

Brock University Event Risk Assessment Protocol

Last update July 2024

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 two or level three, 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 One	Level Two	Level Three
Event Size	Less than 100 attendees	Over 100 attendees	Over 200 attendees
Alcohol and Substances	N.A.	On-campus with alcohol in a licensed setting	Off-campus with alcohol in a licensed setting
Attendees	Brock students, staff, and/or faculty only	Open to select, invited, members of the public	Open to the broader public
Location	On-campus in an indoor, enclosed area	Off-campus in an indoor, enclosed area	On or off-campus in an open and/or public space with high volumes of traffic, indoor or outdoor

Virtual Engagement	N.A.	Livestreamed/showcased internally to expand reach of the event to additional participants	Livestreamed/showcased publicly on a virtual platform
Speakers and Entertainers	Speakers and/or entertainers are Brock University affiliated (i.e. current faculty, staff and/or students)	Speakers and/or entertainers not affiliated with the University	N.A.
Potential Health Risk	Potential for injury (very low to low levels)	Higher degree of risk for injury to participants (low to moderate levels)	Higher degree of risk for injury to participants (moderate to high levels)
University Reputation	Low likelihood to have an impact on the University's reputation	May garner external attention, media, and/or have an impact on the University's reputation	A higher likelihood to have an impact on the University's reputation, and/or to garner external attention, and/or attract a protest or media coverage
University Operational Impact	Low impact on University operations	May impact the typical operations of the University and/or require additional resources to ensure safety	High likelihood to impact the typical operations of the University and/or require additional resources to ensure safety
Travel Destination	Local travel within the Niagara Region	Travel within 200 km of the campus	Travel over 200 km away from the campus and/or involves international travel
Travel Mode	Public ground transportation, i.e. city bus, train, or taxi	Private ground transportation, i.e. personal vehicle or rental car	Charter bus rental 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/safety issues and protects attendees and event organizers. All events have some risk associated with them, and it is the event organizer(s)'s 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 organizations must adhere to the SERMA process to use University resources and to conduct/promote events and activities, as described below:**

- The SERMA process applies to all Brock University Students' Union (BUSU) and Graduate Students' Association (GSA) members, including professional staff, student staff, and the Executive Team(s), who organize in-person or online events on or off campus.

- The SERMA process applies to all Brock student(s) and recognized student groups and clubs at Brock who are organizing events on or off campus, in-person or online.
- The SERMA process applies to all Brock student(s) and recognized student groups and clubs at Brock who partner with a Brock department, Brock faculty, and/or Brock endorsed/affiliated partner.

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 two or level three, an enhanced review protocol may be enacted.

Level One to Two:

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 Three:

When an event is identified by the students planning the event or activity and/or assessed by the SERMA team as having level three 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 three 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 three 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 three 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 three 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 Three Components

Events that are identified as containing Level Three 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 three components, the following process will be initiated:

- The SERMA team will determine if the proposed event has been planned in accordance with university policies and protocols and if event organizers have provided strategies to mitigate event risks. When this has not occurred, the SERMA team will communicate this to event organizers and notify the *Executive Director, Student Life & Success* who will determine if this protocol applies.
- When the protocol does apply, one or more of the following actions may take place:
 - o The SERMA team may notify applicable campus partners and share event information.
 - o 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.
 - o 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.
 - o 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.

Level Three Student Events that are not Risk Managed

When made aware of student events that may contain Level Three components taking place on or off-campus that haven't been risk managed through the SERMA process, the following protocol will apply.

- **During an Event:** If made aware that an event with Level Three components is currently taking place, the *Associate Vice President (AVP), Students* will determine if this protocol applies. If so, the *AVP, Students* will consult with *Campus Safety Services, Human Rights & Equity*, and the *Senior Administrative Council* to determine appropriate actions. In situations where there is an immediate concern to campus health, safety, or well-being, *Campus Safety Services* will respond accordingly.
- **After an Event:** *Student Life and Success* will immediately communicate with the applicable advisors of the student group(s), such as the *Brock University Students' Union* and/or *Graduate Students' Association*, in order for their processes to be enacted.
- If made aware that a potentially level three student event has taken place, the *Associate Vice President (AVP), Students* will determine if this protocol applies. If so, the *AVP, Students* will review the case through the Student Affairs unit and consult with the appropriate campus partners.
- **Reporting an Event:** If you believe an event containing Level Three components will occur, contact serma@brocku.ca.
- If an event with Level Three components occurs in real-time, contact *Campus Safety Services* 905-688-5550 x 3200 (emergency) or 905-688-5550 x 4300 (non-emergency). If you believe an event is considered level three after it is concluded, please notify the SERMA team via email serma@brocku.ca.