <http://www.gov.hk/en/residents/immigration/outsidehk/>

- **Chinese Embassy or Consular Mission**

Consular protection and services are important safety measures for HK residents outside of Chinese territory. Apart from protecting the national interests and legitimate rights of citizens or legal persons, consular protection also includes assistance to Chinese citizens or legal persons, such as providing information on international travel safety, assisting in employing lawyers and translators, visiting detainees and assisting in evacuating from dangerous places, etc. More details on the assistance are available at <http://www.gov.hk/en/residents/immigration/outsidehk/assistentravel.htm>. A list of Chinese embassy, consulate, mission and representative office are available at http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa_eng/wjb_663304/zwjg_665342/.

4.2 Off-campus emergencies in Hong Kong

The subject/project leaders and the staff involved should:

- Stay calm, assess and respond properly to the situation;
- Call 999, if required;
- Call 112, if no mobile network coverage;
- Report to the Head of Department, SLLO and other departments concerned when situation allows.

4.3 Emergencies on campus

The subject/project leaders and the staff involved should:

- Call 999 (for life-threatening events ONLY);
- For all non-life-threatening emergencies, report promptly to the 24-hour manned Campus Control Centre (CCC) for assistance and coordination by:
 - Calling (852) 2766 7999 (emergency hotline) or 2766 7666/ 2766 7177 (24 hours);
 - The emergency intercom installed on campus; or
 - In person at P111.
- Report to the Head of Department, SLLO and other departments concerned when situation allows.

4.4 Particulars to be reported in an emergency

In an emergency, you should clearly state the following to the emergency assistance team:

- Location of the accident/incident,
- Nature of the accident/incident, e.g. no. of persons injured, any fire or hazardous chemical spillage, etc.
- Severity of the accident/incident, e.g. seriousness of the injured – Bleeding? Bone fracture? Coma?
- Your name and contact, e.g. mobile phone
- Your department, subject/project title (only to PolyU internal, e.g. CSC or SLLO)

4.5 Accident/Incident reporting and investigation

All accidents and incidents must be reported and investigated for the following purposes:

- To identify the root causes of the accidents/incidents so that proper corrective actions can be undertaken to prevent future recurrence
- To meet local legal requirements, e.g. Employees' Compensation Ordinance, Cap. 282
- To meet the requirements of insurers

HSO has launched an e-Platform for Reporting Accidents and Incidents since 2021. If any accident/incident occurs within or outside Hong Kong, the subject/project leaders should report to the Departmental Health and Safety Officer (DHSO) in their department, and through the 24/7 e-Platform, the DHSO will report the incident and send for their HoD's for approval. HSO will be notified immediately of any approved departmental submission to undertake necessary follow-up

actions.

A Quick Guide to HSO e-Platform for Reporting Accidents and Incidents is available on HSO website (https://www.polyu.edu.hk/hso/docdrive/_sso/HSE_Forms/Quick_Guide_to_HSO_e-Platform_for_Reporting_Accidents_and_Incidents_r2.pdf).

All SL subject-related incidents reported to HSO should also notify SLLO for follow up.

Appendix 1: Code of Conduct for Students Participating in Service-Learning Activities

Code of Conduct for Students Participating in Service-Learning Activities

Students participating in Service-Learning (SL) activities should be fully aware of the importance of behaving in an ethical, responsible and professional manner. Students should abide by the following statements, which are important and applicable to most SL activities. The subject leader may add specific guidelines for a particular project.

Responsibility

- Students should be punctual and responsible in completing their commitment to the service project; absence from the service without prior approval is not acceptable.
- Students should follow the instructions of project staff during service delivery and should not leave the service team without permission.
Students should not report for duty if they are infected by a contagious disease or under the influence of drugs or alcohol.

Professionalism

- Students should dress neatly and appropriately, and not wear expensive jewelry, clothing, etc. when delivering the service.
- Students should follow the agency's policies and procedures, particularly with respect to office protocols and policies related to privacy ordinance and other work ethics.
Students should respect the privacy of service recipients by obtaining their consent before disclosing their personal information, photos, videos or audio clips.

Prohibit sexual harassment

- Students should not tolerate verbal exchanges of a sexual nature or engage in behaviour that might be perceived as sexual with a service recipient or collaborating agency representative.
- Students must not engage in sexual activities or sexual contact, and should avoid any intimate physical contact with the service recipients.
- Students should report cases of sexual harassment to the subject staff and/or relevant authorities.
- Students should complete the unit on sexual harassment included in the e-learning module, "Learn to Serve, Serve to Learn: Introduction to Service-Learning" developed by the Service-Learning and Leadership Office (SLLO).

Respect service recipients

- Students should have knowledge of the service recipient's culture, and be sensitive to and respect the differences during the service delivery.
- Students must not use derogatory language in their written or verbal communications to or about service recipients.
- Students must not tolerate verbal exchanges or engage in behaviour that might be perceived as discriminatory against an individual on the basis of her/his age, race, gender, ability or ethnicity.

Avoid conflicts of interest

- Students should not take unfair advantage of any professional relationship or exploit others to further their personal, religious, political, learning, research or business interests.
- For example: Do not give or loan service recipients money or other personal belongings. Do not engage in any type of business with service recipients during the service period.

Possible Consequences of Misbehaviour

Any illegal, unethical or harmful acts performed during the service period will have serious consequences for the student. The University may take disciplinary action against any student who engages in misconduct or violates the laws of Hong Kong or any of the University's regulations and rules, such as sexual harassment, theft or assault. Such cases may be referred to the Student Discipline Committee or even the Police for investigation.

(Last updated: 05/2025)

Appendix 2: Guidelines on Suspension of Service-Learning Projects in Relation to Infectious Diseases

These guidelines apply to both local and non-local SL activities and should be followed strictly by both students and staff members.

1. Within the service period, if any participant (student, staff member of PolyU, agency staff, or service recipient) is suspected or confirmed to suffer from an infectious disease which is statutorily notifiable* to the Department of Health, HKSAR, the responsible person shall notify the Department concerned, the Health & Safety Office (HSO) and the Service-Learning and Leadership Office (SLLO) as follow immediately.

Dept.	Name	Email	Telephone
HSO	Miss Nana Lai	nana.wc.lai@polyu.edu.hk	3400-8404
	Dr Dennis Lai	dennis.lai@polyu.edu.hk	3400-8393
SLLO	SLLO 24/7 Emergency Contact		5463-5710

2. For **suspected** cases, the service may be suspended temporarily in consultation with the collaborating agency until further information is obtained.
3. For **confirmed** cases, the service will be suspended for a period recommended by the local health authority and/or the Department concerned and/or SLLO in consultation with the collaborating agency.
4. Under one of the following conditions, the Department concerned and SLLO will assess the suitability of conducting the service project:
 - a) The influenza pandemic alert is raised to Phase 6 by the World Health Organization (WHO), or the Emergency Response Level is announced by the HKSAR Government;
 - b) Travel restriction is imposed to the destination country by the WHO;
 - c) There is an ongoing infectious disease outbreak or anticipated outbreak in the local community;
 - d) Overseas counterparts decide to suspend the activities / services;
 - e) Infectious diseases are spreading in the collaborating agency and under such circumstances students are not able to contact service recipients, or the agency suspends the service project.
5. When the service opportunity is significantly deprived by the situation, the service project will be suspended; a change of agency or alternate arrangement will be discussed by the collaborating agency, the Department and SLLO.
6. If it is not possible to carry out the service project in the required period, alternate service project/assignments will be arranged by the subject holder/course instructor in consultation

with SLLO for students who are affected by the suspension. The goal is to maintain the required study/service hours as far as possible, in line with the intended learning outcomes.

* Please refer to https://cdis.chp.gov.hk/CDIS_CENO_ONLINE/disease.html for the list of statutorily notifiable diseases.

Reminder to staff member (before the service period):

- Identify special arrangements/procedures that are adopted by the collaborating agency/service site to prevent Infectious Diseases. Pay special attention to the operational details of these procedures.
- Inform the representative of the collaborating agency about the above guidelines on suspension of Service- Learning project if there is any outbreak of Infectious Disease within the service period.
- Explore the students' anxiety level regarding Infectious Diseases. Help them develop a right attitude towards the crisis (not to panic or too unconcerned).
- Explain to the students the above guidelines for to the suspension of a Service-Learning project relating to the Infectious Diseases outbreak before the service period.
- Equip students with information, knowledge and skills about the prevention of Infectious Diseases. Useful references can be found at the website of the Department of Health of HKSAR, the University Health Service (UHS) of PolyU, School of Nursing, etc. In some projects, such as non-local Service-Learning activities to less developed countries, training provided by an expert should be considered for all participating students.

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(In alphabetical order)

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