

Brock University Event Risk Assessment Protocol

Last updated August 2025

Brock University Policy Context

Brock University strives to balance providing space for meaningful, engaging, and inclusive activities and ensuring that the potential for harm to students and the Brock community is low. All events must adhere to Brock University, Brock University Students’ Union, and Graduate Students’ Association [policies](#). This includes, but is not limited to, the following affiliated Brock Policies, Codes, Standards and Protocols:

- [Alcohol Policy](#)
- [Brock University Accessibility \(AODA\)](#)
- [Campus Promotions](#)
- [Freedom of Expression](#)
- [Residence Community Standards](#)
- [Respectful Work and Learning Environment Policy](#)
- [Student Code of Conduct](#)
- [Driver and Vehicle Management Policy](#)
- [BUSU Clubs Ratification and Election](#)
- [GSA Governing Documents](#)

Defining Risk for Student Events

Event risk assessment includes several considerations: event size, alcohol and substances, public events, event location, speakers/entertainers, physical activities, reputation, university operations, and travel. Additional considerations may also impact risk assessment, and the University can consider additional factors through the risk assessment process as applicable.

Please note that a combination of risk considerations taken together can impact the review process to follow, and if one or more planning consideration falls into Level 2 or Level 3, an enhanced review protocol may be enacted. Please note that Brock University has decision-making authority to determine the risk category that proposed events fall within and the likelihood that an event may lead to violation(s) of Brock University policies or pose a significant risk to the campus community from a health, wellness, and safety perspective.

Table 1: Planning Considerations

Risk Consideration	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
Event Size	Fewer than 100 attendees	Between 100-200 attendees	Over 200 attendees
Alcohol and Substances	-	On-campus event with alcohol served in a licensed space	Off-campus event with alcohol served in a licensed venue
Attendees	Limited to Brock University students, staff, and faculty	Open to select invited guests or specific members of the public	Open to the general public

Location	On-campus, indoors in an enclosed space	Off-campus, indoors in an enclosed space	On-campus or off-campus in an open or high-traffic area, either indoors or outdoors
Virtual Engagement	-	Livestreamed or shared internally to expand access to Brock University participants	Livestreamed or shared publicly on external or open-access virtual platforms
Speakers and Entertainers	Speakers or entertainers affiliated with Brock University (such as current faculty, staff, or students)	Speakers or entertainers not affiliated with Brock University	-
Potential Health Risk	Minimal risk of injury (very low to low level)	Moderate risk of injury to participants (low to moderate level)	Elevated risk of injury to participants (moderate to high level)
University Reputation	Low likelihood of affecting the University's reputation	Moderate likelihood of attracting external attention or media coverage, or affecting the University's reputation	High likelihood of impacting the University's reputation, attracting media coverage or external attention, or prompting protests
University Operational Impact	Minimal or no impact on typical University operations	Moderate impact that may disrupt normal University operations or require additional resources to ensure safety	Significant impact that is likely to disrupt normal University operations and will require additional resources to ensure safety
Travel Destination	Local travel within the Niagara Region	Travel within 200 km of campus (outside the Niagara Region)	Travel beyond 200 km from campus or involving international destinations
Travel Mode	Public ground transportation (such as city buses, trains, or taxis)	Private ground transportation (such as personal vehicles or rental cars)	Chartered bus or air travel

Risk Assessment Process

Student Event Risk Management and Approvals (SERMA)

Student-organized activities contribute to the University's goal of *"providing an engaging campus experience that meets students' needs and affords social, cultural and recreational opportunities for all students."*

Student Event Risk Management and Approval (SERMA) creates awareness of planning and safety issues and protects attendees and event organizers. All events have some risk associated with them, and it is the event organizers' responsibility to consider and understand all associated risks and take steps to prevent or mitigate them, while also adhering to Brock University policies.

All students and student-led organizations must comply with the SERMA process to use University resources and to host, promote, or partner on events and activities, as outlined below:

- The SERMA process applies to all Brock students and recognized student groups or clubs organizing in-person or online events, whether on or off campus.
- The SERMA process applies to all members of the Brock University Students' Union (BUSU) and Graduate Students' Association (GSA), including professional staff, student staff, and Executive members, who are planning in-person or online events, whether on or off campus.
- The SERMA process also applies when Brock students, student groups, or clubs are partnering with a Brock department, faculty, or any Brock-endorsed or affiliated partner on an event or activity.

All events submitted through the SERMA process must adhere to submission deadlines. Submissions must be fully completed, with all required information provided at the time of submission. Incomplete submissions will not be reviewed. Completed submissions should be received at least 10 to 21 business days prior to the scheduled event date, depending on the nature and complexity of the event.

Events with planning elements assessed at Level 2 or Level 3 risk must carefully follow these timelines. Certain elements have mandatory minimum lead times, as outlined below:

- Speakers and Entertainers (Level 2):
 - SERMA submissions for events that include external speakers or entertainers (those not affiliated with Brock University) must be fully completed, with all required information submitted **at least 10 business days prior to the event date**. Submissions that are incomplete or submitted after this deadline may not be considered and risk being automatically denied
- Travel Destination (Level 2 and 3):
 - SERMA submissions for events involving travel over 200 km from campus or international travel must be fully completed, with all required information submitted at least 10 business days prior to the departure date. Submissions that are incomplete or submitted late may not be considered and risk being automatically denied.

These timelines exist to allow for proper review and consultation with relevant campus departments, ensuring appropriate risk management, safety, and security measures are in place.

Utilizing the *Planning Considerations* (Table 1), event risk is assessed based on the details provided by event organizers through the SERMA process. As previously noted, a combination of risk considerations taken together can impact the review process, and if one or more risk considerations fall into Level 2 or Level 3, an enhanced review protocol may be enacted.

Levels 1 and 2:

When events are identified by the students planning the event or activity and/or assessed by the SERMA team as having level one to level two components, information may be shared with campus partners by the SERMA team for awareness; otherwise, all information will be available to the campus community through the ExperienceBU event portal and will follow the standard SERMA process.

Level 3:

When an event is identified by the students planning the event or activity and/or assessed by the SERMA team as having Level 3 components, using the considerations outlined below, an enhanced review process is enacted.

Considerations for an Enhanced Review Process

- Components outlined in Table 1
- Information shared by the student group/organization
- Campus climate
- Broader cultural climate (e.g. regional, national, global)
- Other considerations at the discretion of the reviewers

Examples of events part of an Enhanced Review Process

- A carnival or entertainment event on campus where more than 100 people are expected to attend and participants are open to injury.
- A campus event involving speakers that could directly or indirectly involve discussion about a potentially controversial topic.

Enhanced Review Process for Student Events

The Brock University *Enhanced Review Process* has been established to support and encourage students in planning and executing events that may be identified or assessed as having Level 3 components through the SERMA process, based on *Planning Considerations* (Table 1) and the considerations outlined above. The Process emphasizes student and guest safety (physical and psychological) and takes a collaborative and caring approach involving campus partners and students to ensure that bias and inequities are addressed through the approach described in the following sections. **Please note that approving events through these processes does not imply University endorsement and/or agreement with the nature of events/event topics.**

Planning a Student Event that Requires an Enhanced Review Process

Students or student groups/clubs who are planning an event with Level 3 components are encouraged to submit a detailed event submission through the SERMA process 10-21 days before the event is to take place. Students or student groups/clubs are also encouraged to reach out to the SERMA team to inform and/or involve the SERMA team in the planning process. When planning an event with Level 3 characteristics, students are responsible for identifying and mitigating possible risks related to the campus community's health, safety, and wellbeing. In doing so, students organizing Level 3 events are required to:

- Review [SERMA resources](#) and [Brock University policies](#), and ensure all components of the [SERMA process](#) are adhered to.
- Identify the risk level of the proposed event and the precautions that will be taken to mitigate risks.

- Provide comprehensive details for all event components (e.g., event itinerary, speaker information, event RSVP and check-in procedures, plans for event disruptions, etc.).
- Demonstrate that inclusive practices will be utilized in the planning and implementation of the event.
- Include a comprehensive health and safety plan that addresses strategies for mitigating potential risks in the SERMA submission.

If a Student Event Contains Level 3 Components

Events that are identified as containing Level 3 components may require consultation with campus partners to ensure the event is conducted in a manner that is lawful, respectful and in accordance with Brock University policies. When a student event has been identified and/or assessed as containing Level 3 components, the following process will be initiated:

- The SERMA team will review submissions to assess whether the proposed event complies with University policies and protocols, and whether appropriate risk mitigation strategies have been identified. If the event does not meet these standards, the SERMA team will notify the event organizers and advise the Associate *Director, Student Life* who will determine whether this protocol applies to the event.
- When the protocol does apply, one or more of the following actions may take place:
 - The SERMA team may notify applicable campus partners and share event information.
 - The SERMA team may establish a committee, including event organizers and campus partners, to gather additional information and discuss health, safety, and wellness considerations to reduce and mitigate overall event risk. Note that meetings may not be necessary if the group has provided sufficient details in their SERMA submission and/or has participated in meetings with the committee for previous events. The SERMA team will use their discretion to determine if a meeting is required.
 - A collaborative and comprehensive health and safety plan will be finalized and shared with event organizers and campus partners and will be added to the SERMA submission.
 - Based on recommendations from the committee, the Associate Vice President (AVP), Students will decide whether health and safety risks can be managed for the proposed event. The AVP, Students will consult with Campus Safety Services, Human Rights & Equity, and the Senior Administrative Council as appropriate.

Protocol for Unmanaged / Non-Approved Level 3 Events

If a student event involving Level 3 components is identified, whether before it takes place, while it is in progress, or after it has concluded, without going through the SERMA process, the following steps will apply:

- The Associate Vice-President (AVP), Students will determine whether this protocol applies. If so, the AVP, Students will consult with Campus Safety Services, Human Rights & Equity, Student Affairs, and other relevant campus partners to assess the situation and determine next steps.
- In cases where there is an immediate risk to health, safety, or well-being, Campus Safety Services will respond directly.

- Student Life and Success will notify the applicable student group advisors, such as the Brock University Students' Union (BUSU) and/or the Graduate Students' Association (GSA), so that their internal processes can also be initiated.

Reporting an Event:

If you become aware of an event with Level 3 components that **is currently taking place**:

- For emergencies, call Campus Safety Services at 905-688-5550 extension 3200.
- For non-emergencies, call 905-688-5550 extension 4300.

If you believe an event involving Level 3 components is being **planned or has already taken place**, please contact the SERMA team at serma@brocku.ca