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This document describes procedures and policies regarding securing approvals for students to engage in credit-bearing, on-site, community-based and other field-based experiential activities during Fall 2020 semester.

“Community-based” is used as a generic term to refer to a wide variety of learning experiences in which students conduct experiential, educational work off campus in spaces or buildings that are not University-owned. Students, instructors, and program leaders are encouraged replace this generic term with the specific term that best reflects the nature of their off-campus, experiential learning program or activities.

This guidance is relevant to all learners engaged in any of the following curricula and co-curricular field/community-based, experiential learning experiences (non-health-focused only) that are tied to students’ academic programs:

- internship
- service-learning
- field experience
- student teaching
- community-based research
- community-based capstone
- social entrepreneurship

**IMPORTANT NOTE:** Any of these types of experiences that are health or clinical in nature fall under the guidelines issued by the Office of Academic Clinical Affairs, not by this guidance document. Please refer to the guidelines described in the Restore Plan for Clinical Experiences in the Covid-19 Era.

Students with established, independent agreements with employers (i.e., independent internships) do not need approval for their on-site work unless they seek to receive academic credit for work completed at their place of employment. If academic credit is sought for off-campus, community-based, or field-based experiences, then approval to engage in these experiences must be secured.

Remote-only activities tied to field experience or internship courses do not require approval.
RESUMING COMMUNITY-BASED EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING ACTIVITIES

The safety of our students, faculty, staff, and external partners is a top priority as we continue to navigate this public health crisis. As all courses and instructional activities across the system are being modified to meet health and safety demands, we also need to modify and limit in-person experiential learning activities held off-campus. Facilitators of experiential learning activities are urged to explore and incorporate virtual and remote modes whenever possible.

We realize, however, that in some instances, alternative modes of instruction to on-site, community or field-based experiential activities are not possible. When no virtual or remote alternatives exist, approvals to permit students to conduct on-site, community-based and field-based experiential activities for credit may be requested.

We acknowledge that the limitations of this policy pose challenges to students, instructors, and external partners in programs that rely heavily on field-based and community-based experiential activities. Your cooperation and understanding are greatly appreciated.

Given the continued threat of COVID-19 transmission, we must be especially careful and systematic in how we reopen instruction and learning experiences situated in community-based and other off-campus settings. Fall semester on-campus, in-person instruction is possible because it is offered in monitored classroom settings that ensure social distancing, mask wearing, systematic sanitizing of classrooms and work spaces, and other actions intentionally designed to minimize COVID-19 transmission. When it comes to off-campus, community-based or field-based learning activities, we want to be equally sure that students will conduct their work in settings that are equally safe and intentionally attentive to the dangers of COVID-19. To this end, community-based and other types of experiential learning activities will be permitted, but only when assurances are in place that the external sites at which students will work are safe.

With this in mind, this restore plan provides guidance to instructors and program leaders on the process for approving credit-bearing community-based and field-based experiential learning experiences when such experiences cannot be conducted remotely or virtually. The plan includes guidance on calibrating risk levels for particular field-based experiences, and presents the requirements for data tracking and reporting. Most importantly, this plan is not meant to present bureaucratic roadblocks or to establish an inflexible set of rules, but rather, it is designed to encourage and support students’ participation in safe, high quality experiential learning activities when virtual or remote alternatives are not an option.
APPROVAL CRITERIA

Approvals to conduct community-based or field-based experiential learning activities for credit may be considered when the following four conditions are present:

1. SITE SAFETY
   The community or field site at which students conduct their work is safe for the proposed activities. There is verification that the site has in place appropriate safety protocols (commensurate with the risk level of experiences) designed to protect students and other University-affiliated personnel.

2. TRACKING SYSTEM
   There is a system in place that tracks the dates and times when students are at the site. The system asks students to log the date and time that they are on site. (This is required in the event there is an outbreak at the site or the student is found to have been exposed). The data from this system may need to be shared with central administrators for statewide reporting purposes.

3. SAFETY INFORMATION AND TRAINING
   Students receive the necessary knowledge, information, and/or training regarding required safety protocols and procedures prior to engaging in field work or community-based experiential learning activities. Safety information and/or training must align with the risk level of COVID-19 exposure (See Table 2).

4. STUDENT ATTESTATION
   Students submit an agreement in which they attest to: abide by all safety procedures and rules; report any changes to the safety protocols or procedures at their site; and track and maintain a complete and up-to-date report of their time on site.

PROGRAM-LEVEL APPROVALS

Throughout summer 2020, students and instructors interested in conducting on-site, community-based activities connected to an academic program had to submit a petition to the Provost Office detailing the nature of the site-based work. Petitions were approved or denied depending on the activity’s risk level (i.e., amount of face-to-face interaction), types of activities permitted by the Governor’s Executive Orders, and presence of appropriate safety procedures at the community-based work sites. Petitions were considered on an individual, case by case basis.

This fall semester, programs or units that have a substantial number of students who participate in community-based learning, or that house programs in which community-
based learning experiences are highly encouraged or required, may request to receive a “blanket exemption”. A blanket exemption provides approval for a suite of experiential activities that fall within the same risk category and are conducted in settings in which appropriate safety protocols are in place. A blanket exemption also transfers responsibility for reviewing and approving exemptions for eligible community-based experiences from the Provost’s Office to the college (or school) that houses the program.

Instructors or unit directors may request a blanket exemption at any time for specific courses or programs through their unit manager, department leader, school director, or college dean once particular procedures and assurances are in place (described below).

CONTINUATION OF INDIVIDUAL STUDENT PETITIONS

For programs and units that do have a large number of students who participate in community-based, or that do not wish to take on the responsibility of reviewing and approving students’ community-based learning experiences, the existing centrally-facilitated petition process for approving students’ community-based learning experiences will continue. Individual students may file this petition at any time during the semester to request approval to conduct on-site experiential learning activities.

PROCEDURES FOR SECURING A PROGRAM-LEVEL BLANKET EXEMPTION

Department or program leaders may request blanket exemptions, with approval from their college dean or school director, for individual programs that have multiple students and/or instructors involved in curricular or co-curricular community-based or field-based experiential learning activities. A blanket exemption is granted when:

1. the program has met the four aforementioned conditions for approving field-based or community-based experiences; and

2. The program has in place the structures, procedures, and policies identified below to monitor and approve individual students’ experiences.

A blanket exemption may be secured for the following types of programs/experiences:

A **Specific Field Experience**:

*Situation:* Students within a program who work together at a particular site at the same time and follow one set of safety protocols.

*Example:* A group of students participate daily in a two-week archaeological dig.
A Particular Course:

Situation: Students within a course who are guided by an instructor in community-based experiences at the same site or different sites.

Example: Students in an organizational management course are assigned to one of six non-profits to assist with each organization’s strategic planning efforts.

A Particular Site (or Set of Sites):

Situation: Sites that accommodate one or more students and are approved to receive students to conduct similar types of activities (commensurate in risk level).

Example: Each year, Company X, Company Y, and Company Z provide internship opportunities to students in the major.

Specialized Community-Based Activities at Specially Selected Placement Sites:

Situation: Students conduct specialized kinds of work at similar sites.

Example: Preservice student teachers are placed in selected elementary school classrooms to conduct student teaching and teacher training.

Group of Students:

Situation: Experiences selected by individual students to complete a program requirement with particular requirements and expectations (i.e., community-based capstone experiences).

Example: Students in the program complete a proposal that details the nature of their work and submit the safety protocols of the site at which they will conduct their capstone; each student’s experience is monitored.

(Note: This is not an exhaustive list)

Blanket exemption requests may be submitted at any time before or during the Fall 2020 semester. Unit leaders or instructors may submit multiple plans, or may submit one plan that includes details for multiple programs or courses.

Please note that previously-approved exemption requests (i.e., summer exemptions) will not automatically be applied to Fall 2020 experiential learning activities. All exemptions for Fall 2020 and beyond need to be requested as part of an this Restore Plan exemption process. Requests can be made to approve experiential learning activities for any length of time but no later than through the end of the 2020-2021 academic year.

As a reminder, all are urged to continue to explore virtual or remote methods to substitute for field-based or community-based experiential learning requirements. Blanket exemption requests and individual student petitions should be submitted only when the work cannot be conducted virtually or remotely or when virtual or remote methods severely compromise the educational integrity of the academic program.
To submit a proposal for a blanket exemption, please follow these steps:

- Establish a program/unit-level approval and review process.
- Develop and submit a “Blanket Exemption” plan.
- Secure approval and signoff from school director/college dean (or designee)
- Hold a brief meeting with Associate Vice President for Public Engagement to discuss the plan and to address any lingering questions.

1. Establish a program/unit-level approval and review process:

   - **Identify an Approval Administrator.** This individual should be in a position at a sufficient level to make curricular decisions regarding students’ experiences. In some cases, programs may wish to also identify a designee who works with the Approval Administrator.

   - **Establish a plan for approving sites and tracking students’ participation.** The plan should include a mechanism for verifying that sites have in place appropriate safety protocols and tracks the days and times when students are present at the site. For activities in higher risk categories (see Table 2), programs may require students to complete safety training prior to engaging in certain kinds of community-based. Consideration should be given to how you plan to track students’ (and/or staff or faculty members’) compliance with required trainings. Some safety training requirements may be recorded and tracked through Canvas. (See pages 18-19, Blanket Exemption Approval Checklist, for items and descriptions to include in the plan.)

   - **Secure department leader and college dean’s (school director’s) support.** Blanket exemption proposals require sign off by respective department and college leaders.

2. Develop and submit a “Blanket Exemption” plan.

   While there is no specific form or specified format that your proposal should follow, the following issues should be considered:

   A. **Description of Experiential Learning Activities**

      Provide a description of the kind(s) of field or community-based activities in which students will engage. The plan can be for a particular type of experiential education experiences conducted at one or more sites, or for students in a particular course, or for students in a particular program (i.e., licensure or credential program), etc. Descriptions should be attentive to the following important details (when applicable):
- start and end date of activities (length of time for which you seek approval)
- approximate number of students who will participate.
- approximate/average amount of time students will spend in the field, community, or on-site per week, per month, or per semester. (*Example:* “While different students will be spending different amounts of time in the field, on average they will spend between 5-7 hours per week on site”).
- general nature of the activities students will perform (*Examples:* “operate software at a company”, “conduct student teaching in classrooms”, “provide support to a non-project agency”, “collect water samples from lakes”, etc.)
- whether the activities will be held indoors, outdoors, or combination.
- amount of face to face interaction during site work (with the same individuals, with different individuals).
- mode(s) of transportation students will take to get to their field sites (*Examples:* “three students will be ride in a six passenger van”, “students will carpool with no more than two students per vehicle”, “students will use mass transit”, etc.)
- overnight stays, or other conditions that require extended site activities.
- risk-level category or categories of the proposed activities (See Table 1 and Table 2)
- other important information about the experience (i.e., is experience required?, are there state or other licensing body expectations or restrictions to consider?, etc.)

B. **Assurances of Site Safety**

*Everyone’s safety is of primary concern. Modifications to program requirements, expectations for degree completions, number of field-based hours, etc. should be considered when the experiential learning situation reveals an unsafe or potentially high-risk situation for exposure to COVID.*

- **Safety of sites must be verified.** What process will be in place to verify that sites or spaces in which students (and accompanying faculty/staff) conduct their work are safe and have in place the appropriate safety protocols? (*Example:* “students will submit their respective site’s safety plan to approval administrator”, “program will collect site protocols from the organization at which all students are placed”, etc.).

- **Students must be prepared to practice required safety protocols.** What information, materials, resources, and or training (if required) will students receive to ensure they understand the safety protocols. Higher risk activities may require students to complete safety training (i.e., use of safety equipment) prior to engaging in the site visit. (*Examples: “Every student will receive a resource sheet that provides information on CDC safety protocols, masking wearing, social distancing, hand washing, etc.”; “Students will be asked to watch a five-minute video on how to handle masks”.)

C. **Tracking of Student Participation**

*Describe the process that will be in effect to track students’ time (dates and hours) at respective sites and how this information will be systematically logged and reports. Programs can use the established system via students’ x.500, or develop their own system.*

D. **Student Attestation Agreement**

*Students must agree to follow sites’ safety protocols and follow all rules and policies, complete all required safety training (if applicable), and track and
log their experiential learning hours. Submit a copy of the attestation statement you will ask student to complete.

3. Secure approval and signoff from school director/college dean (or designee).

The approval can come in the form of an approval email to avp-ope@umn.edu, or note included with the plan, or in another form that suits the program or administrator.

4. Hold a brief meeting with Associate Vice President for Public Engagement to discuss the plan and to address any lingering questions.

This meeting is intended to ensure that all of the information needed to process the Blanket Exemption approval is included in the plan and to address any questions that you or other program leader(s) might have. This meeting will help avoid delays. All individuals interested in participating in the meeting are welcome to join.

PROGRAM RESPONSIBILITIES

When a Blanket Exemption is approved, programs/units/departments assume responsibilities both for ensuring the safety of sites for experiential learning and for managing the student tracking system. The information below is intended to guide unit’s Approval Administrators who are charged with managing the unit’s experiential learning activities.

1. **Role of the approval administrator.** The Approval Administrator manages and oversees the submission of the blanket exemption for the unit/program/course and serves as the lead administrator for managing data systems, tracking, and reporting.

Prior to submitting a blanket exemption for a program, course, or other experiential learning effort, the Approval Administrator should:

- determine if requests for conducting experiential activities on-site (rather than virtually or remotely) are warranted (i.e., can the work be conducted remotely instead?);
- use Table 1 and Table 2 to calibrate the risk level category for experiential learning activities and determining what kinds of safety protocols should be in place and if any pre-activity safety training is required. (If needed, please reach out to the Associate Vice President for Public Engagement, Andy Furco, at avp-ope@umn.edu for guidance on options and expectations).
- verify that the community/field site(s) are safe for engaging students in experiential learning activities by securing copies of site’s safety practices. (For
example, this can be done by asking students to provide a copy or link to their site’s safety protocols).

- identify a means to track students’ on-site presence (A central system using students’ x.500 is available);
- prepare the blanket exemption proposal for submission.

After submitting and receiving approval for a blanket exemption, the Approval Administrator:

- maintains a database of students’ community-based experiences. The database includes the names of students, the respective site(s) at which they conduct their work, students’ attestation statements, copy of site safety protocols, and a log of the days and times when students are present at the site. (Approval Administrators can develop their own tracking systems, use existing ones, or use the available central system through which students can log their on-site dates and times using their x.500 number.)
- ensures students are prepared to engage in on-site work (i.e., students are informed of University safety expectations and/or receive any required safety training).
- follow protocols articulated in the Guidance on Positive Student Cases if and when a positive case is identified.
- participates in regular meetings of Approval Administrators to share lessons learned, challenges, and best practices.
- reports challenges, irregularities, or improvement recommendations to Associate Vice President for Public Engagement, Andy Furco, at avp-ope@umn.edu.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The program level blanket exemption criteria and procedures are guided by the following principles:

- **Public Health Alignment** – Adherence to guidance from the Governor and the Minnesota Department of Health, the University of Minnesota President’s Office, and Campus Public Health Officer/VP of Academic Clinical Affairs, and the Office of the Executive Vice President and Provost. Program level protocols and procedures may also require adherence to accreditation and licensure expectations.

- **Work Environment Safety** – Assurance of a safe working environment that minimizes risk for transmission of infection for all parties, including practicing social distancing, wearing the appropriate types of masks, and in certain situations, having available adequate personal protective equipment.

- **Appropriate educational sites** – Verification of community-based sites’ appropriateness and readiness to engage students safely in meaningful educational experiences, including the
presence of approved safety protocols and measures.

- **Meaningful educational experiences** – Availability of a high quality educational experience for students while on site.

- **Adequate student progress** – Commitment to ensuring students graduate on time with required credits, experience, and competencies.

- **Community value** – Attainment of benefits to field partners and community stakeholders through students’ engagement, work activities, and other contributions.

**GUIDANCE AND SUPPORT**

For questions and/or guidance on the exemptions process pertaining to non-health-related community-based experience, contact Andy Furco, Associate Vice President for Public Engagement at avp-ope@umn.edu.
These risk levels are intended to provide schools/programs guidance for approving exemptions for community-based learning experiences when blanket exemptions are in place. Exemptions are based on the level of risk, which is determined by the type, scope, and length of interactions other individuals.

## Community-Based Setting Risk Levels

### CATEGORY A: MINIMAL OR NO-RISK SETTINGS

Community-based learning experiences are fulfilled primarily through remote-only activities.

Approval given when:

1. Most or all learning, internship, or field activities are conducted remotely.
2. There may be an occasional site visit (with no person-to-person interaction) to gather materials, supplies, but NOT to conduct activities connected to the learning experience.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Required For Learners</th>
<th>Required For Community Sites</th>
<th>Required For Programs/Depts.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Masks required at all times when others are present on site</td>
<td>- Site must have in place appropriate safety protocols and procedures before students are asked or permitted to conduct any on-site activity.</td>
<td>- Track/log each student’s time on-site (if off campus, site-based work is involved).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Social distancing practiced</td>
<td>- A site supervisor/contact is identified to monitor and oversee students’ involvement (if or when University supervisor is not present).</td>
<td>- Tracking includes name of site(s) and date(s) and time of students’ on site visit(s).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- No special safety training required.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### TABLE 1. Continued (Subcategory B-1)

**CATEGORY B: MODERATE RISK SETTINGS (3 subcategories)**

**Subcategory B-1: Non-health-related site-based or community-based activities that do not involve face-to-face activities (Low to moderate Risk)**

**Approval given when:**

1. Community-based or other off-campus field-based activities are involved, but the on-site activities generally do not include face-to-face interactions (Example: operating machinery, managing technology systems, etc.).
2. Time spent on community-based, field-based on-site experiential activities are kept to a minimum (are not extensive or full-time).
3. Community-based or field-based experiential activities are limited to only those that cannot otherwise be conducted remotely.
4. Community-based/field-based activities require students to wear masks when others are present, practice social distancing, and adherence to site’s COVID-19 safety protocols.

<table>
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<th>Required For Programs/Depts.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Students must follow site’s safety protocols at all times when on site.</td>
<td>• Before students are asked or permitted to conduct any on-site activity, site must have in place appropriate safety protocols and procedures.</td>
<td>• Track/log each student’s time on-site.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• When on site, students are required to wear masks at all times when others are present (regardless of site’s policy on masks).</td>
<td>• Changes to site safety protocols must be reported to University program/department.</td>
<td>• Tracking includes name of site(s) and date(s) and time of students’ on site visit(s).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Social distancing practiced</td>
<td>• A site supervisor/contact is identified to monitor and oversee students’ involvement (if or when University supervisor is not present).</td>
<td>• Verify that site has appropriate safety protocols in place.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• No special safety training required.</td>
<td></td>
<td>• Maintain up-to-date copy of each site’s safety protocols and policies.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Guidance or training on social distancing and general safety precautions recommended.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**CATEGORY B: MODERATE RISK SETTINGS (3 subcategories)**

**Subcategory B-2: Non-health-related site-based activities that involve face-to-face activities. (Moderate to high risk)**

**Approval given when:**

1. Community-based activities include face-to-face activities. Efforts are made to keep face-to-face activities to a minimum.
2. Time spent conducting experiential learning activities at the off-campus site are kept to a minimum (are not extensive or full-time).
3. Experiential learning activities conducted off campus are limited to only those that cannot otherwise be conducted remotely.
4. All participants (including non-students) wear masks at all times when conducting face-to-face interactions at the site.
5. Site expects students to practice social distancing and strict adherence to site’s COVID-19 safety protocols.

**Required for Learners**

- Students must follow site’s safety protocols at all times when on site.
- When on site, students are required to wear masks at all times when others are present (regardless of site’s policy on masks).
- Guidance or training on social distancing and general safety precautions recommended, especially if activities vulnerable populations and populations at high risk for COVID.
- PPE training may be required for specific cases
- Other specific safety training maybe required by site or program.

**Required for Community Sites**

- Before students are asked or permitted to conduct any on-site activity, site must have in place appropriate safety protocols and procedures.
- Changes to site safety protocols must be reported to University program/department.
- A site supervisor/contact is identified to monitor and oversee students’ involvement (if or when University supervisor is not present).

**Required for Programs/Depts.**

- Track/log each student’s time on-site.
- Tracking includes name of site(s) and date(s) of students’ on-site visit(s), and other data programs deem essential for tracking each student’s on-site presence and interactions.
- Verify that site has appropriate safety protocols in place.
- Maintain up-to-date copy of each site’s safety protocols and policies.
### CATEGORICAL MODERATE RISK SETTINGS (3 subcategories)

#### Subcategory B-3: Health-related community-based or clinic-based activities that involve face-to-face activities. *(Moderate to High risk)*

1. Community-based or other site-based work involves face-to-face activities focused on delivery of non-COVID-19 health-related services.
2. The setting and/or nature of activities are situations in which there may be moderate or high exposure to COVID-19 (due to venue, size of work group, or nature of interactions) and/or in which vulnerable populations that are most seriously affected by COVID-19 (i.e., elderly, individuals with compromised immune systems, etc.) are present.
3. Only those activities that cannot be conducted remotely are conducted on site.
4. All participants (including non-students) are required to practice social distancing and in many cases require the use personal protective equipment (PPE) when conducting person-to-person or face-to-face interactions at the site.
5. Participants must have appropriate health training or credentials to participate.

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<th><strong>Required for Programs/Depts.</strong></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Students must follow site’s safety protocols at all times when on site.</td>
<td>- Before students are asked or permitted to conduct any on-site activity, site must have in place appropriate safety protocols and procedures.</td>
<td>- Track/log each student’s time on-site.</td>
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<tr>
<td>- When on site, students are required to wear masks at all times when others are present.</td>
<td>- Changes to site safety protocols must be reported to University program/department.</td>
<td>- Tracking includes name of site(s) and date(s) of students’ on-site visit(s), and other data programs deem essential for tracking each student’s on-site presence and interactions.</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Guidance or training on social distancing and general safety precautions recommended, especially if activities vulnerable populations and populations at high risk for COVID. Instruction, guidance, or training on social distancing, use of masks, and use of PPE equipment required.</td>
<td>- A site supervisor/contact is identified to monitor and oversee students’ involvement (if or when University supervisor is not present).</td>
<td>-Verify that site has appropriate safety protocols in place.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Changes to on-site or face-to-face activities must be reported to program.</td>
<td></td>
<td>- Maintain up-to-date copy of each site’s safety protocols and policies.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note: Final approval for program level blanket exemptions in this subcategory is granted by the Office of the Vice President for Clinical Affairs.*
TABLE 1. Continued (Category C)

**CATEGORY C: HIGH RISK SETTINGS**

**Category C: COVID-19-related, community-based or other site-based activities that involve face-to-face activities and delivery of health care services. (High Risk)**

1. Community-based or other site-based work involves face-to-face activities focused on delivery of COVID-19 health-related services or care.
2. Face-to-face activities are conducted with personal protective equipment.
3. Participants must have appropriate health training or credentials to participate.

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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Students must follow site’s safety protocols at all times when on site.</td>
<td>• Before students are asked or permitted to conduct any on-site activity, site must have in place appropriate safety protocols and procedures.</td>
<td>• Track/log each student’s time on-site.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Advanced training on social distancing and use of PPE equipment required.</td>
<td>• Changes to site safety protocols must be reported to University program/department.</td>
<td>• Tracking includes name of site(s) and date(s) of students’ on-site visit(s), and other data programs deem essential for tracking each student’s on-site presence and interactions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Changes to on-site or face-to-face activities must be reported to program.</td>
<td>• A site supervisor/contact is identified to monitor and oversee students’ involvement (if or when University supervisor is not present).</td>
<td>• Verify that site has appropriate safety protocols in place.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note: Final approval for program level blanket exemptions in this subcategory is granted by the Office of the Vice President for Clinical Affairs.*
### TABLE 2 - Risk Levels for COVID-19 Exposure and Transmission
Community-Based Experiential Learning (updated 8.2.20)

**NATURE OF FIELD ACTIVITIES**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Nature of Field Activities</th>
<th>Risk Level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>LOW RISK (Category A)</strong></td>
<td>Remote activities; possible occasional site visit (i.e., to collect work materials); no face-to-face interaction</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Remote activities with periodic on-site visits (i.e., for regular training); minimal in-person socially distant activities; work activities are not based on face-to-face interactions</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mostly remote activities with periodic on-site presence that have in-person socially distant situations and requires some face-to-face interactions</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Regular on-site presence; work conducted outdoors; social distancing practiced; includes some face-to-face interactions</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Regular on-site presence; work conducted indoors; social distancing practiced; activities do not include face-to-face interactions</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Regular on-site presence; work conducted outdoors; social distancing practiced; minimal face-to-face interactions with same individuals</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Regular on-site presence; work conducted indoors; social distancing practiced; minimal face-to-face interactions with same individuals</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Regular on-site presence; work conducted outdoors; social distancing practiced; moderate face-to-face interactions with same individuals</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Regular on-site presence; work conducted outdoors or indoors; social distancing practiced; moderate face-to-face interactions with different individuals</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Regular on-site presence; work conducted outdoors or indoors; social distancing; constant or substantial face-to-face interaction with same individuals</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Regular on-site presence; work conducted indoors; social distancing; constant or substantial face-to-face interaction with different individuals</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Regular on-site presence; work conducted outdoors or indoors; social distancing; constant or substantial face-to-face interaction with same or different individuals/groups at high risk for COVID-19</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>MODERATE RISK (Category B)</strong></td>
<td>Regular on-site presence; work conducted in health-focused setting or clinic; social distancing; minimal face-to-face interaction w/individuals at high risk for COVID-19; services are non-COVID</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Regular on-site presence; work conducted in health-focused setting or clinic; social distancing; substantial interactions with COVID patients; services are not COVID related</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Regular on-site presence; work conducted in clinics or hospitals; involves minimal interactions with COVID patients; services are COVID-related</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Regular on-site presence; work conducted in clinics or hospitals; substantial interactions with COVID patients; services provided are COVID treatment services provided in secured zones</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Model Adapted from Texas Medical Association, 2020*
This checklist is intended to serve as a guide for developing blanket exemptions proposals for community-based and/or field-based experiential learning activities under the Fall 2020 Restore Plan.

1. Remote Learning Experiences
   - Remote options are considered and explored
   - Community/Field-based activities are only those that cannot be conducted remotely
   - A case for why the activities cannot be conducted remotely/virtually is provided

2. Description of field-based or community-based activities
   A clear description of the kinds of field-based or community-based experiential learning activities in which students (and faculty and staff, if applicable) will engage is provided. The description includes information about the following:
   - Frequency and length of on-site work
   - Whether work is conducted indoors, outdoors, large spaces, small spaces
   - Amount and nature of person-to-person interactions (vs. working individually)
   - Extent to which the activities students perform involve face-to-face interactions
   - Whether face-to-face interactions, if any, involve same persons or different persons
   - If the proposal is for multiple programs or courses, a brief summary of which courses/programs fall within particular types of activities is provided.

3. Calibration of Risk Level
   - Risk level(s) of field activities have been calibrated (using Table 2)
   - Risk level (range is okay) within which the activities fall is noted in proposal (using Table 2)

4. Verification of Site Safety
   - Safety protocol for each site is collected
   - Site safety protocols have been reviewed
   - Sites are verified as safe based on activity risk level(s) and available safety protocols

5. Tracking
   - A system and policy for tracking students has been described
   - Students are informed that they need to log the location (organization field site, etc.), dates, and times when the work at the site will count for academic credit or other academic requirement.

6. Student Preparedness
   - The proposal includes verification that students have or will receive appropriate information, training, etc. on safety procedures and other important protocols (based on activity’s risk level).
7. **Student Supervision**
   - A supervisor (either from the University or at the site) who will oversee students’ educational activities is identified.

8. **Attestation**
   - The proposal includes a copy of the attestation that students will complete as a condition of approval to conduct experiential learning. At a minimum, the attestation should include:
     - Students’ agreement to follow all safety rules and procedures
     - Students’ agreement to report any changes to their site’s safety procedures or expectations
     - Students’ agreement to log their hours and provide an accurate and full account of their field-based or community-based experiential learning activities.
     - Students’ agreement to follow all University student conduct policies when conducting in University business off campus.
     - Students’ agreement to complete required training (if applicable)
     - Students’ acknowledgement that they understand that if safety protocols are not followed, hours/times in the field-based work are not recorded, and/or student conduct infractions are noted, academic credit for the field-based or community-based activities may be forfeited.

9. **Transportation (if applicable)**
   - Travel policy is articulated and includes information on the following:
     - Social distanced practiced at all times when traveling to and from sites.
     - Minnesota Department of Health and CDC guidelines will be followed

10. **Accommodations (if applicable)**
    - Accommodations policy is articulated and includes information on the following:
      - Social distancing practiced at all times
      - No room sharing
      - Shared bathrooms avoided
      - Site of accommodations site follows strict safety procedures

11. **Approval Administrator**
    - An approval administrator is named.
    - The approval administrator has in place the necessary system and support needed to manage administrative requirements and approval processes for all programs and activities covered by the blanket exemption.

12. **Special Circumstances**
    - Unique or special circumstances (i.e., licensure requirements requiring specific equipment or particular types of activities) are noted and explained.

   — END OF CHECKLIST —
FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING ACTIVITIES CONDUCTED REMOTELY

Q. My students will be conducting their community engagement experiences through virtual means. They will be interacting with community members virtually. Do they need to submit a petition for approval?

A. No. Approvals are not needed for community-focused or other experiential learning activities that will be conducted strictly through remote or virtual means. Approval is required only when students will be going to an off-campus site to conduct experiential learning activities that are part of their academic program.

SAFETY PROTOCOLS

Q. We work with many schools and districts and place many students each year. Do we need to secure safety protocols for each site?

A. Prior to placing students, all field-based and community-based sites should be verified as having in place safety protocols that are appropriate for the risk level of students’ site-based experiences. A district level protocol that covers all the schools in the district would be acceptable, assuming that the district safety policy is required to be implemented in all schools in the district.

Q. What support will we receive to provide students with safety training to prepare them for site-based work? Are there ready-made training modules we can use or adapt?

A. A catalog of safety training modules, materials, and information sheets is being compiled and will be made available to Approval Administrators and program managers. Advice from COVID-19 health and safety experts will also be shared as needed.

Q. Whose policy prevails when the site’s safety policies are not compatible with the University’s policies (i.e., sites or organizations that do not require masks)?

A. At a minimum, until further notice, all University of Minnesota students (as well as faculty and staff) must wear a mask at all times and practice social distancing when conducting university business on or off campus. If a site where students are placed does not have a requirement to wear a mask, students are still expected to wear a mask; the level of risk of having students at the site should therefore be carefully weighed and the appropriateness of the site for experiential activities may need to reconsidered. If the site does not permit mask-wearing, then it should be assumed that the site is not an acceptable space for students to safely conduct community-based or field-based experiential learning.
Q. Is it sufficient if the site says they follow CDC health and safety guidelines, or is more detailed information needed to approve a site?

A. As long as there is a written attestation that the CDC health and safety guidelines are followed at the site, then these guidelines should be acceptable in most instances. However, if students’ activities fall within one of the higher risk categories, then some attention should be given as to whether additional safety training or more protective safety protocols should be in place.

TRACKING STUDENTS’ EXPERIENCES

Q. What information is needed for tracking. Is it just where students are and when they are at the site, or is more information required?

A. At a minimum, we need to log the days and times each student is engaged in off-campus experiential activities that will count for credit. There also needs to be verification of site’s safety protocols. (Many programs secure these protocols by having students submit them for their respective site). Programs may wish to or be required to (i.e., by credentialing or licensing offices) to track other information. Programs can develop their own systems or incorporate the tracking system into other existing databases. There is also central tracking system available to all programs whereby students can use to log their on-site time using their x.500.

Q. If we already have a tracking system in place, do we need to develop a separate one?

A. No. Programs are encouraged to use the systems that are already in place.

BLANKET EXEMPTION PROCESS

Q. Who needs to review/sign off on the blanket exemption application before it goes to AVPPEProvost’s Office for review?

A. Unit leaders (directors, department chairs, etc.) who are responsible for the delivery of the course, program, or experience should be made aware of the blanket exemption process. Approval should include the sign off from the college dean or school director. Colleges and departments may require additional reviewers and sign offs.
APPROVAL ADMINISTRATOR

Q. Who can serve as an Approval Administrator?

A. The Approval Administrator should be a manager or other unit professional with sufficient oversight responsibilities who can serve in an official capacity to approve students’ site-based experiential learning activities. Approval Administrators have much responsibility in approving experiential learning experiences, ensuring the safety of sites where students will conduct their work, and managing data and information for the experientials.

Q. What kinds of training and support will Approval Administrators receive?

A. For those who are interested, a series of workshop sessions will be held to walk through scenarios to calibrate risk levels of different activities and discuss the specific safety protocols or trainings that might need to be in place. Approval Administrators can also bring specific cases to the sessions to gather input from peers.

STUDENT ATTESTATION

Q. Can we have students sign a waiver or acknowledgment to they are responsible for incidents that occur as a condition of having them begin their site placement?

A. All students are required to sign an attestation to which they agree to follow their site’s safety protocols, to report any changes to the site protocols, and to accurately keep track and report the time they spend on the site. Program may wish to have students agree to additional conditions prior to receiving approved to conduct site-based activities.

TRANSPORTATION

Q. What are protocols and expectations regarding transportation? Some students will carpool. Do we try to provide transportation that has a more controlled environment? What about Uber or Lyft?

A. The University-wide Return to Campus plan mandates that social distancing must be maintained at all times when conducting University business on or off campus. Students are strongly encouraged to ride in their own vehicles whenever possible. However, when this is not possible, exemptions may be made via an approval through the Blanket Exemption process. Requests for carpooling, riding UBER or Lyft, or using other modes of transportation should be included in proposals requesting approval to conduct community-based or field-based activities.
STUDENTS EMPLOYED BY AGENCIES

Q. We have students that are engaged in on-site internships as employees of the agencies. Do these experiences need to be approved?

A. If a student is working on-site at an agency as an employee and is not counting that work toward their academic progress or degree completion, then no approval is required. However, if the student plans to apply some or all of the work at the site (paid or unpaid) toward fulfillment of their academic degree program, then the on-site work activities must be approved. Agreements between employers and students should articulate which portions of the work are the responsibility of the employer and which aspects are the responsibility of the University. The aspects of the site-based work that are the responsibility of the University would need to be approved.

COVID-19 OUTBREAK

Q. What are we required to do if there is an outbreak at one of our approved sites?

A. If students have followed the required safety protocols, then it is assumed they have been sufficiently protected. However, students should be encouraged to visit a health care professional for advice, especially if they feel sick or exhibit any symptoms. Program leaders should explore whether the site’s safety protocols were followed. At all times, it is very important to keep in mind that confidentiality of personal health information is paramount. Instructors, staff, and students may not disclosure to others that someone is sick, has a positive COVID-19 test, or is in quarantine due to exposure. All should follow the information and procedures described in the Guidelines on Positive Student Cases.