

# **GAP YEAR ASSOCIATION -** **2023 STANDARDS OF ACCREDITATION FOR PROGRAM PROVIDERS**

## **DESCRIPTION OF APPLICATION**

The application for Gap Year Association (GYA) Accreditation involves an evidence-based, multi-round, comprehensive evaluation including a short survey by recent students and staff. GYA staff and the Board of Advisors administer the accreditation review process typically with a strong basis in field programming and administration.

Program providers intending to apply for Gap Year Association (GYA) Accreditation are encouraged to read through this document thoroughly, prior to submitting the non-refundable deposit and signed [Engagement Letter](#).



## **BENEFITS OF GYA ACCREDITATION**

1. Professionalization and benchmarking using the U.S. Department of Justice-approved Standards for gap year education
2. Ability to participate in GYA's College Credit Program through GYA's partnership with Portland State University. Students on GYA Accredited Programs can earn up to 16 quarter-credits (1 semester's worth) of college credit. Details include:
  - Flat fee of \$1,700/student for up to 4 courses through PSU, with minimal additional administrative requirements from program staff,
  - Increase access to *and* enrollment in your programs by leveraging 529 tax deferred college savings to pay for most program expenses,
  - Academically recognize the value of high value experiential education.
3. Listing on Accredited Programs web page, in addition to the General Programs page
4. Program-Specific Public Profile Web Page
5. Ability to use GYA's Seal of Accreditation on all materials
6. Accreditation Plaque to display at fairs and promotional events
7. GYA Accreditation Seal placed on all listings through marketing partners such as GoOverseas & Teenlife
8. Exclusive discounts and listing status with GYA-partnered organizations
9. Attributed photos in GYA promotional materials
10. Discounts with iNext health & evacuation insurance
11. Access to exclusive gap year experts, data, and trends
12. Access to a gap year professional community

|  |    |
|--|----|
| DESCRIPTION OF APPLICATION   | 1  |
| BENEFITS OF GYA ACCREDITATION  | 1  |
| COST   | 4  |
| GYA'S THEORY OF EFFECTIVE PRACTICE   | 4  |
| INSTRUCTIONS TO APPLY FOR GYA ACCREDITATION  | 4  |
| GLOSSARY OF TERMS USED IN THIS APPLICATION AND AT THE GYA  | 6  |
| GENERAL TERMS:   | 6  |
| GLOSSARY OF TERMS USED IN 1.X.X: PHILOSOPHY AND PROFESSIONAL ETHICS  | 7  |
| GENERAL 1.X.X TERMS  | 8  |
| MENTAL HEALTH TOPICS AND MEDICATION  | 9  |
| RISK MANAGEMENT AND EMERGENCY PROCEDURES TERMS   | 11 |
| TERMS USED IN 2.X.X: FAIR-TRADE LEARNING   | 13 |
| TERMS USED IN 3.X.X: BACKCOUNTRY/DEVELOPING COUNTRY  | 15 |
| TERMS USED IN 4.X.X: INDEPENDENT STUDENT EXPERIENCES   | 15 |
| TERMS USED IN 5.X.X: PARTNERSHIPS  | 15 |
| APPLICATION FOR ACCREDITATION - ORGANIZATIONAL DESCRIPTION AND DETAILS   | 17 |
| 1.X.X - PHILOSOPHY & PROFESSIONAL ETHICS - required for all organizations  | 18 |
| 1.1 - "Organization's pedagogy is congruent with gap year education."  | 18 |
| 1.2 - "Do what you say you'll do & be public about it."  | 20 |
| 1.3 - "Organization must abide by GYA's principles for strong governance."   | 24 |
| 1.4 - "Organization upholds the spirit of Federal standards for higher education."                                     | 29 |
| 1.5 - "Organization prepares student appropriately."   | 29 |
| 1.6 - "Organization has clear policies about program-provided transportation."   | 32 |
| 1.7 - "Organization has clear process for hiring and staffing."  | 35 |
| 1.8 - "Staff have clear policy expectations, are regularly and adequately trained, and current on any certifications." | 38 |
| 1.9 - "Organization has appropriate medical kits available for students and staff whenever on program."                | 44 |
| 1.10 - "Organization has clear admissions processes."  | 45 |
| 1.11 - "Organization strives to improve."  | 47 |
| 2.X.X COMMUNITY-BASED LEARNING   | 49 |
| 2.1 - "Common Purposes for Partnership."   | 51 |
| 2.2 - "Host Community Program Leadership."   | 53 |
| 2.3 - * "Rights of the Most Vulnerable."   | 54 |
| 2.4 - "Host Community Program Participation."  | 55 |
| 2.6 - "Ethics in Recruitment & Publication Materials."   | 57 |
| 2.7 - "Communication Between Program & Community Partner Organizations."   | 58 |
| 2.8 - "Participant Orientation to Community Partner."  | 59 |
| 2.9 - "Environmental Impact."  | 60 |
| 2.10 - "Economic Considerations and Local Sourcing."   | 61 |
| 2.11 - "Regular Evaluation of Programs and Partnership."   | 62 |
| 2.12 - "Financial Transparency."   | 63 |
| 2.13 - "Ethical Engagement with Animals."  | 64 |
| 3.X.X - RISK MANAGEMENT IN LOCATIONS WITH LIMITED MEDICAL RESOURCES  | 68 |

|  |           |
|--|-----------|
| 3.1 - "Organization manages risk responsibly."   | 68        |
| 3.2 - "Organization critically and continually reviews all locations for safety in advance of any student activities." | 71        |
| 3.3 - "Students receive appropriate orientation."  | 72        |
| 3.4 - "Staff are trained appropriately and regularly, and certified where appropriate."                                | 74        |
| <b>4.X.X - INDEPENDENT STUDENT EXPERIENCES</b>   | <b>76</b> |
| 4.1 - "Organization has protocols to vet independent experiences for safety of student and community partners."        | 76        |
| 4.2 - "Organization provides basic pre-departure support."   | 78        |
| 4.3 - "Organization has a local contact for each student."   | 81        |
| 4.4 - "Organization has policies & resources for students to support their own personal health and risk awareness."    | 82        |
| <b>5.X.X - PARTNERSHIPS</b>  | <b>84</b> |
| 5.1 - "Organization maintains integrity with GYA standards through their partnerships."                                | 84        |
| 5.2 - "Organization has policies for managing risk on hired transportation."   | 86        |

**STEP 1.**  
Make sure all the appropriate boxes are ticked here. Don't forget to click "Update". NOTE: every org has to do "Philosophy & Integrity".

**1. Select the categories of standards which apply to your organization**

Philosophy & Integrity     Service-Learning     Backcountry / Developing Country     Independent Placements     Partnerships

**Update**

**STEP 2.**  
Add evidence. NOTE, you can create a title such as "Staff Manual" and not upload the manual until you're finished dragging & dropping all the standards. This way you can update the manual to address a Standard and not have to upload it each time. (see step 5)

**2. Match standards to your organization's evidence**

*Drag and drop each standard (below) onto the evidence (right) that satisfies the requirement*

1.1.1 Organization consciously includes core qualities of "Experiential Education:" Appropriate mentorship.    Exception    Not applicable

1.1.2 Organization consciously includes core qualities of "Experiential Education:" Focused reflection with a strong emphasis on student-directed answers.    Exception    Not applicable

1.1.3 Organization consciously includes core qualities of "Experiential Education:" Have an active role in the self-governance program.

1.1.4 Organization attempts to challenge students' thinking in manageable ways.

**STEP 3.**  
Drag and drop each Standard on to the Organizational Evidence. NOTE, if you want to take an "Exception" or consider a standard "Not applicable" then a simple text answer will suffice.

**STEP 4.**  
Click on the evidence to open it and: (a) Change the title. (b) Upload a "File" or type in a "URL" or some "Text". (c) Identify the corresponding page #s for each

**STEP 5.**  
This box will turn from gray to green once everything inside it is completed.

**+ Add organization evidence**

*- Special cases -*

**Not Applicable: 2.2.1**  
TEXT Satisfies 0 standards

**Not Applicable: 2.3.1**  
TEXT Satisfies 0 standards

## **COST**

There is a \$1,500 non-refundable deposit to be paid prior to submitting your application. Then, depending on the number of gap year students you worked with in the prior twelve months, either a \$1,500 final fee ( $\leq 150$  students) or a \$2,500 ( $> 150$  students).

## **GYA'S THEORY OF EFFECTIVE PRACTICE**

GYA's underlying Theory of Effective Practice for Accreditation requires programs to submit evidence-based documentation that supports the organization's cultural alignment with its own documentation, and is verified by a GYA Student Survey confirming that what is reported in the field is actually happening.

GYA's Standards and Accreditation Committee has developed these standards in an effort to set the most effective practices for the field of gap year education, and in alignment with our obligations as the federally recognized Standards Development Organization. Our intentions are that these standards support gap year programs by (1) maintaining high-caliber professional ethics; (2) upholding reciprocity and equitability in global community-based learning (including service-learning) where relevant; (3) creating adequate risk management practices that reduce the likelihood of significant incidents; (4) elevating effective practices when working with students on independent experiences (e.g. internships independent of a cohort); and (5) maintaining quality third-party partnerships recognizing that any GYA-Accredited program can never fully abdicate student safety to a third party.

## **INSTRUCTIONS TO APPLY FOR GYA ACCREDITATION**

Complete the application using our proprietary online system in the members area of our website: <https://www.gapyearassociation.org/dashboard>. An instructional video from Ethan Knight, the Gap Year Association's Founder and Emeritus Executive Director, is available on [GYA's YouTube Channel](#) to assist with the application process.

TO COMPLETE YOUR APPLICATION, SUBMIT THE FOLLOWING ITEMS: (Note: Evidentiary materials should represent current practices, not older than 4 years at the time of application).

- Signed and dated Gap Year Association Accreditation Engagement letter found on the [GYA Standards web page](#).
- \$1,500 non-refundable deposit to be sent via check, ACH, or credit card. Members will receive an invoice from GYA.
- Evidence supporting all relevant categories of accreditation depending on your organization's programming:
  - 1.X.X: PHILOSOPHY AND PROFESSIONAL ETHICS certification is required for all organizations;
  - 2.X.X: COMMUNITY BASED LEARNING. The Gap Year Association (GYA) partners with the [Community-Based Global Learning Collaborative](#) to adopt their [Fair Trade Learning](#) rubric, adapting it to gap year education. GYA requires this certification for accreditation applicants that include community-based learning (including service-learning) in their programs, for which **two or**

**more** listed categories apply. We require organizations to self-score 0-3 on each of 13 categories.

- 3.X.X: RISK MANAGEMENT IN LOCATIONS WITH LIMITED MEDICAL RESOURCES certification is for organizations traveling 2 or more hours away from definitive emergency medical care: a modern hospital with advanced trauma life support and advanced cardiac life support (ACLS), for example, where an emergency appendectomy could be performed 24-hours a day. Typically, these facilities are not available during backcountry/wilderness operations or in developing countries.
  - 4.X.X: INDEPENDENT STUDENT EXPERIENCES certification is for organizations who match students with individual/solo internships or community-based learning experiences where the student is away from an organization-staffed supervisor. Individual students in this context differ from Gap Year Consultants' clients, as individual students in this context are still participants in a Provider's Program, just not necessarily traveling with a cohort.
  - 5.X.X: PARTNERSHIPS certification is for any organization that outsources some activities to a partner-organization. E.g. hiring private transportation, contracting with an adventure outfitter for SCUBA or white water rafting, arranging student homestays, etc. In this context, Partner refers to a third-party contracted organization that provides a service for the Program Provider's students.
- People in charge: name of the Executive Director/CEO; name of person submitting the application; business address for the primary headquarters for gap year programming; summary of operations (i.e. mission, vision, and overall scope of programs/activities).
  - A description of your program (200 words or less as an operator, not a salesperson).
  - Send GYA's surveys to 20 of your most recent alumni (or active students), and 5 of your most recent staff (or current), that allows us to verify important Standards (recent means within the past 2 years). A custom link will be sent to you specific to your program.
  - Copy of current Liability Insurance (USD \$2 million minimum).
  - Copy of official registration (e.g., 501.c.3, LLC, Sole-Proprietor, etc.).
  - Copy of required student forms including a release and waiver form, a medical disclosure form, and if appropriate, forms for minors.
  - Digital or hard copy versions of current marketing collateral (brochures, flyers, etc.).
  - TEN digital pictures that GYA can use to promote gap years and your organization. These must be higher-resolution PNG or JPEG files AT LEAST 500KB in size.

## GLOSSARY OF TERMS USED IN THIS APPLICATION AND AT THE GYA

### GENERAL TERMS:

**Evidence:** Proof that your organization meets the standard, typically in the form of a current document or webpage showing the standard is met or otherwise publicly stating it happens.

**Gap Year:** A semester or year of experiential learning, typically taken after high school and prior to career or post-secondary education, in order to deepen one's practical, professional, and personal awareness. This can happen through travel, community-based learning (formerly called service learning or volunteering), and/or internships.

**Gap Year Education:** The field of education dedicated to maximizing the potential of young adults through gap year experiences, including mentorship and experiential education curricula.

**Gap Year Student** (sometimes called a *participant* or a *gapper*): A student, typically between the ages of 17 and 22, who takes a gap year to cultivate new skills, and to discover more about themselves and the world around them. Gap year students can travel independently, with a cohort, or some of both.

**Gap Year Alum:** A gender-neutral term for a single student who has completed a gap year. *Alumna* is feminine singular. *Alumnus* is masculine singular. *Alum* is gender-neutral singular.

**Gap Year Alumni:** A gender-neutral plural term referring to multiple students who have completed a gap year.

**Gap Year Program:** A semester or year-long experiential education course designed for groups (i.e. cohorts) of typically 8-16 gap year students. Gap year programs might include a combination of travel, outdoor education, adventure, intercultural & language learning, community based activities (i.e. service-learning), vocational education, post-therapeutic transitions, self awareness education, and/or curricular themes.

**Gap Year [Provider](#)** (aka, gap year organization): An organization that offers gap year experiences. Providers often partner with 3rd party organizations such as companies and/or community-based organizations where students participate in experiences.

**Gap Year Consultant ([GYC](#)):** A person who advises gap year students (and their families) on articulating the student's goals and plans for a gap year. A GYC might recommend gap year providers for students seeking to travel with a cohort and/or recommend work, internships or community-based activities for students who want to take an independent gap year.

**Gap Year Colleges/Higher Education Institutions:** Colleges and universities that are supportive of the gap year option. [Official Gap Year Colleges](#) work with the Gap Year Association to grow the gap year movement through gap year research, scholarships for gap year alums, and facilitation of an intentional return to campus after the gap year.

**The Gap Year Association (GYA):** The membership based nonprofit association and Standards Development Organization (SDO) for gap year education in the United States, as recognized by the U.S. Department of Justice and Federal Trade Commission. GYA provides [professional development opportunities](#) for Gap Year Providers and Consultants. Additionally, GYA accredits gap year providers and consultants on effective practices determined by its [Standards & Accreditation Committee](#), which is composed of experts representing stakeholders in the gap year education field. [Gap Year Association \(GYA\) Accredited Providers](#) have the ability to offer [college credit](#) to their students through GYA's partnership with Portland State University.

**Sustainability:** The [U.S. Environmental Protection Agency](#) defines sustainability as follows: "Sustainability is based on a simple principle: Everything that we need for our survival and well-being depends, either directly or indirectly, on our natural environment. To pursue sustainability is to create and maintain the conditions under which humans and nature can exist in productive harmony to support present and future generations."

## **GLOSSARY OF TERMS USED IN 1.X.X: PHILOSOPHY AND PROFESSIONAL ETHICS**

### ACTS AND AGENCIES REFERENCED IN THE ACCREDITATION APPLICATION

#### UNITED STATES ACTS:

**FERPA:** The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act Federal law that protects the privacy of student education records. The law applies to all schools that receive funds under an applicable program of the U.S. Department of Education. FERPA gives parents certain rights with respect to their children's education records. These rights transfer to the student when they reach the age of 18 or attends a school beyond the high school level. Students to whom the rights have transferred are "eligible students."

**HIPAA:** The Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act requires institutions that have access to patient Protected Health Information (PHI) to take action to ensure protection of this sensitive data.

**VAWA:** The Violence Against Women Act is a U.S. federal law established in 1994 to create and support more effective responses to sexual assault, domestic violence, dating violence and stalking for both women and children.

#### NATIONAL GOVERNMENTAL AGENCIES:

**OSHA:** The Occupational Safety and Health Administration was created by the U.S. congress to ensure safe and healthful working conditions for workers by setting and enforcing standards.

**CDC:** The Centers for Disease Control is a U.S. federal agency that aims to protect safety and health in the U.S. and around the world through the "control and prevention of disease, injury, and disability."

**NOAA:** The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration is a U.S. Federal agency that monitors, researches, and disseminates findings about atmospheric and environmental systems. Components of these systems include but are not limited to climate, weather, oceans, and coasts.

**OSAC:** The Overseas Security Advisory Council is a U.S. based Federal agency that was established to better connect the U.S. Department of State's Diplomatic Security Sector with the security interests of the American private-sector. Through the sharing of security based tools, the OSAC aims to help the private-sector better anticipate and address issues of security in foreign environments.

**The State Department and the STEP program:** The State Department is the U.S. Federal agency responsible for issuing Passports, assessing global security for U.S. citizens, and informing U.S. citizens about international travel. The Smart Traveler Enrollment Program is a global system to support communication and security needs between U.S. citizens and local embassies.

**WHO:** The World Health Organization is an agency of the United Nation that collaborates with nations and global organizations to promote health and safety to all peoples of the world, particularly the most vulnerable. WHO leads initiatives to extend global health care and coordinate responses to health emergencies.

**ADA:** The ADA is one of America's most comprehensive pieces of civil rights legislation that prohibits discrimination and guarantees that people with disabilities have the same opportunities as everyone else to participate in the mainstream of American life -- to enjoy employment opportunities, to purchase goods and services, and to participate in State and local government programs and services. The ADA is an "equal opportunity" law for people with disabilities and defines a disability as a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities, a person who has a history or record of such an impairment, or a person who is perceived by others as having such an impairment. The ADA does not specifically name all of the impairments that are covered.

## GENERAL 1.X.X TERMS

**Background check:** An inquiry into a person's behavioral and criminal history for the purpose of protecting vulnerable populations, especially in the case of community-based learning experiences. In general, organizations should think about what they specifically need to know and why, recognizing limits of every background check to available information and interstate & federal data sharing limitations.

**Bias:** Bias refers to the internal mechanism that every human being has toward favoring a particular set of beliefs, cultural values, and people as the norm or ideal, while considering those who don't conform to that perceived/socialized ideal as *other* or less favorable.

**Bystander:** A person who witnesses an incident without direct involvement, but with the responsibility to intervene in the case of sexual misconduct/assault, and in the case of illicit drug use. A bystander can step in if the person has knowledge about another person's intent to harm someone or to abuse drugs.



## **DEIA (DIVERSITY, EQUITY, INCLUSION, AND ACCESS) TERMS:**

**Diversity:** Socially, it refers to the wide range of identities. It broadly includes race, ethnicity, gender, age, national origin, religion, ability, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, education, marital status, language, veteran status, physical appearance, etc. It also involves different ideas, perspectives and values.

**Equity:** The fair treatment, access, opportunity and advancement for all people, while at the same time striving to identify and eliminate barriers that prevent the full participation of some groups. The principle of equity acknowledges that there are historically underserved and underrepresented populations and that fairness regarding these unbalanced conditions is necessary to provide equal opportunities to all groups.

**Inclusion:** The act of creating an environment in which any individual or group will be welcomed, respected, supported and valued as a fully participating member. An inclusive and welcoming climate embraces and respects differences.

**Access:** Providing equitable opportunities to everyone along the continuum of human ability and experience.

**BIPOC:** Black, Indigenous, and People of Color.

**LGBTQPIA2s+:** Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Pansexual, Intersex, Asexual, 2Spirit. The plus is for those with romantic and sexual orientations and with gender identities beyond those listed in the typical acronym; identity can be fluid and romantic/sexual orientations are more often than not a spectrum.

**Marginalized (as in marginalized people, groups, identities):** presently, historically, and/or systemically excluded or treated as "other" due to race, gender identity, sexual orientation, age, ability, language, and/or immigration status. Marginalization occurs due to unequal power relationships between social groups.

## **MENTAL HEALTH TOPICS AND MEDICATION**

**Mental Health:** Emotional, psychological, and social well-being. This can include mood, thought processes, positive (or negative) psychology, ability to mentally process events, coping with change, navigating areas outside of one's comfort zone, etc. Strong mental health can present as high resilience, positive attitudes, ability to process emotions, etc. Poor mental health can look like prolonged periods of anxiety, depression, stress, etc.

**Mental Health Clinician:** A clinician trained to diagnose and potentially treat mental health conditions specifically.

**Psychotropic drugs (i.e. psychoactive drugs):** The [American Psychological Association](#) defines psychotropics as follows: “any drug that has significant effects on thinking, perception, and emotion. These drugs are therapeutic agents designed to ameliorate a mental condition; these include [antidepressants](#), [mood stabilizers](#), [sedatives](#), [hypnotics](#), and [antipsychotics](#).”

**Drugs:** Drugs are generally any substance to alter pain, mood, or state-of-being. This umbrella term includes medications, and legal (depending on location) and illegal substances. GYA specifies in-standard when we mean illegal drugs. See *Prescription medication* and *over-the-counter medication* in this glossary to see when and how GYA uses these terms.

**Duty of Care:** legal responsibility for someone (e.g. a member of an organization’s field staff) to provide for students’ basic needs.

**EEC (Essential Eligibility Criteria):** An organization’s core list of qualities and physical requirements that a student must possess to be able to fully participate in the program. These are designed to opt-in or out of participation based on the program’s essentially designed elements, while recognizing an effort to establish an inclusive educational opportunity wherever possible. Are the organization’s programs wheelchair-accessible? What level of fitness is required to participate? Are there language, communication, or professional skill requirements?

**Evacuation:** Removing a participant (or multiple participants) from a program to transport them to emergency care, either at the nearest hospital or back in the student’s home country when/if feasible. Depending on the context, a student might recover in time to return to the program. Evacuation can also refer to removing a group of students from impending danger (e.g. in the case of a natural disaster), where the group would evacuate from one location and arrive at another location, and still remain on-program in the new location.

**Experiential Education:** The [Association for Experiential Education \(AEE\)](#) defines experiential education as: “a teaching philosophy that informs many methodologies in which educators purposefully engage with learners in direct experience and focused reflection in order to increase knowledge, develop skills, clarify values, and develop people's capacity to contribute to their communities.”

**Flora and Fauna:** Plants and wildlife.

**Fraternizing:** Forming friendships, usually in the context of crossing a boundary from professional into personal and a misuse of power in an imbalanced power dynamic.

**Gradual Change Blindness:** Changes over time that are so incremental they may go unnoticed.

**Guidelines vs. Expectations vs. Policies:** Guidelines are general items that are good to keep in mind. Expectations are a set of agreed-upon items to be followed. Policies are the Program equivalent of laws, which must be followed by anyone working with and participating in a Program’s activities.

**Mentorship:** A philosophy of guidance, especially in the context of field leaders mentoring students to think from new perspectives and mentoring students to find their own answers to questions important to them.

**Organizational Staff:** People paid to work by the Gap Year Provider, typically including but not limited to field and administrative staff, as well as independent contractors.

**On-Site:** That which occurs in-person in the program location(s). This term is most commonly used in the context of on-site (i.e. in-person, on-the-ground) orientations for students.

**Outsource:** Hiring a third party to manage any component(s) or service of a program.

**Over-the-Counter (OTC) Medications:** Medications that anyone can purchase (sometimes with age restrictions) without the need for a physician to facilitate access to the medication via prescription.

**Prescription Medications:** Medications which a licensed medical provider recommends to a patient and are filled by a pharmacist.

**Re-Entry:** Preparing students for returning home, which may include orientations on reverse culture shock, integrating program outcomes, and improving personal goals post-program.

## **RISK MANAGEMENT AND EMERGENCY PROCEDURES TERMS**

In the context of gap year and experiential education, risk management refers to a philosophy and set of practices to approach risks inherent in domestic or global travel and/or wilderness trekking.

**Basic First Aid:** Teaches how to respond to a number of basic emergencies. Online and in-personal curricula typically require 8 hours to complete and include topics such as asthmatic emergencies, anaphylaxis, choking, bleeding, poisoning, stroke, seizure, heart attack, and environmental emergencies. Commonly recognized industry providers include The American Red Cross, The American Heart Association, the National Safety Council, and more.

**CPR:** Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation is defined by the [The American Heart Association](#) as an “emergency lifesaving procedure performed when the heart stops beating.” Trainings typically take up to 4 hours and should include a component of in-person skills demonstration. Certifications must include adult CPR but may also cover children and infants. Topics should include the use of an AED (Automated External Defibrillator), signs of stroke and heart attacks, emergency response systems, and provider safety. Commonly recognized organizations include The American Heart Association, The American Red Cross, and more.

**eCPR:** Emotional CPR is an educational program designed to teach people to assist others through an emotional crisis by three simple steps: C = Connecting, P = emPowering and, R = Revitalizing. eCPR is based on the principles found to be shared by a number of support approaches: trauma-informed care, counseling after disasters, peer support to avoid continuing emotional despair, emotional intelligence, suicide prevention, and cultural attunement. Courses are typically 12 hours and are primarily done virtually.

**Emergency Response Plans:** A plan that typically includes a short and mid-term response to known potential emergencies, as well as preemptive efforts to reduce the likelihood of any emergency. The Emergency Response Plan is more specifically framed for field staff and administrators to respond quickly and effectively to specific event.

**First Aid & Trauma Care:** Core components of each of the below that GYA would look for (i.e. core components of the training's curriculum, number of hours, GYA-accepted providers)

**MHFA:** Mental Health First Aid is a course that teaches how to identify, understand and respond to signs of mental illnesses and substance use disorders. The training gives skills to reach out and provide initial help and support to someone who may be developing a mental health or substance use problem or experiencing a crisis. Courses are typically 7 hours, and have a variety of subspecialties available (e.g., wilderness & remote communities, higher education, youth, etc.).

**PFA:** Psychological First Aid is an evidence-informed modular approach to help people in the immediate aftermath of disaster. Individuals affected by a disaster or traumatic incident, whether survivors, witnesses, or responders to such events, may struggle with or face new challenges following the event. PFA was developed by the National Child Traumatic Stress Network and the National Center for PTSD, with contributions from individuals involved in disaster research and response. Trainings are typically 5 hours and increasingly are available online.

**Public Risk Management Document:** This is typically a 1-2 page publicly oriented document outlining the organization's philosophy for managing emergencies. The document is geared toward prospective participants, their families and other non-professionals, and should NOT be the organization's internal risk management process, but rather more generalized processes and promises that offer reasonable expectations for communication and professionalism.

**Vectors for Disease:** Information about the ways in which a particular disease or illness spreads from person-to-person, animal-to-person, object-to-person, etc. These are important to be aware of to support student decisions, and outline policy adjustments as needed to shifting information on the ground or due to a pandemic.

**WFA:** Wilderness First Aid is typically a 16 hour course that teaches students how to care for patients who are more than one hour away from Emergency Medical Services. All courses include an in-person practicum component and typically cover skills including provider safety, patient assessments, life threatening injuries, wound management, musculoskeletal injury, environmental illnesses, anaphylaxis, shock, and evacuations plans. Commonly recognized providers include NOLS (Wilderness Medicine Institute), Wilderness Medical Associates International, SOLO, and more.

**WFR:** Wilderness First Responder certifications require typically 80 hours of instruction and an in-person practicum training. The course is designed to provide medical care in a backcountry context and typically cover skills such as provider safety, patient assessment, life threatening injuries, spinal injuries, musculoskeletal injury, wound management, environmental injuries, altitude illness, anaphylaxis, diabetes, communicable disease, reproductive health, mental health, drug kits, emergency evacuation procedures, and legal responsibilities. Commonly recognized providers include Wilderness Medicine Institute (NOLS), Wilderness Medical Associates, SOLO, and more.

**Therapy:** The treatment of mental or psychological disorders by psychological means, performed by a mental health specialist.

**Titration Medication:** Slowly weaning off of a medication, typically an antidepressant or psychotropic, that without proper supervision has significant increase risks of suicide and other mental health episodes. GYA strongly discourages changing medications once a program is in process.

**Training:** Training is the process by which an organization prepares staff for the role they'll play (and by which staff can prepare students for the experiences ahead). Training can involve workshops, systems onboarding, technical skills teaching, and experiential methods to ensure that staff are prepared to do their clearly-specified jobs to the best of their abilities.

**Transference:** In the context of gap year education, transference refers to the process of assisting students to integrate the lessons they've learned on a program into their lives post-program. Ideally, students are encouraged to continue learning throughout their lives and to continue reflecting on their gap year experiences. Note, not to be confused with the psychological term of the same name.

**Virtual/Online Program:** A gap year program at least 2 months in length, during which a significant portion, if not all of the curriculum is conducted virtually.

## **TERMS USED IN 2.X.X: FAIR-TRADE LEARNING**

**Fair Trade Learning for Gap Year Education:** The Gap Year Association (GYA) partners with the Community-Based Global Learning Collaborative to use their Fair Trade Learning principles in GYA's Standards of Accreditation. GYA also has a [Fair Trade Learning](#)

[Committee](#), which develops resources that stakeholders in gap year education can use to improve their engagement with community-based organizations or community partner organizations through using FTL principles.

**Community-Based Learning:** Field-based experiential learning with community-based partner organizations, which is ideally mutually beneficial for both students and partner community members. Community-based learning includes guided orientations and reflections with the goal of preparing students with knowledge about the community's values, priorities, existing strengths, culture, etc. Examples include service-learning, volunteering, internships with social impact, and language classes with community members. This conception of community-based learning is strongly influenced by George Kuh's (2008) [research](#).

**Community-Based Partner Organization (CPO):** A typically grassroots community-based organization in the U.S. or outside of the U.S. with its own mission and Theory of Change. These are usually civil society organizations which represent community interests separately from government or the private sector. Examples include non-profit organizations (NGOs), community cooperatives, associations, schools, churches, cultural institutions, and advocacy groups. CPOs partner with gap year program providers to host groups of students when they need volunteer support.

**Community Members:** Those who are involved with the partnership through their connection to a community-based partner organization, association, or neighborhood rather than as gap year provider staff. This may include community-based partner organization staff, host families, and community residents who interact with gap year participants informally.

**Lower-Income Countries/Developing Countries:** Countries with typically less advanced medical facilities, and overall less industrialization than Western European or the United States. Defining these terms poses the challenge to describe and not prescribe, and to move away from centering Europe and the U.S. In previous decades, it was common to use the term "*third world country*," and "Lower-income country" is an improvement to that term. "Developing country" implies one methodology for development and is still widely used although problematic.

**Rubric:** A tool designed to measure competence in a given set of categories.

**Vulnerable Populations:** Vulnerable populations should be identified within each partner community context. Examples may include, but are not limited to: youth, survivors of violence, elders, and migrants/refugees. Gap year students should work within their skill sets and training levels when engaging with vulnerable populations.

### **TERMS USED IN 3.X.X: BACKCOUNTRY/DEVELOPING COUNTRY**

**Backcountry:** Typically more than 2 hours from definitive medical care, such as wilderness environments without close proximity to roads, urgent care, and hospitals. Typically a measure is whether an appendectomy or advanced cardiac life support would be available at an atypical hour (i.e., 2am), within 2 hours of an event.

**Frontcountry:** Typically urban environments with close proximity to roads, running water, urgent care, hospitals, and advanced cardiac care. Access to such care that requires a helicopter is not broadly considered “frontcountry” according to the GYA.

### **TERMS USED IN 4.X.X: INDEPENDENT STUDENT EXPERIENCES**

**Independent Student Experience:** In the 2018 Standards of Accreditation, certification level 4.X.X was called Individual Student Placements. GYA has decided to move away from the term placement. The term placement implies that an organization (usually in an industrialized country) has the power to place a student with a non-governmental organization (NGO) or nonprofit community partner organization (CPO) (usually in less-industrialized country) without the CPO necessarily determining whether or not the student is a good fit for any needed projects. GYA agrees with Omprakash that any engagement with a community-based organization should operate in a similar way to a job application, where the organization is the one to accept the student. A Gap Year Provider can facilitate a student opportunity. However, the partner community-based organization should have the right and agency to say yes or no, depending on their capacity to manage volunteers, on their own goals, and on the willingness of the student to learn first and serve second.

### **TERMS USED IN 5.X.X: PARTNERSHIPS**

**MOU (Memorandum of Understanding):** Instead of a formal contract, an MOU, while it can be but isn’t always signed, outlines the expectations that each defined party has for a given engagement (e.g. a project, a day-long activity, an organizational partnership with a specific purpose, etc.).

**Vetting Process:** A vetting process is an organization’s method for developing and asking key questions to assess the reliability and risk-consideration of a potential or existing third party working with participants (e.g. a homestay, a community-based organization, a SCUBA diving outfitter, a zip lining and rock climbing company).

# GAP YEAR ASSOCIATION



The Official Standards Development Organization as recognized by the  
United States Department of Justice, and the  
United States Federal Trade Commission

**gap year, (noun):** "A semester or year of experiential learning, typically taken after high school and prior to career or post-secondary education, in order to deepen one's practical, professional, and personal awareness."

No two gap years are alike: Intentionality, deliberately expanding one's comfort zones, having a cross-cultural experience, and reflecting on your experiences are critical components to a quality gap year.



## APPLICATION FOR ACCREDITATION - ORGANIZATIONAL DESCRIPTION AND DETAILS

| DESCRIPTION:  | DETAILED INFORMATION: |
|---|-----------------------|
| <i>Organization Name:</i>   |                       |
| <i>Organization Mail Address:</i>   |                       |
| <i>Number of Gap Year Students in the Prior Twelve Months:</i>            |                       |
| <i>Date of Submission:</i>  |                       |
| <i>Organization Contact Person and Info:<br/>(position, email, phone)</i> |                       |
| <i>Digital Signature of Executive:</i>                                    |                       |
| <i>Up to 200 Word Description of Your Program:</i>                        |                       |

## **1.X.X - PHILOSOPHY & PROFESSIONAL ETHICS - required for all organizations**

Every organization that is applying for Accreditation with the Gap Year Association **MUST** complete the Philosophy & Professional Ethics certification. These are basic standards so students are informed, prepared, and appropriate risk-management is considered and active.

### **1.1 - "Organization's pedagogy is congruent with gap year education."**

Gap year education is an active process that involves, among other things, both experiential and reflective elements. Students must be involved in and accountable for their own learning, processes, and growth with a fundamental favor towards natural consequences when appropriate.

Structured activities are designed to engender real successes, failures, uncertainty, learning, and do so with awareness to student safety.

| Indicator   | Possible Evidence of Indicator<br>(these are simply possible examples and do not constitute a comprehensive list)  | In Place | In Process | Not Applicable | Exception Requested |
|---|--|----------|------------|----------------|---------------------|
| 1.1.1 - Organization consciously includes core qualities of "Experiential Education:" Appropriate mentorship that is structured by the organization to promote healthy relationships, focusing on individualized growth and community engagement. <i>(Critical to the development of youth is mentorship. Partially this is a statement about student:staff ratios, but moreso this is about defining the nature of the relationship staff have with students as supportive, interested, and encouraging of learning through mistakes.)</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staff Manual detailing mentorship support tools and expectations</li> <li>• Copy of staff training schedule highlighting mentorship strategies</li> </ul>   |          |            |                |                     |
| 1.1.2 - Organization consciously includes core qualities of "Experiential Education:" Focused reflection with a strong emphasis on student-directed answers. <i>(In order to increase knowledge, develop skills, clarify values, and develop people's capacity to contribute to their communities (as noted by the AEE). At the end of intentional experiences, equal intention must be put into debriefing and reflecting upon what happened.)</i>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staff manual outlining guidelines to prepare students for active role in day-to-day activities</li> <li>• Expectations that outline reflection</li> <li>• Reflection tools for staff or students</li> </ul> |          |            |                |                     |

| Indicator  | Possible Evidence of Indicator<br>(these are simply possible examples and do not constitute a comprehensive list)  | In Place | In Process | Not Applicable | Exception Requested |
|--|--|----------|------------|----------------|---------------------|
| <p>1.1.3 - Organization consciously includes core qualities of "Experiential Education:" Students have an active role in the governance of their experience/program. <i>(Students learn best by doing and receiving the merits of their own efforts - for better or worse. The best way to make sure that students 'own' their experience is if they have a hand in its creation. This might mean booking transportation, leading an initiative, etc.)</i></p>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Expectations that outline self-governance for students as a priority</li> <li>• Staff manual outlining self-governance strategies</li> </ul>  |          |            |                |                     |
| <p>1.1.4 - Organization attempts to challenge students' comfort zones in manageable ways: Students are set up for success and individual capacity is considered. <i>(One of the two most common reasons listed in taking a gap year is a desire to increase one's self awareness. Challenging comfort zones remains a vital element in the definition of a gap year and organizations each have their own unique approaches to such challenges that must consider individual student needs and abilities.)</i></p>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Copy of program planning directives that incorporate such challenges to students comfort zone</li> <li>• Copy of staff manual outlining specific activities designed to challenge comfort zones</li> </ul>  |          |            |                |                     |
| <p>1.1.5 - Organization educates students on the value of seeing things from differing perspectives; exposing students to, and discussing with them, differing world views, opinions, and cultural norms. <i>(Students will be challenged to define their own answers to questions and thus develop a deeper sense of Self. Additionally, in terms of developing an appreciation for global citizenship, it becomes vital to develop tools that will help students see things from differing perspectives. Understanding how to resolve issues with coworkers, strangers, or even other students it is important to attempt to see their perspective.)</i></p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Copy of curriculum that focuses on opposing perspectives education</li> <li>• Copy of staff expectations that mandate world view education</li> <li>• Copy of staff manual that provides guidelines or directives focused on opposing perspectives education</li> </ul> |          |            |                |                     |

| Indicator  | Possible Evidence of Indicator<br>(these are simply possible examples and do not constitute a comprehensive list)  | In Place | In Process | Not Applicable | Exception Requested |
|--|--|----------|------------|----------------|---------------------|
| <p>1.1.6 - Organization communicates a commitment to inclusivity and, within the organization’s Essential Eligibility Criteria, welcomes participants of diverse backgrounds and perspectives. <i>(Some examples include, but are not limited to: political beliefs, socio-economic status, different physical abilities, race, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, etc. An environment that fosters respect, tolerance and recognizes the incredible contribution of diversity is an essential component for uplifting our shared-humanity. Where appropriate, special consideration for safety (eg, LGBTQ in Uganda), should be discussed in educational terms as a concern, but not excluded from participation.)</i></p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Inclusivity statement published on website</li> <li>• Policy on bullying</li> <li>• Staff manual or trainings on fostering inclusivity among participants and/or addressing bullying</li> </ul> |          |            |                |                     |

**1.2 - “Do what you say you’ll do & be public about it.”**

All marketing and enrollment material is reviewed and updated on an ongoing basis in order to ensure its accuracy and ease of understanding. Materials don’t mislead nor misrepresent any experiences students will be exposed to and are clear about what an ‘appropriate student’ is for their organization’s programs. Policies and marketing materials are unambiguous, deliberate, and publicly available.

| Indicator  | Possible Evidence of Indicator   | In | In | Not | Exce |
|--|--|----|----|-----|------|
| <p>1.2.1 - Policies about student behavior must be clear and include the typical process for escalating disciplinary responses. Policies must include at minimum expectations about:</p> <p>(A) Interpersonal behavior (i.e., bullying, violence),</p> <p>(B) Alcohol &amp; drug use (e.g., prescription, street, tobacco/vaping),</p> <p>(C) Sexual relationships (internal/external to the program as well as where relevant, for minors).</p> <p><i>(It is vital for students to have clear expectations while they are on program to avoid surprises and support positive outcomes. This starts prior to the enrollment process and is thus public. Note that GYA does not take a stand on relationships between staff members.)</i></p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Public list of policies for students and how they are ‘public’</li> <li>• Public URL</li> <li>• Brochure</li> <li>• General program / organization information packet and description of its public availability</li> </ul> |    |    |     |      |

| Indicator   | Possible Evidence of Indicator   | In | In | Not | Exce |
|---|--|----|----|-----|------|
| <p>1.2.2 - Organization emphasizes publicly that students must choose to participate: mandates by parents, court, or otherwise are not allowed. <i>(While many students can benefit from a gap year, those that are required to join a program inevitably will change the dynamic of any experience. Parents directing students towards programs should be counseled against student-participation unless students adequately convey their own personal desire to join.)</i></p>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Public URL</li> <li>• Brochure</li> <li>• Public list of guidelines for admission</li> </ul>  |    |    |     |      |
| <p>1.2.3 - Organization seeks to improve its inclusion and equity efforts with a publicly available plan for both, and clear targets for accountability. <i>(The plan should recognize the current accomplishments of the organization and focus on efforts that can be improved in programming, staff hiring, marketing, financial aid, and partnerships. Inclusion represents broad student perspectives and life-experiences, such as racial differences, political differences, LGBTQ, ADA, etc.. Equity represents additional financial aid resources that might make the gap year more accessible.)</i></p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Public URL showing the Strategic plan</li> </ul>  |    |    |     |      |
| <p>1.2.4 - Organization has clear policies about existing student prescription medication. <i>(Students who forget to take, or lose/damage their prescription medications may put themselves or others at risk. Be clear about where responsibilities lay and the level of self-management expected of prospective students. Who holds the meds? Who is responsible for maintaining correct dosage?)</i></p>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Public URL</li> <li>• Public list of guidelines for admission</li> <li>• Public list of policies for students and how they are 'public'</li> <li>• General program / organization information packet and description</li> </ul> |    |    |     |      |

| Indicator  | Possible Evidence of Indicator   | In | In | Not | Exce |
|--|--|----|----|-----|------|
| <p>1.2.5 - Organization has a clear and publicly available Essential Eligibility Criteria (EEC) that clearly communicates minimum fit for students. <i>(EEC are vital to clearly explain what is needed for each student to complete the established itinerary, particularly with attention to relevant medical history, recent therapeutic history, and the diverse mental health needs of each student and the program's resources to support those. Specific to mental health, programs should be transparent about their capacity to serve students who require regular/on-site/in-field therapy and about the scope of staff training. <a href="#">NOLS Example</a>)</i></p>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Public URL</li> <li>• Copy of admissions criteria highlighting where this is publicly stated</li> </ul> |    |    |     |      |
| <p>1.2.6 - Organization clearly communicates - at least prior to formal acceptance - any paid commissions to any student in whose name they are referred, including the recipient and the amounts paid. Furthermore, the organization agrees to not increase student fees to account for commissions paid. <i>(While accepting commissions is an organizational decision, clearly, fit is paramount in a successful gap year and money can easily become part of a reward system that confuses motives, and colors perceptions. Staff sales incentives, and alumni referral programs are excluded from this standard. No double dipping would be allowed thus fee-for-service referrals cannot also take a commission.</i></p> <p>Example language might be: "To support transparency and trust, we are required to let you know that the pathway you came to us was through xxxxxx @ yyyyyy agency and they are paid through a commission, which in this case is x\$. Referrals that come through yyyyyy usually do great with us and we're thrilled that you have such a good understanding of what you're getting into with us. We're disclosing this to recognize that money can sometimes complicate things and we think it's important to have a clean start with no confusion as you launch on this experience.")</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Public URL</li> <li>• Brochure</li> </ul>   |    |    |     |      |

| Indicator   | Possible Evidence of Indicator  | In | In | Not | Exce |
|---|---|----|----|-----|------|
| <p>1.2.7 - Organization must have a clear pandemic vaccination and travel testing policy including accepting or denying any medical and/or religious exemptions for participants and classroom &amp; field staff. <i>(On the heels of COVID-19 organizations must be proactive for student, classroom/field staff, and local health considerations.)</i></p>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Pandemic policies published and updated on Organizational websites</i></li> <li>• <i>Required submission of vaccination records and/or testing results</i></li> <li>• <i>Participant enrollment and staff agreement inclusions</i></li> </ul> |    |    |     |      |
| <p>1.2.8 - Organization is transparent about typical staff profile emphasizing qualifications, certifications, and accomplishments. <i>(Staff who administer the organization and especially those Direct Supervision Staff give a window into the type of experience the organization is facilitating, as well as supports the organization to build rapport and trust with families.)</i></p>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Brochure</i></li> <li>• <i>Public profiles of current staff</i></li> <li>• <i>General program / organization information packet and description of its public use</i></li> </ul>  |    |    |     |      |
| <p>1.2.9 - Organization is clear about finances: including program costs, anticipated additional charges, and a clear refund policy. <i>(Finances hit at the heart of establishing trust and no one wants to feel blind-sided with them. This means clearly anticipated costs. Refund policies must be clearly stated to ensure financial accountability.)</i></p>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Public URL</i></li> <li>• <i>Brochure</i></li> <li>• <i>General program / organization information packet and description of its public use</i></li> </ul>  |    |    |     |      |
| <p>1.2.10 - "Safe," "always," "guarantee" are not used to suggest or promise as much in any materials. <i>(There are legal complications in using unrehearsed or promissory language that creates an implied expectation about things that are ultimately out of the organization's control. Organizations do themselves a favor to accurately represent risks as well as clarify that sometimes bad things happen despite the best preparation.)</i></p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Organization's policies discussing care in word choice</i></li> <li>• <i>Written letter of commitment from the Executive Director</i></li> <li>• <i>Submitted collateral by the organization</i></li> </ul>                                   |    |    |     |      |
| <p>1.2.11 - Organization is transparent with students, parents, and family about expected frequency and methods of communication for the duration of the program. <i>(Because a student's experience necessarily involves their family, it is important to be clear about the expected methods and frequency of on-program communication.)</i></p>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Public URL</i></li> <li>• <i>Brochure</i></li> <li>• <i>General program / organization information packet and description of its public use</i></li> </ul>  |    |    |     |      |

| Indicator   | Possible Evidence of Indicator  | In | In | Not | Exce |
|---|---|----|----|-----|------|
| 1.2.12 - Organization communicates a commitment to environmental sustainability through a public strategic plan that takes steps to proactively address impacts. <i>(The plan should recognize the current accomplishments of the organization and focus on efforts that can be improved in areas such as carbon dioxide, transportation, materials, curricula, and the program’s influence on living and life-supporting systems.)</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Public URL showing the Strategic plan</li> </ul> |    |    |     |      |

**1.3 - “Organization must abide by GYA’s principles for strong governance.”**

All organization staff should strive to represent a professional educational organization with integrity. Safety and student education should be the priority above all other considerations, however, to achieve the best in safety standards, the organization must be accordingly run and governed.

| Indicator   | Possible Evidence of Indicator<br><i>(these are simply possible examples and do not constitute a comprehensive list)</i>   | In Place | In Process | Not Applicable | Exception Requested |
|---|--|----------|------------|----------------|---------------------|
| 1.3.1 - Organization is adequately insured for all proposed activities (minimally USD \$2million), properly registered, and submits all mandated reports in a timely and responsible fashion. <i>(Having sufficient insurance, being properly registered, and handling the business of your organization responsibly is a protection to all gap year students and the organization itself.)</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Copies of: local, state, or federal registration (corp, llc, 501.c.3, etc.), 990s,</li> <li>Current liability insurance</li> <li>Copy of additionally encouraged insurance (such as DAN for SCUBA)</li> </ul> |          |            |                |                     |



| Indicator   | Possible Evidence of Indicator<br>(these are simply possible examples and do not constitute a comprehensive list)   | In Place | In Process | Not Applicable | Exception Requested |
|---|---|----------|------------|----------------|---------------------|
| <p>1.3.2 - Organization's Emergency Response Plan has clear steps on how to handle an emergency including death. This plan should address, at minimum, the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(A) Field staff having sufficient funds (cards and/or cash) for short-term emergency expenses</li> <li>(B) Planning for the substantial and long-term expense for a quality emergency response</li> <li>(C) Handling of current students / group, including emergency logistics and ongoing health and wellbeing</li> <li>(D) Real-time communication with family and post-event debriefing and support</li> <li>(E) Physical, emotional, and logistical support for staff</li> <li>(F) Repatriation of remains / insurance / communication with local government and if needed, State Department</li> <li>(G) Detailing protocols for a missing student including contacting HQ, working with any local agencies, supporting local staff and individual students and other group members</li> </ul> <p><i>(A good Emergency Response Plan should include specific roles for all parties, addressing all groups [parents, students, staff, affected students/staff, media, GYA, etc.]. It should identify when the plan is put into effect and the principal decision-maker for each step when one is called for. It also should include planning for the costs, both short and long term for a quality emergency response [e.g. funds to transport one support staff to any operating area for each of five concurrent programs or to purchase emergency travel for an entire groups and/or clearly detailed travel insurance coverage)</i></p> | <p>Field-relevance:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Organization's policies discussing maintenance of financial cushion</li> <li>• Field budget from a recent program showing extra 'emergency' funds</li> </ul> <p>Office-relevance:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Organization's policies discussing maintenance of financial cushion</li> <li>• Organization's emergency protocols</li> <li>• Written letter of commitment from the Executive Director</li> <li>• Balance statement from bank accounts</li> <li>• Names and locations of contacts who can intervene</li> <li>• Documents for a Business Line of Credit including available credit</li> </ul> |          |            |                |                     |

| Indicator  | Possible Evidence of Indicator<br>(these are simply possible examples and do not constitute a comprehensive list)   | In Place | In Process | Not Applicable | Exception Requested |
|--|---|----------|------------|----------------|---------------------|
| <p>1.3.3 - Every student (or their legal guardian if minors), signs medical history forms disclosing current medications and allergies, as well as relevant psychological diagnoses, relevant history of hospitalization, and any relevant physical disabilities, in alignment with the organization's EEC. <i>(In order to best protect each student, the organization must know relevant student needs in advance. Preparation and information are a minimum for responsible care. Medical history forms should be specific to program needs and not used to unnecessarily exclude students.)</i></p>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Copy of medical history form</li> <li>• Copy of deadline for submission of all required forms</li> <li>• Explanation of organization's methods for tracking and keeping copies of all submitted forms</li> </ul>   |          |            |                |                     |
| <p>1.3.4 - Prior to departure, every student (or their legal guardian if minors), sign release &amp; waiver forms. <i>(Having clear forms helps ensure all parties know the true risks inherent to the program, and helps them make informed decisions to participate. GYA recommends being clear about potential risks in any paperwork.)</i></p>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Copy of release and waiver form</li> <li>• Explanation of organization's methods for tracking and keeping copies of all submitted forms</li> </ul>   |          |            |                |                     |
| <p>1.3.5 - Organization has formalized relationships with qualified experts - who are not the student's clinician - requiring a 24-hour or less response time, to consult during emergencies and to assess the fitness of a student or staff to continue participation for:</p> <p>(A) Medical concerns (at minimum a certified Registered Nurse or, for front-country, domestic settings, calling emergency services)</p> <p>(B) Mental health concerns (at minimum a licensed clinician familiar with the nature of the program)</p> <p><i>(Having these resources on-call provides professional guidance in determining urgency, directing treatment, and recommending evacuation. The ultimate decision to temporarily or permanently remove a student rests with the gap year organization and thus relying on a student's clinician is not allowed.)</i></p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Policy for staff to call local 911-equivalent for medical advice and action</li> <li>• Contract with qualified expert detailing: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Name of expert</li> <li>- Term of contract</li> <li>- Required qualifications / licensure</li> <li>- Expectation for response times, &amp;</li> <li>- Expectation for coverage if time away</li> </ul> </li> </ul> |          |            |                |                     |

| Indicator  | Possible Evidence of Indicator<br>(these are simply possible examples and do not constitute a comprehensive list)   | In Place | In Process | Not Applicable | Exception Requested |
|--|---|----------|------------|----------------|---------------------|
| 1.3.6 - Organization abides by all local laws wherever students or staff are present. <i>(Familiarity with local laws is necessary to ensure the students and the organization aren't unintentionally put in harms way nor at risk for potential local legal issues, including prison.)</i>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Organization's policies discussing compliance with all local laws</li> <li>• Staff resource educating about local laws</li> </ul>  |          |            |                |                     |
| 1.3.7 - Any safety equipment used by students or staff are kept in sound condition, appropriately used, checked prior to use, and sufficient to accommodate different students (i.e., sized correctly). <i>(Safety equipment must be kept in good working order and appropriate to the students and staff using it or the utility of the equipment meant to minimize the risk to students will not serve its purpose.)</i>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Organization's policies discussing maintenance of equipment and supply needs/standards</li> <li>• Name and contact information of person responsible for safety equipment</li> </ul> |          |            |                |                     |
| 1.3.8 - Organization must have a clear Crisis Communication Plan. <i>(For small organizations, GYA can be a part of the Plan. Emergency response plans are a critical first step, but in a true crisis, expectations for communication with outside stakeholders can interfere with the actual ability to best preserve life. A good Crisis Communication Plan should include proactive steps to communicate with parents, other programs in the "field", local partners, and media sources. It should also consider decision making processes and authorized speakers on behalf of the organization. See <a href="https://today.duke.edu/showcase/emergency_plan/">https://today.duke.edu/showcase/emergency_plan/</a> for an example.)</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Crisis Communication Plan or flowchart</li> </ul>  |          |            |                |                     |
| 1.3.9 - Organization must share upon request a Risk Management Document or web page with any interested party. <i>(This should NOT be the full risk management plan for proprietary and liability concerns, however, it must speak intelligently of what a family can broadly expect in the event of a crisis.)</i>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Template or .pdf or web page of a risk management outline</li> </ul>   |          |            |                |                     |

| <i>Indicator</i>  | <i>Possible Evidence of Indicator<br/>(these are simply possible examples and do not constitute a comprehensive list)</i>   | <i>In Place</i> | <i>In Process</i> | <i>Not Applicable</i> | <i>Exception Requested</i> |
|---|---|-----------------|-------------------|-----------------------|----------------------------|
| <p>1.3.10 - Organization is clear about when students are under its duty of care and when they are not. Clear program start- and end-dates and times are published, identifying any limitations or exclusions. <i>(A common success for any program is when a student decides to stay and explore independently post-program. In these, and many other cases, being able to communicate program completion (through paperwork, contracts, completion certificates, etc.), is a vital part towards safeguarding the organization and any confusion about when program staff responsibilities are completed.)</i></p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>• Paperwork showing start and finish dates and times that are program-specific</i></li> <li><i>• Certificate of completion and instructions for when to give</i></li> </ul> |                 |                   |                       |                            |

#### 1.4 - "Organization upholds the spirit of Federal standards for higher education."

Universities, in order to receive funding and ensure compliance with Federal agencies, must abide by reasonable practices. Given the relationship gap years have (and hope to continue) with universities, such standards are in every organization's best interest to pave the way for gap years' inclusion in Federal education benefits.

| Indicator  | Possible Evidence of Indicator<br>(these are simply possible examples and do not constitute a comprehensive list)   | In Place | In Process | Not Applicable | Exception Requested |
|--|---|----------|------------|----------------|---------------------|
| <p>1.4.1 - Staff do not share confidential information about specific students without either the express permission of the student, or to prevent a clear or immediate danger to a person or persons (ie, FERPA, HIPAA, GDPR). <i>(Sharing any students' information creates many consequences and should only be done with their prior permission, or if a clear or immediate danger is posed. This explicitly includes information-sharing with parents. Minor children don't have the same legal right to privacy, however, every effort should be made to treat them as adults whenever immediate safety is not a concern.)</i></p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Copy of policy detailing staff disclosure of student details for Office staff and Field staff</li> <li>• Policy of organization to educate about FERPA and keep student privacy</li> </ul> |          |            |                |                     |
| <p>1.4.2 - The organization works proactively and supports a trauma-informed approach to any report of sexual misconduct. (ie, Title IX &amp; VAWA). <i>(No one should ever be assaulted, but when it occurs, each organization has an obligation to respect the needs, rights, and privacy, of the victim, while also striving to protect other students from potential or known assailants.)</i></p>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Copy of policy detailing organization's compliance of student record confidentiality</li> </ul>  |          |            |                |                     |

#### 1.5 - "Organization prepares student appropriately."

Despite the best training for staff and solid organizational protocols, at the end of the day students themselves are their own best resources for safety. A comprehensive orientation remains the best way to teach a student to make safety-conscious and healthy decisions for themselves.

| Indicator  | Possible Evidence of Indicator<br>(these are simply possible examples and not a comprehensive list)   | In Place | In Process | Not Applicable | Exception Requested |
|--|---|----------|------------|----------------|---------------------|
| <p>1.5.1 - Provides on-site program orientation, started and finished within 96 hours of program beginning, that includes each of the following, with subsequent reviews/updates for each new program site and activity:</p> <p>(A) Focuses on teaching students experientially about “risk management awareness” and problem solving.</p> <p>(B) Educates students about “bystander awareness” for at least BOTH,</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Sexual assault and</li> <li>2. Drug overdose prevention</li> </ol> <p>(C) Re-establishes program policies and provides EXPLANATIONS meant to enroll students in the reasoning for each policy</p> <p>(D) Staff facilitates follow-up with students about any potentially undisclosed medical concerns, specifically discouraging titration of prescription medications without a doctor</p> <p>(E) Addresses EACH of the following where relevant: illness, disease (HIV &amp; other regional communicable diseases, etc.), hygiene, working and living with others (within the group and cross-culturally), personal medical issues (allergies, medication, etc.), mental health emergencies, self-harm/suicidal ideation, day/night safety, terrorist attacks, natural disasters (floods, hurricanes, earthquakes, etc.), crime (sexual assault, assault, theft, etc.), local laws, hydration &amp; potability, food-borne illness &amp; safety, local flora &amp; fauna safety, road safety, drowning, local fire safety, environmental hazards (lightening, etc.), hypothermia &amp; heat stroke, homestays, etc.</p> <p>(F) Activity-specific risk briefings (e.g., climbing, new city, bus trip, etc.).</p> <p><i>(Ultimately, students are their own best safety-sponsors, but only if they are informed about, frequently reminded of, and meaningfully understand relevant risks and expectations. On-site is vital because until the students are present in the newness of the program environment, it is hard for them to appreciate how important these topics are.)</i></p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Copy of the staff policies detailing orientation expectations</li> <li>• Copy of an orientation outline</li> <li>• Copy of instruction used to experientially instruct students about risk management awareness and problem solving</li> <li>• Signed copy of program policies that students have re-initialed from an orientation</li> <li>• Copy of the staff policy detailing timeline and what must be covered during orientation</li> </ul> |          |            |                |                     |

| Indicator   | Possible Evidence of Indicator<br>(these are simply possible examples and not a comprehensive list)  | In Place | In Process | Not Applicable | Exception Requested |
|---|--|----------|------------|----------------|---------------------|
| <p>1.5.2 - Written welcome information includes details on each of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A) Program policies,</li> <li>B) Housing,</li> <li>C) Local environmental concerns,</li> <li>D) Transportation,</li> <li>E) Vaccinations (based on CDC guidelines),</li> <li>F) Potential social challenges (personal, group, cultural),</li> <li>G) Local safety/security concerns,</li> <li>H) Packing list specific to the student's program.</li> </ul> <p><i>(Different people learn in different methods, so while it's important to address details over the phone and 'on the ground', it's also vital to have these same details available for reference in print.)</i></p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Program-specific welcome packet detailing the concerns listed</li> <li>• Student web-page detailing the concerns listed</li> </ul>  |          |            |                |                     |
| <p>1.5.3 - Organization has appropriate process for re-entry that is focused on easing the transition home and maximizing the longterm integration of lessons learned. <i>(These experiences inevitably will transform a student's life, but even more so with a proper contextualization of the experience. Taking time to prepare a student for 'normal' life or 'reverse culture shock' are critical towards their longterm success and the integration of lessons learned.)</i></p>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Copy of curriculum used in debriefing program</li> <li>• Handouts or materials to address re-entry preparation and how they are used</li> <li>• Written letter describing the steps taken to address re-integration shock post-program</li> </ul> |          |            |                |                     |

### 1.6 - "Organization has clear policies about program-provided transportation."

Understanding that different methods of transportation are critical to the overall experience of a good gap year, transportation remains a mostly preventable risk. Road transportation is the most common cause of fatalities and thus should merit a significant preventative effort.

| Indicator   | Possible Evidence of Indicator<br>(these are simply possible examples and do not constitute a comprehensive list) | In Place | In Process | Not Applicable | Exception Requested |
|---|---|----------|------------|----------------|---------------------|
| 1.6.1 - For students, being a passenger or driver of a motorcycle, ATV, or quads, is not allowed. <i>(In the Peace Corps anyone riding a motorcycle is automatically expelled even in the eleventh hour. Not applicable for staff.)</i>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Copy of policy detailing motorcycle use</li> </ul>                       |          |            |                |                     |
| 1.6.2 - Organization must have a policy in place describing appropriate use of any motorized recreational vehicles (eg, scooters, jet skis, ebikes, segues, hover boards, etc.). <i>(Given the breadth of recreational vehicles now available, and their high speeds with road and other hazards, each organization must provide guidance based on their own risk tolerance and educational value.)</i>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Copy of policy</li> </ul>  |          |            |                |                     |
| 1.6.3 - Seatbelt safety is adequately considered prior to any embarkation: local laws are paid attention to, and any decision to ride in a vehicle without seatbelts is made consciously and as part of a planned and researched activity. If available, seatbelts must be worn at all times. <i>(Seatbelts remain a singular, controllable way to mitigate the most severe risks in a moving vehicle. Any desire to not use them should be done with great consideration, and with respect to local laws.)</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Copy of policy</li> </ul>  |          |            |                |                     |



| Indicator   | Possible Evidence of Indicator<br>(these are simply possible examples and do not constitute a comprehensive list)  | In Place | In Process | Not Applicable | Exception Requested |
|---|--|----------|------------|----------------|---------------------|
| <p>1.6.4 - Any public transportation (ie, city busses, tuktuks, taxis, etc.) in which students are passengers must be vetted according to a pre-departure checklist that includes minimally a visual check for obvious safety concerns (such as flat tires &amp; nonfunctioning lights), and route hazards. Safety briefings should include students and emphasize methods to minimize risk that includes provisions for:</p> <p>(A) Reasonable attempts to assess the driver’s fitness for safe vehicle operation, such as through questions and dialogue checking for reasonable and assertive responses</p> <p>(B) The maximum number of occupants exceeding the vehicle’s safety specs, preferably where every student has a proper berth,</p> <p>(C) Daylight travel is standard, and exceptions should be well-considered.</p> <p><i>(Public transportation has inherent educational and cultural value, but efforts to assess risk and smartly determine whether to proceed require planning and process.)</i></p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A copy of the predeparture checklist</li> <li>• A copy of the public transportation policy</li> </ul>   |          |            |                |                     |
| <p>1.6.5 - Any transportation that is program-managed in which students are passengers must be vetted by staff according to a pre-departure checklist that includes at least the following (* refer to section 5.2.x for hired transportation):</p> <p>(A) Have potential route-hazards been researched?</p> <p>(B) Vehicle is checked for key safety considerations such as fluids, light functionality, tire tread and pressure, critical safety equipment, proper weight distribution (ie, trailers, secured loads, etc).</p> <p><i>(Reasonable checks are made on the ground with respect to vehicle safety and any recent security issues / road status, and special consideration for off-limit regions of the country.)</i></p>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staff driving vehicle check list</li> <li>• Staff policies detailing minimum training standards</li> <li>• Copy of vehicle insurance certificate and coverage</li> <li>• Copy of policy on when seatbelts are used and when they are not</li> <li>• Employee Manual section with a checklist for road travel</li> <li>• Expectations section for staff that outlines road travel checklist</li> </ul> |          |            |                |                     |

| Indicator  | Possible Evidence of Indicator<br>(these are simply possible examples and do not constitute a comprehensive list)        | In Place | In Process | Not Applicable | Exception Requested |
|--|--|----------|------------|----------------|---------------------|
| <p>1.6.6 - Organization has a policy with clear expectations for staff drivers, focused on safety and fitness for driving students, that should at least meet USDOT standards and must include the following: (* refer to section 5.2.x for hired transportation):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(A) Maximum number of hours driving per day</li> <li>(B) Minimum required breaks from driving</li> <li>(C) Driver is not fatigued; substance and alertness requirements are well established</li> <li>(D) Driver is free from distractions (ie, cell phones) and alert</li> <li>(E) Driver is appropriately licensed and insured to operate the vehicle</li> <li>(F) Daylight travel is standard, and exceptions to this should be well-considered</li> <li>(G) Driver is trained to operate vehicles according to the program's needs and student safety</li> </ul> <p><i>(USDOT standards are: 10-hour maximum driving after 8 consecutive hours off duty; 70 hour driving limit within 8 consecutive days. The Federal Government has created a few clear limits around driving before the 'human element' begins to have a negative impact.)</i></p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Copy of Staff policy detailing rest and maximum driving expectations</li> </ul> |          |            |                |                     |

### 1.7 - "Organization has clear process for hiring and staffing."

Hiring the right people is arguably the most important effort for any well-run organization. Doing so inadequately both endangers the organization and the students. Staff should be well-qualified, which includes but is not limited to: ability to self-assess, take feedback, appropriately handle foreseeable medical emergencies, handle challenging or difficult students, be familiar with program and location-specifics, possess relevant technical skills, etc. GYA considers "staff" as any person, directly receiving payment from the GYA Member Program, and responsible for student safety.

| Indicator   | Possible Evidence of Indicator<br>(these are simply possible examples and do not constitute a comprehensive list)  | In Place | In Process | Not Applicable | Exception Requested |
|---|--|----------|------------|----------------|---------------------|
| <p>1.7.1 - The hiring and employment process follows employment law. <i>(The organization must adhere to all national, and local laws with regard to both domestic and international employees, and should recognize common practices in Human Resources especially with care to protected classes. Hiring international staff requires special considerations such as potential work visa, alternative methods for performing background checks, etc. Read here for <a href="#">helpful information on U.S. hiring law.</a>)</i></p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Outline of hiring process including dos and don'ts for questions, etc.</li> <li>• Copy of staff interview template</li> <li>• Written letter of commitment from the Executive Director</li> </ul>         |          |            |                |                     |
| <p>1.7.2 - Staff are provided with access to medical, and evacuation insurance, and educated about options for longterm care such as might result from a chronic back injury, or paralysis - while on program. <i>(Staff that feel safe and supported are better able to do their jobs. Additional long-term support through workers compensation or alternative insurance in the event of an accident provides securities for the staff.)</i></p>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Copy of Workers' Compensation Insurance listing field staff</li> <li>• Copy of staff contract with insurance details</li> <li>• Copy of organization policy for hiring independent contractors</li> </ul> |          |            |                |                     |

| Indicator  | Possible Evidence of Indicator<br>(these are simply possible examples and do not constitute a comprehensive list)  | In Place | In Process | Not Applicable | Exception Requested |
|--|--|----------|------------|----------------|---------------------|
| <p>1.7.3 - Staff have clearly articulated process for redress of professional grievances that is timely and free from retaliation. Reporting processes must have a written component and include options for reporting concerns that are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(A) Anonymous,</li> <li>(B) To a direct-report supervisor,</li> <li>(C) To a Board, Council, and/or Owner,</li> <li>(D) To <a href="#">GYA's professional complaint form</a>.</li> </ul> <p><i>(Treating staff with respect only improves their experience and thus that of their students. Creating a strong process for addressing grievances involves creating a culture of tolerance around sharing, but also represents a safety net from lawsuits.)</i></p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Copy of protocols for staff grievances</li> <li>• List of person in charge of dealing with staff grievances</li> <li>• Staff / Employee Handbook</li> <li>• Copy of previous staff grievance and how it was addressed</li> </ul>  |          |            |                |                     |
| <p>1.7.4 - Organization clearly outlines expectations for staff either through a Job Description, a Contract, and/or a Scope of Work. <i>(Staff, and humans in general, succeed best when they know what is expected of them. Clear expectations and well-articulated responsibilities allow staff to be grounded and to succeed in the roles and responsibilities outlined for them. Out of respect for everyone involved, if changes/additions are to be made to a job description, it's best to make sure that everyone is on the same page.)</i></p>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Copy of staff handbook</li> <li>• Copy of job expectations method used by organization</li> </ul>   |          |            |                |                     |
| <p>1.7.5 - Staff have understanding of relevant cultural norms and how to navigate them with students. <i>(In every gap year there is some form of cultural navigation - whether from New York city to Katrina relief or from Colorado to Turkey. In every case, staff should have a strong understanding of the cultural norms to safely chaperone students through the intricacies of navigating cultural differences. These skills have direct benefits in college and in the workforce and thus represent a compelling reason for students to take a gap year.)</i></p>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Copy of hiring guidelines</li> <li>• List of expectations for staff to know specifically re. cultural norms</li> <li>• List of supportive educational materials for staff to read prior to departure</li> <li>• Copy of staff training materials that discuss navigating cultural norms while on program</li> </ul> |          |            |                |                     |

| Indicator   | Possible Evidence of Indicator<br>(these are simply possible examples and do not constitute a comprehensive list)   | In Place | In Process | Not Applicable | Exception Requested |
|---|---|----------|------------|----------------|---------------------|
| <p>1.7.6 - When available, staff must have a background check that at least checks the national sex offender registry and national criminal database. For those that cannot have a background check (ie, international staff) similar efforts should be made to check for sex offenses and criminality, with at least three relevant professional references in every case. <i>(Working with young adults while putting them in de facto uncomfortable situations means they will rely on staff in a very significant way. Even though it is rare that a relevant history will show on a background check, it's also critical that if it does not, the organization be able to say they did their due diligence.)</i></p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Copy of contract with background check agency</li> <li>• Copy of organization policy to get references from all potential staff</li> <li>• Copy of reference check form with instructions</li> </ul> |          |            |                |                     |
| <p>1.7.7 - Staff are interviewed in-person or virtually so. <i>(Hiring staff that interact with students, parents, or other professionals is far too important to do with only a phone call or email. In this day and age, there are too many options for a virtual meeting to warrant not having one. e.g., Zoom, Skype, Google Chat, etc.)</i></p>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Copy of interview sheet for organization HR</li> <li>• Copy of interview guidelines for prospective staff</li> <li>• Name and contact information of person in charge of interviewing</li> </ul>     |          |            |                |                     |

**1.8 - "Staff have clear policy expectations, are regularly and adequately trained, and current on any certifications."**

"Staff" are hired to work directly with students. This may represent a group leader, a remote supervisor doing regular check-ins, or a local independent contractor who is in charge of the day-to-day safety of the students. Direct Supervision Staff represent the greatest safety mechanism in working with students. They must be regularly trained, respect the fundamental worth of all people regardless of personal differences, and should work within the scope of their training.

| Indicator  | Possible Evidence of Indicator<br>(these are simply possible examples and do not constitute a comprehensive list)  | In Place | In Process | Not Applicable | Exception Requested |
|--|--|----------|------------|----------------|---------------------|
| <p>1.8.1 - Staff have a minimum and current certification of First Aid/CPR, although more is preferred. <i>(Even in front-country settings with ready access to emergency services, first-aid/CPR certifications are an expectation. Organizations that go "backcountry" have a higher responsibility to provide a WFA or, preferably, a WFR, which is found in section 3 of the Standards.)</i></p>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Copy of training / incentives that organization sponsors to ensure staff compliance</li> </ul>  |          |            |                |                     |
| <p>1.8.2 - Staff are experienced and/or trained sufficient to lead any activity that isn't being outsourced to a partner organization. <i>(Staff have specific training or certification if leading the following:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Camping (fire safety, food safety, wildlife, equipment maintenance, evacuation protocols, etc.)</i></li> <li>• <i>Backpacking / Hiking</i></li> <li>• <i>Climbing</i></li> <li>• <i>Biking (touring, mountain, road, commuting, helmets, etc. )</i></li> <li>• <i>Caving / Spelunking</i></li> <li>• <i>Horseback Riding / Working with Pack Animals</i></li> <li>• <i>Snow Sports (Skiing, Snowboarding, Avalanche, etc.)</i></li> <li>• <i>Ropes Courses (High and Low Challenge Courses)</i></li> <li>• <i>Sailing</i></li> <li>• <i>Tree Climbing</i></li> <li>• <i>Water sports (canoeing, boating, rafting, kayaking, SCUBA, etc.)</i></li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>List of typical activities on program and certification requirements to do so</i></li> <li>• <i>Organizational protocol / policy to determine whether staff can lead certain activities or if they need to be outsourced</i></li> <li>• <i>Written letter of commitment from the Executive Director</i></li> </ul> |          |            |                |                     |

| Indicator   | Possible Evidence of Indicator<br>(these are simply possible examples and do not constitute a comprehensive list)  | In Place | In Process | Not Applicable | Exception Requested |
|---|--|----------|------------|----------------|---------------------|
| <p>1.8.3 - Policies support the sustainability of staff (e.g., time off, adequate co-leaders, professional development opportunities, etc.).<br/><i>(Staff who are well-rested and strongly supported are better able to do their job. Additionally, the institutional knowledge of a veteran staff is in everyone's interest.)</i></p>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Copy of staff training/manual that emphasizes staff care</li> <li>• Organizational policy that discusses staff support</li> </ul>   |          |            |                |                     |
| <p>1.8.4 - Staff must provide resources for students' basic needs including physical (medical, food, water, shelter) and mental health.<br/><i>(In order to do the real work on a gap year we must be intentional about students' basic needs. Teaching them what healthy food, clean water, and emotional health looks like is often more useful in their lives than many of their experiences. Unless there is a specific and intentional experience such as a walkabout or a fast from food, this standard should be considered second only to immediate physical safety.)</i></p>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Copy of policy that requires staff to ensure students basic needs</li> <li>• Copy of resources for staff to support students' basic needs</li> <li>• Copy of staff training that addresses mental and emotional health</li> <li>• Copy of policy that outlines regular staff interaction with students</li> </ul> |          |            |                |                     |
| <p>1.8.5 - Staff are trained for and have clear policies against any romantic or sexual relationship with a student. Staff training should address process, sexual misconduct topics such as power differentials with students, how to redirect any student advances, creating appropriate boundaries, and guidelines for post-program interactions with an eye toward professionalism.<br/><i>(While these should seem obvious, it must be clearly stated. For post-program staff-student interactions, organizations should consider what liability they may be accepting, and their guidelines should articulate expectations and the timeline for, at minimum, social interactions, drinking/drug use, intimate relationships, and travel to prevent confusion and recognize the historical student-educator relationship.)</i></p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Copy of policy or expectation</li> <li>• Staff contract with these points highlighted</li> </ul>  |          |            |                |                     |

| Indicator  | Possible Evidence of Indicator<br>(these are simply possible examples and do not constitute a comprehensive list)  | In Place | In Process | Not Applicable | Exception Requested |
|--|--|----------|------------|----------------|---------------------|
| <p>1.8.6 - Organization must assess the program for the following risks and emergencies and design a management plan in advance of student arrivals:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(A) Fire emergencies (conditions &amp; height, evacuation, smoke &amp; carbon monoxide detectors, emergency services)</li> <li>(B) Drowning risks (conditions, activities, PPE/PFD, emergency services, certifications/training for attending staff))</li> <li>(C) Written, predetermined communication check-ins from field groups and response for missed check-ins</li> <li>(D) Management of medications, including the misuse of OTC and prescription, an emphasis on bystander training to proactively identify overdose concerns and to properly report these concerns</li> </ul> <p><i>(While not a comprehensive list of risks and management strategies, the above cover the most prevalent concerns relevant to gap programming worldwide. Having systems in place to evaluate and manage these risks is a minimum in effective risk management and a baseline to provide an appropriate experience for students. In each category, the provider should strive to take the most conservative approach to managing the hazard [e.g. preferencing 1st floor accommodations].)</i></p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Checklist for staff when selecting housing</li> <li>• Staff expectations/policy that states housing preference to be given to 1st floor, with multiple points of evacuation, and smoke detectors present</li> </ul> |          |            |                |                     |
| <p>1.8.7 - Staff policy clearly prohibits students from carrying any of the organization’s primary critical emergency equipment (med kit, emergency phones, etc.), unless students have training and it is required by the educational outcomes of the program. <i>(It may be tempting to empower students with these tools, however, given their critical nature trained staff should manage them primarily. In the unique event students are free from supervision as part of a planned activity, students holding this equipment must be properly trained.)</i></p>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Copy of policy or expectation</li> <li>• Staff contract with these points highlighted</li> </ul>  |          |            |                |                     |



| Indicator  | Possible Evidence of Indicator<br>(these are simply possible examples and do not constitute a comprehensive list)  | In Place | In Process | Not Applicable | Exception Requested |
|--|--|----------|------------|----------------|---------------------|
| 1.8.8 - Organization has clear internal policies for documentation of student medical / behavioral concerns, and patterns. <i>(Documenting student behavior is both important for legal records, but also helps to address the 'gradual change blindness' of student behavior and empower staff to respond objectively and appropriately.)</i>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Copy of policy or expectation</li> <li>• Copy of staff manual</li> <li>• Copy of documentation template</li> </ul>  |          |            |                |                     |
| 1.8.9 - Staff are educated, proficient, and trained in how to work with students on prescription psychotropics. <i>(Approximately 40% of students are, or have recently been, on some form of psychotropics. Staff must be prepared to work with some of the unique considerations that accompany these students.)</i>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Copy of educational materials for staff detailing prescription psychotropics</li> <li>• List of red flag behaviors to track that would escalate to a professional review</li> </ul>     |          |            |                |                     |
| 1.8.10 - Staff training addresses implicit biases that might affect work performance. <i>(Staff have an incredibly challenging job, but one that only works if they are aware of their own biases. Staff must be involved in their own regular self-reflection process in order to identify and address unconscious biases such as a 'favorite student', or a bias against particular races, perspectives, backgrounds, religion, abilities, income, etc. <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kKHSJHkPeLY">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kKHSJHkPeLY</a>)</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Copy of training that emphasizes reflection and self-awareness of staff</li> <li>• Copy of policy that details staff stepping down</li> <li>• EXAMPLES</li> </ul>                       |          |            |                |                     |
| 1.8.11 - Staff are trained on how to ensure proper administration of epinephrine according to the organization's protocols. <i>(Epinephrine is a life-saving drug that must be available and administered correctly. There are many vehicles for administering it, and staff must be informed about when to use it and how it is injected. An anaphylactic reaction can occur without any prior warning. If students bring their own epinephrine, then staff must be trained on administering with the student's device.)</i>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Copy of staff training that emphasizes epinephrine training (WFA does not emphasize this)</li> <li>• Organization's epinephrine tools of choice and instructions for its use</li> </ul> |          |            |                |                     |

| Indicator  | Possible Evidence of Indicator<br>(these are simply possible examples and do not constitute a comprehensive list)   | In Place | In Process | Not Applicable | Exception Requested |
|--|---|----------|------------|----------------|---------------------|
| <p>1.8.12 - Staff carry appropriate, relevant, and updated resources that support and complement learning opportunities. <i>(Staff are incredibly dedicated and smart people. However, they are limited by their experience and the organization can support them to support their students. This may mean games, lesson plans, activities, etc.)</i></p>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Copy of staff manual</li> <li>• Outlines games, initiatives, lesson plans, histories, reading lists, etc.</li> <li>• Copy of handouts for staff that support their efforts to educate</li> </ul> |          |            |                |                     |
| <p>1.8.13 - Appropriate student:staff ratios, with a minimum of two trained staff qualified to lead that activity, or, in front-country situations, one trained staff with appropriate backup procedures.<br/><i>(Sourced from the industry's professional standards:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>(GYA) Developing Country/Overnight Backpacking - 8:1</i></li> <li>• <i>(AMGA) Mountaineering (depending on terrain) - eg, 4:1</i></li> <li>• <i>(AEE) Camping, front-country skiing/boarding - eg, 6:1</i></li> <li>• <i>(ACA) Flat water paddling - eg, 6:1</i></li> <li>• <i>Rafting (depending on class) - eg, 1:2 boats</i></li> </ul> <p><i>These summarize a list of common activities.)</i></p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Public URL</li> <li>• Brochure</li> <li>• General program / organization information packet and description of its public use</li> </ul>   |          |            |                |                     |

| Indicator  | Possible Evidence of Indicator<br>(these are simply possible examples and do not constitute a comprehensive list)  | In Place | In Process | Not Applicable | Exception Requested |
|--|--|----------|------------|----------------|---------------------|
| <p>1.8.14 - Staff always have access to:</p> <p>(A) All emergency phone numbers (e.g. emergency &amp; rescue services, nearest hospital, embassies, organizational contacts) and necessary resources (e.g. maps),</p> <p>(B) All known current student medications &amp; medically relevant diagnoses,</p> <p>(C) An understanding of critical <b>staff medications</b> &amp; medically relevant diagnoses (with permissions, or privately carrying their own for access by other staff in case of an emergency), and</p> <p>(D) Emergency Protocols Document including at least:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Communication</li> <li>2. Weather / natural disaster</li> <li>3. Terrorist attack</li> <li>4. Medical emergency</li> <li>5. Missing student</li> <li>6. Student evacuation</li> <li>7. Political crisis</li> <li>8. Rape and sexual assault</li> <li>9. Self-harm / cutting / suicidal ideation</li> <li>10. Harassment / physical, verbal or emotional abuse</li> <li>11. Student detention, arrest, hospitalization, or quarantine</li> <li>12. Threatening/violent intruder</li> </ol> <p><i>(In the event of an emergency, this information and protocols can become the difference between a well-organized and efficient response, or a chaotic, poorly communicated, potentially dangerous one. Staff medical issues also impact the program, so staff should carry emergency information for staff as well.)</i></p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Copy of staff / employee manual</li> <li>• Policy detailing mandate to carry staff manual at all times</li> </ul> |          |            |                |                     |

**1.9 - "Organization has appropriate medical kits available for students and staff whenever on program."**

A medical kit is an essential part of every safety plan, but only a well-stocked and maintained kit that's on-hand can actually serve its purpose. Staff must be comfortable using every item in the medical kit and if not done so through previous training, the organization must ensure appropriate training to do so.

| Indicator  | Possible Evidence of Indicator<br>(these are simply possible examples and do not constitute a comprehensive list)   | In Place | In Process | Not Applicable | Exception Requested |
|--|---|----------|------------|----------------|---------------------|
| <p>1.9.1 - Staff must have a critical care medical kit available, appropriate to each location's risk assessment, at all times students are present.<br/><i>(Carrying the medical kit at all times is of course the only way it will be useful. Inevitably, the times it will be needed most are those when it is inevitably not carried. NOTE: depending on an organization's risk assessment, "available" can mean at a nurse's offices or other central location.)</i></p>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Medical kit policy</li> <li>• Site specific risk assessment</li> </ul>   |          |            |                |                     |
| <p>1.9.2 - Medical supplies, in alignment with the organization's location risk assessments, must consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(A) Triage and control of bleeding</li> <li>(B) Musculoskeletal, and soft tissue injuries</li> <li>(C) Wound care</li> <li>(D) Allergic reactions</li> <li>(E) Food and water treatment</li> <li>(F) Body Substance Isolation (BSI &amp; PPE)</li> <li>(G) Illness</li> <li>(H) Diagnostic tools (thermometer, pulse oximeter, etc.)</li> </ul> <p><i>(A well-stocked and prepared medical kit will satisfy about 90% of any emergencies. Note that these lists should be contained in the medical kit and another location such that all staff have a copy of these vital details whenever the need should arise.)</i></p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Copy of organization's medical kit 'must haves'</li> <li>• Photograph of actual medical kit</li> </ul>           |          |            |                |                     |
| <p>1.9.3 - All organizational medical supplies must be current and resupplied in advance of each activity. <i>(Carrying expired medication means that it is unreliable and potentially ineffective.)</i></p>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Copy of organization's policy</li> <li>• Copy of organization's activity assessment and supplies list</li> </ul> |          |            |                |                     |

### 1.10 - "Organization has clear admissions processes."

Gap year organizations only thrive when their students thrive. To have students that thrive, each organization must be clear about the right fit, for both the student and the organization. Every organization has a different set of foci, however, being both conscious and clear about them is important. Some of these different areas might include: student-supervision and independence, specific activities, certificates/credits earned, languages learned, level of 'roughing it,' religious affiliations, physical fitness, and many more. Not every program is right for every student and the organization is the best judge because the student doesn't know the actual experiences that are upcoming.

| Indicator   | Possible Evidence of Indicator<br>(these are simply possible examples and do not constitute a comprehensive list)  | In Place | In Process | Not Applicable | Exception Requested |
|---|--|----------|------------|----------------|---------------------|
| <p>1.10.1 - Admissions process, at minimum, includes avenues to gather and appropriately address the following information and topics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(A) Fit with program activities and ethos</li> <li>(B) Managing expectations (challenges &amp; opportunities)</li> <li>(C) Medical review</li> <li>(D) Swimming ability, as relevant</li> <li>(E) Organization's response to ongoing and/or escalating physical or mental health concerns and the ability for the program to provide support</li> <li>(F) Review and acknowledge the organization's policies and disciplinary response</li> <li>(A) As needed, criteria and plan for additional review of student background with relevant third parties, including release of confidential information to the organization (e.g. student's mental health clinician, physician, specialist, or teacher)</li> </ul> <p><i>(At minimum, the organization should strive to have at least one personal touch point during the admissions process, preferably with a video or in-person component. While each organization must determine the right fit, getting to know a student is a critical element to understanding how they'll fare. Gathering and communicating the kind information during the admissions process fosters candor, trust, and confidence and promotes student success. Finally, in consideration of emergent event, the provider should include relevant releases of information from professionals in the student's history.)</i></p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Copy of organization's interview template</li> <li>• Copy of completed interview with student name edited out</li> <li>• Organization's handbook for interviewing students</li> </ul> |          |            |                |                     |

| Indicator  | Possible Evidence of Indicator<br>(these are simply possible examples and do not constitute a comprehensive list)   | In Place | In Process | Not Applicable | Exception Requested |
|--|---|----------|------------|----------------|---------------------|
| <p>1.10.2 - Organization takes special consideration with any student on prescription medication - considering and discussing with each student the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(A) Preparation for the full program's medication needs (recognizing the frequent 30-day limits in prescriptions)</li> <li>(B) Expected availability in case of loss/damage to existing medication</li> <li>(C) Transportation of controlled substances (especially if international)</li> <li>(D) Education about potential stolen medication, what to do, and what it might mean if meds go missing</li> </ul> <p><i>(Prescription medications are potent, have side effects, and are prescribed with specific individuals and medical histories in mind. Students depend on them, however, the organization possesses travel/logistical expertise and thus the onus for education about potential problems and mitigation strategies. Considerations for replacement, strategies to prevent loss, and the abuse of prescriptions by others in/outside of the program, must be discussed.)</i></p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Copy of organization handout (and how it is delivered to students) detailing anticipated medication problems</li> <li>• Copy of student interview template</li> <li>• Copy of narrative that is universally communicated to students encouraging transparency but also how the organization plans to proceed in the event of lost / stolen medication</li> </ul> |          |            |                |                     |
| <p>1.10.3 - Organization has a policy that students are required to continue prescription medications as directed by a guiding physician for the duration of their program. <i>(Rapport should be built that encourages communication of changes, educating students about the importance of staying on their medications and discouraging them from changing medications outside of the supervision of a physician. Students often titrate due to a newfound sense of self-empowerment, but unanticipated side-effects are common - especially increases in suicide rates.)</i></p>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Copy of organization policy on students removing themselves from their medication</li> <li>• Copy of staff policy discouraging unsupervised titration from medication</li> </ul>   |          |            |                |                     |

### 1.11 - "Organization strives to improve."

All GYA Accredited organizations are expected to evolve through a regular and thorough review process learning to pursue their missions while reducing unnecessary risks. Program evaluation, research on outcomes, or student satisfaction are all continuous efforts towards improvement. The organization should have regular review processes that include positives, negatives, and reviews for potential changes to organizational policies.

| Indicator   | Possible Evidence of Indicator<br>(these are simply possible examples and do not constitute a comprehensive list)                 | In Place | In Process | Not Applicable | Exception Requested |
|---|---|----------|------------|----------------|---------------------|
| 1.11.1 - Organization should include a mid-way (optionally) anonymous evaluation for students focused on improving their current experience. <i>(Every program can always be improved, however, waiting until the end of the program to solicit opportunities for improvement is an opportunity lost to improve the immediate student experience.)</i>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Template copy and delivery method of mid-program student evaluation</i></li> </ul>    |          |            |                |                     |
| 1.11.2 - An end-of-program evaluation given to students that must include the "net promoter score." <i>(The end-of-program student evaluation is an opportunity for a comprehensive review of the student experience and an opportunity to mine for areas of improvement, and great reviews or testimonials. For a link and explanation of the net promoter score and why it's relevant, <a href="#">click here.</a>)</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Template copy and delivery method of end-of-program student evaluation</i></li> </ul> |          |            |                |                     |
| 1.11.3 - A staff evaluation of the program. <i>(Staff will often have the best feedback complete with what worked for their students and what about an itinerary made their job more difficult. Evaluations frequently focus on safety, student &amp; cohort outcomes, program flow, local contacts, intake questions, policies, etc.)</i>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Template copy and delivery method of end-of-program staff evaluation</i></li> </ul>   |          |            |                |                     |

| Indicator   | Possible Evidence of Indicator<br>(these are simply possible examples and do not constitute a comprehensive list)  | In Place | In Process | Not Applicable | Exception Requested |
|---|--|----------|------------|----------------|---------------------|
| <p>1.11.4 - An evaluation process aimed at staff development and staff support using the organization's rubric for consistent improvement in alignment to professional responsibilities for both:</p> <p>(A) Field staff (AKA, Direct Student Support Staff),<br/>(B) Office / administrative staff.</p> <p><i>(Working with staff is always an organizational investment, but unless they're given feedback and given an opportunity to give their own, the organization will miss key opportunities to improve.)</i></p>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Template copy and delivery method of Direct Supervision Staff evaluation</i></li> <li>• <i>Template copy and delivery method of Office Staff evaluation</i></li> </ul> |          |            |                |                     |
| <p>1.11.5 - Organization demonstrates a commitment to reflection and continuous improvement on its diversity, equity, inclusion, and access work by completing the GYA's most recent iteration of the DEIA Self-Assessment Tool. <i>(Organizations should complete the most recent version of the Self-Assessment Tool as part of their accreditation process if they have not completed it within the last year. Please input the scores you received as part of completing the self-assessment below. There is no expectation that you receive a certain score-please be honest in your reporting of these scores as they do not impact your accreditation eligibility. We also collect these scores to ensure that in your re-accreditation process you are making progress in your DEIA goals).</i></p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Summary report of scores achieved</i></li> <li>• <i>Screenshot of "thank you for completing the self-study" web page or email</i></li> </ul>                           |          |            |                |                     |



## **2.X.X COMMUNITY-BASED LEARNING**

### **GYA's Fair Trade Learning Adaptation for 2023 Standards**

Individuals and communities have the fundamental right to determine their own challenges and maintain agency over the solutions to those challenges. We cannot overstate the importance of engaging responsibly and ethically with our global and domestic partner communities before, during, and after programs. In gap year education programs, project outcomes fare best when participants focus on learning anchored in cultivating interpersonal relationships and when gap year providers and their community partners focus on common purposes and positive, mutually agreed upon, projects and outcomes for all stakeholders.

Providers cannot expect participants to understand these nuances until they've educated participants about them. Thus, the onus for maintaining mutually-beneficial partnerships and for tone-setting student expectations necessarily falls on the gap year provider.

### **WHO FILLS OUT THE FAIR TRADE LEARNING RUBRIC?**

Gap year program providers whose programs include community-based learning need to complete 2.X.X COMMUNITY-BASED LEARNING if **two (2) or more categories apply to its programs.**

Note: Intermediary organizations such as Experiment in International Living can assist with project planning, and their expertise on the ground can assist with developing new programs with new global partners. With that said, we cannot overstate the importance of *not* outsourcing key issues like the rights of the most vulnerable populations (see Standard 2.3 for more information about this). If you work with an intermediary organization, we suggest using GYA's adaptation of the Fair Trade Learning rubric outlined in this document as a toolkit for vetting intermediary organizations' practices.

### **HOW TO USE THE COMMUNITY-BASED LEARNING SCORING SYSTEM:**

Each of the thirteen principles below are broken into four scoring levels. Organizations can use this study for quantitative scoring and as a prompt to understand and improve their partnerships.

The highest possible combined score (a 3 on each of the fourteen principles) is 39, while the lowest possible score is 0. **A score of 0 in any particular category indicates practices that are generally below standard** for an organization seeking GYA Accreditation. Most organizations will have significant work to do to achieve scores of 3 and this is by design. GYA encourages organizations to explore every improvement opportunity. As such, we require organizations that score 2 or lower on any category to report specific improvement strategies along with their evidence each time this is the case. See Application Step 3 below.

**Overall scores of 13 and above, as long as they don't score 0 on more than 2 categories that apply to the provider,** qualify for accreditation, pending GYA review of self-scores and evidence. As such, an organization with an overall COMMUNITY-BASED LEARNING score

of 13 but with scores of 0 in more than 2 categories, would not qualify for accreditation without GYA investigation. If an organization does not pass for accreditation, we encourage that organization to see it as an opportunity for improvement.

### **Accreditation Renewal Applicants:**

You must show that your organization has improved by showing us your previous Fair Trade Learning rubric as well as your most recent rubric. You must include with your rubric narrative examples from community partners based on community surveys, dialogues, emails, etc.

## **APPLICATION STEPS FOR 2.X.X: COMMUNITY-BASED LEARNING**

**(1.) SCORING** Use the Community-Based Learning scoring system outlined above and the score definitions outlined under each category to give your organization a score for each category. Then, add your scores for each category to generate an overall score for your organization and indicate that score at the end of the rubric.

### **(2.) PROVIDE SPECIFIC EVIDENCE OF SCORES**

Examples of supporting evidence specific to each category are listed under the category description before the definitions of each individual score. Supporting evidence should be specific to each category.

### **(3.) PROVIDE EXAMPLES OF HOW YOUR ORGANIZATION PLANS TO IMPROVE**

We anticipate that most organizations will score less than 3 on many of the categories, and we require organizations to continuously improve their Community-Based Learning practices. If your organization scores 2 or less on any category, you must include one or two specific improvement strategies for each category where you score 2 or less.

## **OUTLINE OF CATEGORIES**

An asterisk (\*) before the standard number indicates that the **category applies to any organization engaged in community-based learning**. Categories without an asterisk before the number are context-dependent. For example, every organization must report on common purposes with their community partner organizations (2.1), but not every organization works with animals (2.13). If a category does not apply to your organization, there's a place to indicate after each category's scores.

For more information and research on Fair Trade Learning and for resources on how to approach and use it, visit the [GYA Fair Trade Learning Committee](#) webpage and this blog for more information about the evolution of our FTL adaptation.

\*2.1 - "Common Purposes for Partnership"

\*2.2 - "Partner Community Program Leadership"

2.3 - "Rights of the Most Vulnerable"

- \*2.4 - "Partner Community Program Participation"
- \*2.5 - "Community Partner Organization Theory of Change."
- \*2.6 - "Ethics in Recruitment & Publication Materials."
- \*2.7 - "Communication Between Program and Community Partner Organizations."
- \*2.8 - "Participant Orientation to Community Partner."
- \*2.9 - "Environmental Impact."
- \*2.10 - "Economic Considerations and Local Sourcing."
- \*2.11 - "Regular Evaluation of Programs and Partnership."
- \*2.12 - "Financial Transparency."
- 2.13 - "Ethical Engagement with Animals."

## **2.X.X - COMMUNITY-BASED LEARNING**

Score your organization's practices under each category and provide evidence for how your organization achieves that score. Select (X) if a category does not apply to your organization. **Scores for each category should be considered as follows:**

- (1) Indicates practices that are not up to GYA's Standards of Accreditation
- (2) Minimum acceptable practices
- (3) Good practices with room for improvement
- (4) Ideal practices for this category as of the current published Standards of Accreditation

Note your organization's total score at the end.

### **2.1 - "Common Purposes for Partnership."**

Gap year provider and community partner organization(s) have mutually-agreed upon goals for all projects and activities included in the partnership. Program's admin staff and field leaders who are involved in projects on the program agree to uphold the goals of the partnership and projects within it, and respect the community's self-determined needs at a given time. *(Longer-term partnerships between gap year providers and community partner organizations tend to yield the most meaningful engagement and best results; however, a short-term, one-time project can benefit a community given mutually agreed upon goals. Common purposes for partnership could include reciprocal learning outcomes, community improvement and organizing, financial gain, intercultural learning and exchange, language skill improvement, civic engagement and action, etc.)*

#### **Examples of evidence:**

- *An MOU or mutual pledge in the most commonly-used language of the partner community and in English, identifying specific governing members with an emphasis on diverse representation of local stakeholders who ensure long-term reciprocal benefits*
- *A formalized evaluation of outcomes for all stakeholders to fill out (anonymously)*

- Survey of program(s) and Results for community-based partners to fill out (ideally anonymously to encourage honest feedback)
- All-Stakeholder Responsibilities and Expectations Policy or something similar

### Scoring

- (0) Community-based projects serve primarily to give program participants a sense of pride for giving back, without any discussion on participant intention vs. community impact. Gap year provider determines projects and goals and merely asks community partner organization staff for permission to carry out the project. There is no broadscale agreement between what happens in the field and what is planned among admin staff.
- *(I, the Provider with participants, want to do good in the community and help the locals. We, the Provider staff have determined challenges within the community and have developed project goals for our participants to carry out in said community.)*
- (2) Provider and community-based partner organizations have discussed goals and aspirations for participants' time in a given community, including the purpose of any activities. Provider and community-based partner organizations determine the length of time for each participant group's activities within the community.
- *(We, the community-based organization and gap year provider, mutually understand the purpose and length of our partnership and any program activities that take place in the partner community.)*
- (3) Provider and at least a few key stakeholders from the community partner organization mutually plan purpose and expectations for completion of specific task(s) or part(s) of a longer-term project by the end of the participants' engagement with the community partner organization. Provider and community-based partner organizations set clear expectations about the ongoing nature of the partnership beyond a single program.
- *(We, the community-based organization, provider, and participants, all understand our shared goals and who was involved in determining those goals. We, the community-based organization, gap year provider, and program participants, understand the tasks the participants are expected to take on and the purpose for each of them in the context of longer-term projects determined by partner community stakeholders.)*
- (4) Provider and community partner organization(s) agree upon long-term mutuality of goals and aspirations as well as reasons for the partnership, which are created through collaboration between multiple, diverse stakeholders. Any stakeholder can initially propose the collaboration; the details of the partnership should be determined collaboratively. Timelines for overall partnerships and project commitments serve to benefit all stakeholders.
- *(We, the community partner organization or community members, lead this relationship with a thorough understanding of our own needs, local dynamics, project plans, and long-term benefits for all involved. We, the gap year provider and multiple members of the community partner organization's staff and community members who will interact with the participants collaboratively create goals for our time together, looking out for benefit to all stakeholders. We, the provider, community-based partner organization, and participants prioritize mutual learning as we engage in projects together, each understanding the goals of the project.)*
- (X) Does not apply. In this case, please briefly comment about why this category does not apply to your organization.

## 2.2 - "Host Community Program Leadership."

The gap year provider makes systematic efforts to ensure that partner community members receive value from the relationship with providers; efforts are made to amplify the voices, questions, insights, concerns, and leadership of individuals in the partner community who are most closely involved with the program. *(If the provider's curriculum includes topics relevant to the partner community, then members of the partner community will have opportunities to co-teach lessons pertinent to their own lived experiences.)*

### Examples of evidence:

- MOU or contract outlining community-based partner organization and gap year provider expectations, including leadership roles
- Commitment statements

(0) One key community member controls all decision making and communication. Power is centralized to one person.

- *(I, the provider, communicate with one local individual who represents the collective needs of the entire community. That individual is our primary source for local representation.)*

(1) Multiple community members have remunerated leadership roles. Relationships are more transactional.

- *(I, the provider and individual community leaders benefit. Financial needs are met and providers, and locals are satisfied with the working relationship.)*

(2) Through diverse input by community members, the community plays a vital role in the planning and implementation of the program modules, projects, and activities. Community members direct student participation on the majority of program work-sites, projects, and activities.

- *(I, the provider, work with a diverse group of local leaders to represent the community and their needs; selecting projects that fit within and benefit a larger community-driven plan.)*

(3) Multiple and diverse community members have distinct teaching and leadership roles within the majority of program components (e.g. facilitating reflection activities, training relevant to specific projects, etc). Community members not only direct program projects and activities but additionally implement and facilitate educational components of the program in collaboration with program staff.

- *(I, the provider, work with a diverse group of local leadership to represent the community and select projects that fit within a larger community-driven plan. The community leverages locals to be "experts" on corresponding subjects and projects, and collaborate with the Provider to partner with external experts who can advance and help achieve the community's long-term goals and financial needs.)*

(X) Does not apply. In this case, please briefly comment about why this category does not apply to your organization.

## 2.3 - \* "Rights of the Most Vulnerable."

**\*For Standard 2.3. Provider agrees to read and understand the research regarding medical, dental, and orphanage volunteering below this standard's description.**

Considering the rights and wellbeing of vulnerable populations, the gap year provider works to identify the most vulnerable populations in a community, minimize negative impacts, and to support these populations' rights and well-being. Vulnerable populations should be identified within each partner community context. Examples may include, but are not limited to: at-risk children, survivors of violence, elders, and migrants/refugees. Gap year students should work within their skill sets and training levels when engaging with vulnerable populations. Gap year provider thoroughly considers the health and safety of vulnerable populations in the context of global pandemics, local epidemics, and crisis situations. Click here for GYA's [COVID-19 Guidelines](#). *(GYA encourages providers to avoid direct contact with at-risk populations on short-term programs. This especially applies to community-based learning in orphanages and medical and dental settings. Students should not work outside of their skillsets in these areas, especially on activities they are unqualified to engage in within their home countries. We base this on the extensive and ongoing research on the pitfalls of orphanage volunteering and medical volunteering. The Association of American Medical Colleges and the American Dental Education Association both have statements suggesting that pre-dental and pre-med students should refrain from engaging in unqualified activities abroad.)*

### **Examples of evidence:**

- Child protection policy, ethics and engagement policies
- Orientation or training materials regarding engagement with vulnerable populations.
- Safety audits and risk assessments specific to location and project(s)
- Community partner organization/community member survey results

### **You are expected to read and seek an understanding of the following:**

#### **Orphanage Volunteering - Required Reading**

- (i) [The Orphanage Voluntourism Campaign: Is the End-Game in Sight?](#) by [Martin Punaks](#)  
International development and child protection expert Martin Punaks writes about the major issues with orphanage volunteering and suggests ways for organizations and students to do better and avoid harming children. Punaks includes hyperlinks to several sources of research in this article.
- (ii) Guiney, T., & Mostafanezhad, M. (2015). [The political economy of orphanage tourism in Cambodia](#). *Tourist Studies*, 15(2), 132-155.
- (iii) [The Paradox of Orphanage Volunteering](#), Martin Punaks and Katie Feit, [Next Generation Nepal](#)

#### **Additional (optional) readings on orphanage volunteering from**

- [Facts and figures on orphanage volunteering](#)
- [Individual Orphanage Volunteering](#): A fact sheet
- [The Love You Give](#): A documentary on orphanage volunteering

- [The Problem with Orphanage Volunteering](#)

### Medical and Dental Volunteering - Required Reading

- (i) Association of American Medical Colleges: [Guidelines for Premedical and Medical Students Providing Patient Care During Clinical Experiences Abroad](#)
- (ii) American Dental Education Association: [Guidelines for International Predental Experiences](#)
- (iii) [Child and Family Health International: Research on Medical and Dental Volunteering](#)

- (0) If and when engaging with vulnerable populations, Provider takes no specific steps to ensure the rights and well-being of vulnerable populations with proximity to program activities.
  - *(I, the provider, haven't adapted staff, student, or project planning to specifically consider vulnerable populations.)*
- (1) Members of vulnerable populations are not part of the exchange programming and/or specific steps are not taken to ensure their rights and well-being specific to the exchange programming.
  - *(We, the provider and partner community, recognize that there are "at risk" populations and work to specifically minimize our contact with them in order to mitigate unintended negative consequences.)*
- (2) Multiple community partners and stakeholders dialogue about and take action to maximize the well-being of members of the most vulnerable populations that may be affected through the partnership.
  - *(We, the provider, have worked with the local community to identify vulnerable populations and execute a plan that maximizes their wellbeing during specific program elements.)*
- (3) Members of most vulnerable populations in the community have been identified by those with lived experience in that community; training and safeguards are in place to ensure their rights and well-being in the community.
  - *(We, the provider, have worked with the local community to identify and maximize the well-being of vulnerable populations. All projects are planned with vulnerable populations in mind.)*
- (X) Does not apply. In this case, please briefly comment about why this category does not apply to your organization.

### 2.4 - "Host Community Program Participation."

Members of partner communities are invited to lead and participate in certain program activities. *(In the best case scenario, the provider makes an effort to invite individuals from the partner community to participate in the provider's program(s), with access to scholarships when possible.)*

#### Examples of evidence:

- *Merit and need-based scholarship application materials*
- *Merit and need-based scholarship award reports including amounts and the nature of the scholarship (e.g. first-generation college students who have accepted and deferred enrollment, BIPOC, LGBTQ+, and members of other marginalized groups)*

- Program activity reports indicating partner community leadership and collaboration
- MOU or commitment statement outlining partner community and provider expectations, including leadership roles

(0) Program is a bubble of visiting students; interactions with the community tend to be highly structured, often as guest speakers or through a 'party' environment.

- *I, the Provider, bring the students to "show up" and do the project. The focus is on our students.*

(1) Members of the partner community take on supervisory roles with students that are filtered through a few persons in charge.

- *I, the Provider, work towards a specific project that relies heavily on local supervisors to oversee the work product only.*

(2) Deliberate spaces of free interaction exist within the program, and participants are made aware of opportunities to connect with local community members. Peer-relationships are promoted with homestays as a possible further collaboration.

- *We, the partner community, have something to gain from broad inclusion to this partnership. Efforts are structured to facilitate both project-related learning and socio-cultural exchange, separate from project relevance.*

(3) Members of the partner community have embedded opportunities to participate, such as through activity planning, work-study arrangements, or scholarships, to participate in programming.

- *We, the Provider and partner community, actively plan learning outcomes to be relevant for both students and locals to participate, recognizing continued learning as the primary goal. I, the Provider, make efforts to provide scholarships for members of our partner communities to participate in our full program.*

(X) Does not apply. In this case, please briefly comment about why this category does not apply to your organization.

## 2.5 - "Community Partner Organization Theory of Change."

Communities and individuals have the fundamental right to determine their own challenges and maintain agency over the solutions to those challenges. Provider understands partner community members' ideas and strategies for improving their own communities, and all projects in which the provider and its participants engage are aligned with community-determined needs. *(Staff training and student orientation should include introduction to community-based partner organizations' missions as well as the goals of the partnership and the projects involved. Providers should ultimately respect that multiple stakeholders within the partner community work toward these outcomes independently from the Provider, and have guiding plans and processes to achieve them.)*

### Examples of evidence:

- MOU or commitment statement outlining partner community goals and provider expectations
- Email correspondences
- Staff training materials

(0) Gap year provider determines challenges in a given community and designs service projects, consulting with community-based organizations to ask for permission to conduct the projects.



- *I, the Provider, have a core project in mind, but do not know where that project fits within community stakeholders' larger strategies for their own community improvement. My solutions to this community's challenges are best for them.*
- (1) Provider considers multiple models of service learning and development, and acknowledges that the community-based organization has goals for community improvement.
- *I, the Provider, have discussed some goals for the community with at least one member of the partner community, but have no broad agreement from the community about those goals. I, the Provider, communicate with partner community members and occasionally adapt project goals to consider the community's improvement strategies.*
- (2) Community-based organization designs project(s) that will lead to accomplishing goals that community members hold for their own community. Providers and participants contribute to those self-determined goals.
- *We, the community and provider, have a broad understanding of what the community would like to accomplish in the mid-term (12-24 months). We, the Provider, consider the long-term impact of the projects in which our participants engage. We, the provider and participants, understand community partner organizations' goals and the reasons why we are here with this community.*
- (3) Provider respects the idea that community-based organizational partners and stakeholders understand that participants have their own goals and desired projects for their community. Each stakeholder in the partnership and projects that are part of it, have comprehensive understanding of how the projects fit with long-term community improvement goals and outcomes. If the community-based organization does not have a need for a group of students at a given time, then the Provider should connect with a different community-based organization or plan alternative activities.
- *We, the community (understood to be composed of a variety of stakeholders) and provider, have agreed upon projects that match the community's theory of change, adapted and applied to every collaborative engagement we create including projects and community-based learning activities. Provider staff understand and act in alignment with the community-based organization's own theory of change.*
- (X) Does not apply. In this case, please briefly comment about why this category does not apply to your organization.

## 2.6 - "Ethics in Recruitment & Publication Materials."

Gap year provider's recruitment materials are mindful of context in language and visual media, reflecting partner community members accurately and striving to present materials that show locals as leaders. Materials avoid dependency-based narratives and highlight empowered locals that avoid a reductive or disempowered perspective: anyone taking a photo asks for consent to take and use the imagery. GYA encourages imagery of students from diverse backgrounds. *(Imagery especially shapes the expectations of prospective students, thus providers should strive to avoid decontextualized poverty stereotypes and imagery depicting imbalances of power or saviorism imagery; and strive to highlight diverse communities of students. See the [GYA Brand Guide's Photo Ethics Policy](#) for examples.)*

### Examples of evidence:

- *Web pages*
- *Social media portfolio and marketing images*

- *Official branding guides*

- (0) Recruitment materials, including webpages, reproduce stereotypical or simplistic portrayals of community members, directly or indirectly referring to them as victims needing help.
- *I, the Provider, publish imagery showing saviorism without context or any captions.-My marketing materials use language that suggests that partner community members have limited or no agency, (e.g. a marketing image depicting someone's hands and a caption asking gap year volunteers to teach local community members how to wash their hands).*
- (1) Recruitment materials including partner community members are neutral; student cohort images may be homogenous. Any people photographed have consented to being photographed and shared for promotional means.
- *I, the Provider, strive to show positive engagements with local communities. I, the Provider and also my participants, use vague and timeless descriptive language; however, the language illustrates positive intent and relationships.*
- (2) Recruitment materials communicate in a responsible and dignified manner about all community-based partner organizations and community members. Provider trains staff on media ethics.
- *I, the Provider, invest in training staff and thus students, on the importance of responsible imagery/video. Every photo has some descriptive language and we have policies that establish ethics for portraying community members. We, the photographed community members, agree to having our images taken.*
- (3) Recruitment materials reflect people from a diverse set of lived experiences. Promotional materials and on-program photography promote the able-ness of the partner community and its members to accomplish long-term goals. Provider educates staff and participants on media ethics and fairly portraying community members in imagery, captions, blogs, and articles.
- *We, the photographed community members, agree to having our images taken and used for agreed-upon purposes. We, the provider and community members, agree on all messaging about our community. Media that represents us has corresponding space for further explanation. The Provider and partner community work to cross-train staff and students on ethical media representation. Partner community members are encouraged and supported by program staff to de-escalate irresponsible or inappropriate media posts and publications (e.g. reductive photographs or those taken without permission). Post-program content (e.g. blogs and promotional materials) highlight the able-ness and agency of local communities.*
- (X) Does not apply. In this case, please briefly comment about why this category does not apply to your organization.

## **2.7 - "Communication Between Program & Community Partner Organizations."**

Gap year provider has a clearly-articulated process to engage in ongoing dialogue with community partners that contribute to mutually aligned community-driven goals. *(Continuous dialogue includes communication before, during, and after programming, as well as minimally annual evaluation and assessment of the partnership and its purposes. )*

### **Examples of evidence:**

- *Outline of frequency of communication*

- *Email correspondences with community partner organizations*
  - *Any anonymous surveys from community-based partners about your cohort's activities or about individual students' work and behavior*
- (0) Communication occurs with a key leader; but fluctuates depending on the frequency of programming.
- *I, the Provider, have a chief ambassador for the community; communication is overwhelmingly focused on the projects in which our students participate.*
- (1) Communication occurs with two individuals throughout the year, although limited to (an) individual(s) in a position of power or authority.
- *We, the Community and Provider, recognize that we have shared invested interests in a long-term relationship with both personal and professional outcomes.*
- (2) Communication regularly occurs between Provider and one community member elected to represent a multitude of community voices.
- *We, the community, are in direct contact with the Provider. We may have elected our own representative, or have appointed someone to represent us; access to direct information from the community is a hallmark of this level.*
- (3) Provider and community members are in regular, year-round communication that extends beyond one representative and are occasionally in direct contact. Provider operates with the understanding that communities include diverse sets of stakeholders, and that communities are composed of seen and unseen power dynamics, which our programs may knowingly or unknowingly impact. Provider documents relevant communication.
- *We, the community, regularly communicate direct information with our Providers and consider them professional allies and friends. We are each invested in the partnership, and regularly seek opportunities to collaborate.*
- (X) Does not apply. In this case, please briefly comment about why this category does not apply to your organization.

## **2.8 - "Participant Orientation to Community Partner."**

Organization provides an orientation to each community-based experience, connecting students to any project goals and contextualizing significant historical, political, geographic, economic, and/or cultural background for students. *(Effective orientations support participant engagement and learning, setting the tone for meaningful community engagement from the beginning. This contributes to the concept of Fair Trade Learning in that it sets participants up for respectful and holistic engagement with partner community members and organizations.)*

### **Examples of evidence:**

- *Student curriculum*
- *Program leader guides and staff manuals*
- *Website links with references to educational materials*
- *Marketing materials*

- (0) *Organization does not have an orientation specific to the project nor community. Students learn about their gap year provider's community-based partners on arrival and learn about the project as they volunteer. No conversations nor curricular elements focus on learning about the culture or context of the program's community partners.*
- I, the Provider, inform students about the location of their program. My informational materials focus on the problems in the general region, and I do not provide participants with the names nor missions of partner organizations prior to the program. Students are passive in the experience and show up to "voluntour" rather than learn from the host community.*
- (1) Pre-program orientation focuses on service-learning with non-specific knowledge about the projects in which they will engage (e.g. 'Participants will work on environmental improvement projects'). Participants know where their provider's community partner organizations are located within a given region, as well as their names, but don't know their missions or goals.
- I, the Provider, give participants general information about the nature of the intended service project(s) and partner community organizations, but not necessarily with much context. I have made an effort to inform participants about general cultural norms in the program region.*
- (2) Pre-program orientation introduces educational materials specific to the partner community as they relate to the program theme. Provider shares community-based organizations' mission and goals with participants, and provides context for how the projects in which they will engage tie in with the community-based organization's own mission and goals.
- I, the Provider, educate participants about their community partner organization's mission, as well as educate about the culture in that community.*
- (3) Pre-program orientation, on-site orientation, and regular debriefs all educate students about (A) the mission of community-based organizations, (B) the purpose of the project(s) in which participants will engage, (C) students' place within the community, and (D) a theoretical understanding of different development models. Provider educates participants and fosters continual reflection about this before and during the program; provider also provides resources for students to continue learning about and engaging with the issue that the community-based partner organization addresses (e.g. climate change, public health and fuel-efficient cookstoves, access to education), in their home communities after participants return home.
- We, the Provider and Community, educate participants about the partner community's culture, history, and relevant projects. We educate participants about multiple worldviews and models for development before, during, and after the program, through facilitated dialogue and educational materials. Participants and individual community members engage in long-term relationship building.*
- (X) Does not apply. In this case, please briefly comment about why this category does not apply to your organization.

## **2.9 - "Environmental Impact."**

Provider pays specific attention to the sustainability of programming in a given partner community, which influences program destinations, projects, activities, and processes. Provider considers the carbon footprint of the program not limited to: flight and ground transportation emissions, administrative footprint, infrastructure, group size, and local sourcing of purchased products and foods. Provider researches broader impacts of and invests ethically in carbon offsetting programs.

**Examples of evidence:**

- *Environmental impact reports*
- *Carbon offsetting data or reports*
- *Carbon calculations for specific community*

(0) Provider does not consider the environmental impacts of its programs within partner community.

- *We, the community, are left with the environmental repercussions of a program, despite any good intentions.*

(1) Provider considers and educates students about the environmental footprint of program at large. Environmental impact comes up as a discussion topic during project planning with local leaders, but it is not a primary focus or action.

- *I, the Provider, strive to include students in broader learning opportunities about environmental impact and sustainability in general. We, the community, are consulted to understand environmental impacts from any project or partnership.*

(2) Provider intentionally educates community partners and students about the environmental impacts of their program, specific projects, and activities. There is a shared commitment to sustainable solutions, including reducing environmental footprint, protecting the ecosystem, and/or implementing development models.

- *We, the community, Provider, and students, make efforts to understand our program's multi-faceted environmental footprints, and actively work to prioritize projects that benefit the community in the context of supporting sustainability(think permaculture).*

(3) Environmental impacts of the planned program are understood and discussed openly between the Provider and multiple partner community stakeholders. Provider and community leaders educate participants about environmental impact, sustainable lifestyles and how those function in various cultural and socio-political contexts. Provider and community partners collaboratively plan programs with the intent to make as many components of the program environmentally beneficial and sustainable to a diverse set of community members. Provider prioritizes program adjustments to offset environmental impact; placing value on sustainability over development. Provider researches community impact of any and all carbon offsetting practices and does not invest in carbon offsetting programs that act as land grabs in underdeveloped communities.

- *We, the community, Provider, and students, all have a thorough understanding of our project's environmental footprint and impact, and we have planned for such impacts in the design of the program to minimize, offset, and highlight them.*

(X) Does not apply. In this case, please briefly comment about why this category does not apply to your organization.

**2.10 - "Economic Considerations and Local Sourcing."**

Economic impact of the gap year experience is understood and discussed openly between provider and multiple community members; Impact is deliberately spread among multiple community stakeholders. Efforts are made to use local sourcing for housing, food, travel, program activities, etc. (*Provider considers supply chains while engaging with a given partner community. For example, are gap year students staying in locally-owned hostels or with host families? Do profits from a hostel or restaurant circulate within the local community?)*

**Examples of evidence:**

- *Budgets for program and spending within partner community, indicating how money is distributed to stakeholders*
- *Contracts*

(0) Provider does not consider economic impact within partner community.

- *We, the community, are left with Provider's and participants' messes, despite any good intentions.*

(1) Provider considers and educates students about the economic footprint for their program at large. During project planning with local leaders, Provider brings up economic factors of the program as a discussion topic, but this discussion does not take on a primary focus.

- *I, the Provider, strive to include students in broader learning opportunities about economic impacts of their program or project. We, the community, are consulted so that Provider staff understand economic impacts of any project or partnership.*

(2) Provider intentionally plans projects, and educates students, about the economic impacts of their program and project specifically. Decisions about remuneration, housing, transportation, and meals reflect shared commitment to economic sustainability and/or development model.

- *We, the community, Provider, and students, all have made efforts to understand our project's economic footprint, and actively work to prioritize any benefits to the community.*

(3) Economic impacts of experience are understood and discussed openly between the Provider and multiple community stakeholders, with special consideration of partner community's cultural norms around discussing flows of money. Students are educated about these discussions. Project planning deliberately attempts to spread the economic benefits of any project to partner community members.

- *We, the community, Provider, and students, all have a thorough understanding of our project's economic footprints, and we have planned for those impacts in the design of the program to highlight them.*

(X) Does not apply. In this case, please briefly comment about why this category does not apply to your organization.

## **2.11 - "Regular Evaluation of Programs and Partnership."**

Regular and clear feedback loops are collaboratively conceived of so that the gap year provider and partner community stakeholders have reliable, transparent, and ongoing ways to provide evaluation of their partnerships. Provider and partner community stakeholders have shared understanding of relevant parties' definitions of long and short-term partnership success.

### **Examples of evidence:**

- *MOU in partner community's native language and in plain English outlining partner community and provider expectations*
- *Commitment statements*
- *Results of partner community program surveys (i.e. host families, NGO leaders, community participants)*
- *Sharing of gap year participant evaluations/surveys with partner communities (i.e. NGO leaders)*
- *Survey forms from the provider given to the community partner organization and vice versa*
- *Regular informal partnership evaluation conversations (i.e. weekly/monthly meetings between partner community members and provider field staff)*

- *Regular formal provider and partner community partnership evaluation conversations (ie annual/biannual) with written notes sent to all stakeholders*
  - *Feedback given through email correspondence*
- (0) Evaluation is specific to individual projects and might solely reflect benefits to the gap year student.
- *I, the gap year provider, ask students to evaluate their experiences, and this is the extent of program evaluation.*
- (1) Evaluation is understood as relational and open-ended, with feedback happening at least after the project.
- *We, the gap year provider and partner community, have an ongoing dialogue but not a clear process for partnership evaluation.*
- (2) Partners have a clear understanding of ongoing relationship and common definition of success of the partnership. Feedback is representative of more than just partner community leadership. Evaluation methods include both written and oral formats. The evaluation process is regular, clear for all, and includes specific project goals as well as long-term partnership goals.
- *We, the partner community and gap year provider are clear about shared goals and solicit feedback regularly - not just around specific projects. Feedback works to include more than just NGO staff. Feedback is continually shared, utilized, and acted upon.*
- (3) The methods and timeline for providing feedback and evaluation of partnership success are clear for all stakeholders. Evaluation includes the long-term partnership outcomes and quality for all core stakeholders. At least part of the evaluation process includes the option of anonymity. Partner community stakeholders have the option to provide written and oral feedback in their native language. If a partnership needs to end, then the gap year provider and partner community have mutual agreement on reasons and process for the end of the partnership, that works to balance power-dynamics and encourages transparency. Financial and other losses to the partner community are mutually identified and minimized.
- *We, the provider, understand that all feedback is welcome and have something written that establishes the value of transparency and whistleblowing. We continuously reflect on the ways different positions of power impact the partnership, and we seek and encourage feedback from partner community stakeholders in various ways.*
- (X) Does not apply. In this case, please briefly comment about why this category does not apply to your organization.

## **2.12 - "Financial Transparency."**

Gap year provider and community partner organizations should regularly (annually, bi-annually, etc) discuss how program funds are spent and why. Provider shares project budgets pertaining to the community-based learning experiences in which they'll engage, especially pertaining to logistics and contribution to the community-based organizational partners and homestay families. *(Financial decision-making roles and timeline should be clear. Transparency should extend throughout the community-based learning relationships, from the gap year provider to and through any intermediary organizations and to the community partner organization(s) and community members involved in the program. With this said, Provider should communicate with community partner organizations about which organization names and information should be published publicly (i.e. websites, orientations, annual reports, etc). Financial transparency serves to limit unjust processes or corruption with financial aspects of the partnership; Financial transparency should not serve in such a way that would undermine key relationships within a given community. Programs should consider the values that the economics convey to the community in terms of who gets compensated, why, and how much and*

also realistically invest in the community to support its economic health. Suggested reading: [The Economy of Global Service Learning and the Problem of Silence](#) by Cynthia Toms.)

### **Examples of evidence:**

- Budgets and partner community spending reports.
- Website links that map out which program funds are spent on what and allocated to which activities and community partner organization(s).
- Clear timeline for creating and changing program budgets between provider and partner community.
- Clear policies around changes in exchange rates and how this affects financial aspects of the partnership.

(0) Economic model, financial exchange amounts, and impacts are kept private.

- *We, the community are paid a sum to host students, but this information as well as any amounts are kept private between the Community and one Provider staff member.*

(1) Provider makes broad-form of budget publicly available, such as through 990 disclosure or a 'light budget.' Payments to individual homestays for elements akin to line items are done privately with little attempt to encourage partner community self-advocacy.

- *We, the community, understand the position of the Provider, with both sides benefitting from better understanding relevant finances and business. Students and Provider typically will not know how much money is going to each community member, and the community will not understand where the tuition dollars go for the Provider.*

(2) Provider shares full budget with interested community members, as well as with any other stakeholders who request access. The local community shares financial arrangements with community members, and provider alike.

- *We, the community, benefit from understanding where the Provider's budget is being spent as it builds trust and helps us feel like we're not being taken advantage of. We share specifics with the Provider about our project budget, and generally where the community's financial place is.*

(3) Specific economic model, commitment, amount, and impact is publically accessible when culturally appropriate and regularly discussed among partners. Participants are housed in paid homestays or in locally-owned hostels. For the majority of meals, the local economy benefits. Students and families are clear on where their program fees are going.

- *We, the community, Provider, and students all have access to detailed financial information about the project, and general information about the community / Provider. Efforts to understand each are made regularly with instructional elements for greater context. Both the community and Provider have an agreement to focus on the fairness of all financial arrangements.*

(X) Does not apply. In this case, please briefly comment about why this category does not apply to your organization.

### **2.13 - "Ethical Engagement with Animals."**

Gap year providers that partner with community-based organizations working with animals should verify that their community partner organization(s) treat animals in ethical ways. *(As a roadmap for best practices in animal engagement, consider the Five Freedoms for Animal*



Welfare from the American Humane Society, adapted by Nora Livingstone, Founder and CEO of Animal Engagement International to the context of volunteering with animals. The Five Freedoms are listed below and should be used as a framework for this standard. Avoid activities such as but not necessarily limited to: riding elephants, petting or playing dress-up with wild animals,, swimming with dolphins, feeding wild animals, walking cheetahs and lions on leashes (for example, still common in South Africa), having volunteers perform activities outside of their skill sets. Students don't know what they don't know. Therefore, the onus is on the Provider for vetting community-based organizations with which students will volunteer for projects involving animals. Such organizations can include but are not necessarily limited to:

- Wildlife rehabilitation centers for (a) animal care & release, (b) permanent home for wildlife that can't be released, and/or (c) rehabilitation for wild animals that will be released back into the wild
- Sea turtle hatcheries/sea turtle monitoring or marine conservation centers
- Game reserve work (tracking/monitoring wildlife), national parks, conservation areas, and protected zones
- Domestic animal shelters & adoption centers)

### **The 5 Freedoms for Animal Welfare**

There are 5 universally-accepted rights established to protect animals living under human stewardship.

- Nutrition** - factors that involve the animal's access to sufficient, balanced, varied and clean food and water.
- Environment** - factors that enable comfort through temperature, substrate, space, air, odor, noise, and predictability. \*The amount of minimum required space varies from animal to animal. However, in general, the amount of space afforded to animals should allow them enough room to roam, run, swim, hide, den, engage in enrichment, and participate in other natural activities and behaviors we would see in the wild. Global and domestic or international standards vary on this as well.
- Health** - factors that enable good health through absence of disease, injury, impairment, and healthy fitness level.
- Behavior** - factors that provide varied, novel and engaging environmental challenges through sensory inputs, exploration, foraging, bonding, playing, retreating, and others.
- Mental State** - the mental state of the animal should benefit from predominantly positive states, such as pleasure, comfort or vitality, while reducing states such as fear, frustration, hunger, pain, or boredom. Zoochosis is the abnormal animal behavior caused by time in captivity.

### **Examples of evidence:**

- Website of community-based partner organization(s) that work with animals
  - MOUs indicating that partner organizations hold animal ethics in high regard and that students will work within their skill levels
- (0) Gap year provider brings students to animal charities or sanctuaries where none or almost none of the Five Freedoms of Animal Welfare are met. Partner organization allows elephant riding and/or petting, walking with, or interacting directly with large predators such as lions, bears, and wolves. Animals are only on loan for short-term activities.
- *I, the provider, have not vetted my community-based partner organizations for ethical engagement with animals. My participants have hands-on time with wild animals that does not mimic wild behavior (e.g. walking animals on leashes, dressing them up in pajamas).*

1. Provider ensures that community-based partner organizations meet 2-3 of the Five Freedoms of Animal Welfare. Additional minimum standards for amounts water given, space provided, and minimum enrichment for captive animals are set as goals; however, there's no clear plan for achieving them.
    - *We, the provider and community-based organization have communicated about and verified that some of the 5 Freedoms are met, and some are set as goals for animals in captivity. We consider ethics for animal engagement at a goal-level and do our best.*
  2. Provider works with community partner organizations that ensure that the animals they work with have 4-5 of the Five Freedoms of Animal Welfare. Community-Based Organization is composed of local volunteer medical staff such as vets, vet nurses, and vet techs. Students might assist these local volunteers or staff to provide enrichment on most days to captive animals.
    - *We, the provider and community-based partner organization, have ensured that at least 4 of the Five Freedoms are met. Program participants do not engage in any projects outside of their skill sets that involve animals.*
  3. Community-Based Organization ensures that all of the Five Freedoms for Animal Welfare are met. Activities involving animals are conducted only with animal sanctuaries led by medical staff trained as veterinarians, vet nurses, and techs. Only professionals and long-term volunteers have close contact with the animals in treatment. Animal sanctuaries with which the gap year provider partners offer more than just animal programming, including a holistic approach to conservation and animal welfare (tree planting, marine debris clean ups, domestic dog adoption campaigns, etc.)
    - *We, the provider, community-based organization, and participants, all understand how animals are treated, with the highest standards for ethics in mind and in practice. Community-based partner organization keeps transparent records of donations and animal release and enrichment efforts.*
- (X) Does not apply. In this case, please briefly comment about why this category does not apply to your organization.

**TOTAL FAIR TRADE LEARNING SCORE FOR YOUR ORGANIZATION:**

**[x/39]**

**Please indicate your organization's strategies for improvement, considering your self-score. These might become clearer once you receive your Accreditation application back after preliminary review.**

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Gap Year Association would like to thank Dr. Eric Hartman, Founder and Executive Director of the Center for Peace and Global Citizenship, which houses the Community Based Global Learning Collaborative (“the Collaborative” for short) and publishes the Fair Trade Learning (FTL) Standards, for his expertise and feedback during GYA’s adaptation update on FTL. Special thanks as well to Caitlin Ferrarini, Dr. Sarah Stanlick, Dr. Nora Reynolds, Dr. Richard Keily at the Collaborative, whose guidance and keen eye for participatory learning practice contributed significantly to our update.

Thank you to the GYA Standards & Accreditation Committee, especially to Ethan Knight, Elizabeth Bezark, Dominique Robinson, and Josephine Foster, for their expertise and significant advancement of these standards. Thank you to Robin Pendoley for his consultation based on years of experience working in global education. Finally but not least importantly, thank you to Nora Livingstone and Julia Rogers for building the Ethical Engagement with Animals Standard into this rubric.

### 3.X.X - RISK MANAGEMENT IN LOCATIONS WITH LIMITED MEDICAL RESOURCES

Typically this certification is for organizations traveling 2 or more hours away from definitive emergency medical care: a modern hospital with a reliable intensive care unit with advanced trauma life support and advanced cardiac life support (ACLS) and a medical transportation system with reliable ACLS that can rapidly transport a person to a modern hospital. Typically, these facilities are not available during backcountry/wilderness operations or in developing countries. These standards are frequently considered as part of travel in backcountry and internationally in developing countries.

#### 3.1 - "Organization manages risk responsibly."

Appropriate risk management protocols can be effective in helping the organization manage risk and improve decision making. Creating systems that support informed decisions are encouraged.

| Indicator  | Possible Evidence of Indicator<br>(these are simply possible examples and do not constitute a comprehensive list)  | In Place | In Process | Not Applicable | Exception Requested |
|--|--|----------|------------|----------------|---------------------|
| <p>3.1.1 - Field resources sufficient to get to greater care, that must include at least:</p> <p>(A) Cash (not credit cards or an ATM)</p> <p>(B) Documents accessible offline, with redundancy: minimally including passport information (if needed), participant health &amp; insurance information, forms authorizing treatment and release of necessary medical information</p> <p><i>(In backcountry &amp; remote locations, field staff should have the resources readily available to manage emergencies independently without support. Organizations should have a list of required items staff must have on hand at all times.)</i></p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Expectations of staff to have on their person at all times each of the items at left</li> <li>• List of items staff must have on their person at all times</li> </ul> |          |            |                |                     |
| <p>3.1.2 - Staff have ability to communicate any emergent issues with locals. <i>(Relevant cultural understanding is a vital consideration for effective communication. Communicating with locals about emergencies in their local language may be a requirement for staff depending on program locations.)</i></p>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Copy of job descriptions</li> </ul>   |          |            |                |                     |

| Indicator  | Possible Evidence of Indicator<br>(these are simply possible examples and do not constitute a comprehensive list)  | In Place | In Process | Not Applicable | Exception Requested |
|--|--|----------|------------|----------------|---------------------|
| <p>3.1.3 - Direct Supervision Staff have access to emergency communication tools whenever they are with students, or, a plan for communication in the event those tools are inoperable. <i>(Having access to a satellite phone or a cell phone is critical in terms of communicating with the organization's headquarters or local authorities.)</i></p>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Field list of required-to-carry items</li> <li>• Copy of staff protocols for communication</li> </ul>   |          |            |                |                     |
| <p>3.1.4 - Organization has a policy in place to fly with reputable airlines. <i>(Not all countries regulate airlines to the same standards as the FAA. Efforts should be made to work only with U.S.-certified travel agents, airlines, or to research to U.S.-standards for air travel safety. Some helpful questions might include: Does the desired destination represent a significant portion of that airlines routes? How 'on time' is that particular airline? Are there more than one flight per day for that route? <a href="https://www.airlineratings.com/safety-rating-tool/">https://www.airlineratings.com/safety-rating-tool/</a>)</i></p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Copy of policy detailing appropriate steps of inquiry to fly with any non-major airlines</li> <li>• Agreement with certified U.S. Travel Agent</li> </ul> |          |            |                |                     |
| <p>3.1.5 - Organization has a plan for, and access to, timely and efficient emergency student evacuation services, including a plan to pay for it. <i>(This formerly required uniform medical evacuation protocols, but was expanded for the 2023 standards. It requires both having a plan in place for evacuation of all U.S. students in an emergency, and protocols for when evacuation is warranted. Having great medical evacuation insurance is critical, however unless the staff are prepared and aware of how to activate the insurance it becomes useless. Typically, good carriers might include iNext, ISOS, HTH, MEDEX, etc.)</i></p>        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Copy of protocols for using medical evacuation including who makes the final decision</li> </ul>  |          |            |                |                     |

| Indicator   | Possible Evidence of Indicator<br>(these are simply possible examples<br>and do not constitute a<br>comprehensive list)  | In<br>Place | In<br>Proce<br>ss | Not<br>Appli<br>cable | Excep<br>tion<br>Reque<br>sted |
|---|--|-------------|-------------------|-----------------------|--------------------------------|
| <p>3.1.6 - Organization must facilitate registration with relevant authorities prior to arrival (rescue agencies, State Department STEP program, etc.). <i>(If traveling backcountry, all appropriate resources should be notified to help address any emergencies that might arise and to keep staff informed. This could be the organization registering each student; the students registering themselves (with some verification), or staff registering prior-to-departure. During March 2020 Pandemic evacuations, prior STEP Registration proved vital for evacuation in collaboration with the U.S. State Department.)</i></p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Copy of job description / expectations of responsible staff</li> <li>• Copy of organizational policy requiring registration with listed agencies</li> </ul> |             |                   |                       |                                |

### 3.2 - "Organization critically and continually reviews all locations for safety in advance of any student activities."

Changes to the safety of any given site happen rapidly and are affected by a variety of unforeseeable and unpredictable elements. Staying connected to what's happening allows for more time to address concerns before they become urgent, and more informed decisions once they need to be made.

| Indicator   | Possible Evidence of Indicator<br>(these are simply possible examples and do not constitute a comprehensive list)   | In Place | In Process | Not Applicable | Exception Requested |
|---|---|----------|------------|----------------|---------------------|
| <p>3.2.1 - Organization has a designated person responsible for checking external threats both prior to arrival and each day a program is in process (for programs operating internationally, registration with OSAC is a requirement). <i>(Being on the ground in a backcountry setting, it can be difficult to access information. Regular checks for political, environmental, health, etc. are worth consideration. Organizations should use relevant State and/or national resources such as NOAA &amp; OSAC. Good examples include: <a href="http://www.globalincidentmap.com">www.globalincidentmap.com</a>, <a href="http://reliefweb.int">http://reliefweb.int</a>.)</i></p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Copy of policy requiring staff (office or, if realistic, Direct Supervision Staff) check resources for news on a daily basis</li> <li>• List of resources checked</li> </ul>                     |          |            |                |                     |
| <p>3.2.2 - Organization has additional protocols in place if a location has a State Department warning valid for any duration of the intended trip:</p> <p>(A) Insurance is notified and verified for validity</p> <p>(B) Organization is transparent about what types of State Department warnings rise to the level of communication with students and relevant parties.</p> <p><i>(Some insurance companies will not honor liability insurance if a State Department warning is in place. Communicating intentionally with parents, guardians, emergency contacts, can support the relationship and help frame next steps.)</i></p>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Copy of protocols in case a location has a specific State Department warning</li> <li>• Copy of letter written to students and parents informing them State Department warning status</li> </ul> |          |            |                |                     |

### 3.3 - "Students receive appropriate orientation."

Backcountry considerations for safety and cross-cultural concerns include all of the 1.x.x Standards of Philosophy and Professional Ethics, with additional concern given the heightened stakes unique to this certification. Same as is true for all GYA Standards, students are the last line of defense in their own safety, but only if they have adequate information to make informed decisions. Additionally, cultural considerations, where appropriate, must be made to support a safe and positive experience.

| Indicator  | Possible Evidence of Indicator<br>(these are simply possible examples and do not constitute a comprehensive list)   | In Place | In Process | Not Applicable | Exception Requested |
|--|---|----------|------------|----------------|---------------------|
| 3.3.1 - At orientation, students must have a physical reminder about what to do in case of being lost. <i>(Often times this is a tool designed to facilitate clear thinking in a challenging situation and might be the business card of a hostel or staff person, an emergency contact, a digitally captured card - available offline - or phone number.)</i>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Copy of emergency card with requisite information</li> <li>• Copy of student orientation requiring use of a card or similar emergency steps</li> </ul>   |          |            |                |                     |
| 3.3.2 - Student on-site orientation works to train students to cultivate their own risk management lenses:<br>(A) Reliable methods of getting in touch with staff or local supervisor<br>(B) Location and use of medical kit/equipment<br>(C) Personal safety<br>(D) Program policies review includes sexual &/or romantic rules<br>(E) Strategies to assess the transportation safety<br><i>(Students are the last line of their own defense and organizations should work to train students to be risk aware.)</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Copy of orientation that lists location and clear expectations of staff to cover all relevant points at left</li> <li>• Copy of staff policy requiring orientation covering all relevant points at left</li> </ul> |          |            |                |                     |



| <i>Indicator</i>  | <i>Possible Evidence of Indicator<br/>(these are simply possible examples<br/>and do not constitute a<br/>comprehensive list)</i>   | <i>In<br/>Place</i> | <i>In<br/>Proce<br/>ss</i> | <i>Not<br/>Appli<br/>cable</i> | <i>Excep<br/>tion<br/>Reque<br/>sted</i> |
|---|---|---------------------|----------------------------|--------------------------------|--|
| <p>3.3.3 - Student on-site orientation addresses additional backcountry concerns including as appropriate:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(A) Human Hazards Drugs and alcohol <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sexual assault</li> <li>• Hygiene issues</li> <li>• Food &amp; potable water</li> <li>• Dangerous drivers</li> </ul> </li> <li>(B) Environmental Hazards <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Diseases (malaria, dengue, Covid-19, etc.)</li> <li>• Local fauna</li> <li>• Local flora</li> </ul> </li> <li>(C) Activity Hazards <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Methods of transportation/seafaring</li> </ul> </li> <li>(D) Cultural Considerations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Local laws</li> <li>• Cultural norms &amp; interaction with locals</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p><i>(Student orientations in backcountry settings require additional information to mitigate the additional risks. These hazards frequently compound each other and need to be considered in relationship to one another.)</i></p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Copy of orientation that lists location and clear expectations of staff to cover all relevant points at left</i></li> <li>• <i>Copy of staff policy requiring orientation covering all relevant points at left</i></li> </ul> |                     |                            |                                |  |

### 3.4 - "Staff are trained appropriately and regularly, and certified where appropriate."

Staff who are in a position of leadership must have appropriate certifications where necessary and available, and specific training tailored to those activities and locations where they are charged with safeguarding students. The distance to medical resources and the unpredictable nature of these locations require additional planning.

| Indicator   | Possible Evidence of Indicator<br>(these are simply possible examples and do not constitute a comprehensive list)  | In Place | In Process | Not Applicable | Exception Requested |
|---|--|----------|------------|----------------|---------------------|
| 3.4.1 - Minimum current certification of WFA, preferably WFR or WEMT. <i>(Some reputable providers include: WMI, WMA, or SOLO.)</i>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Copy of current staff certifications requirement</li> </ul>   |          |            |                |                     |
| 3.4.2 - Staff must have specific training or knowledge that includes special consideration for the socio-emotional aspects of risk management regarding; homestays, isolation (i.e., quarantine & language limitations), culture shock, homesickness, etc. <i>(Unique considerations must be addressed when preparing students for unique situations. In homestays this might entail knowing where the staff live. Culturally there may be minor cues that could cause great issue. For physical safety training and risk management please refer to 1.8.2)</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Copy of staff training highlighting specific concerns at left</li> <li>• Copies of support materials that are given to staff addressing concerns at left</li> </ul> |          |            |                |                     |
| 3.4.3 - Staff must have specific training or knowledge that includes special consideration for potable water and hygienic food standards. <i>(Potable water and hygienic food are of course critical in all cases, but especially so when in backcountry settings. Instructions on how to verify food and water safety is important.)</i>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Copy of staff training about safe food &amp; water</li> <li>• Copies of support materials that are given to staff addressing concerns at left</li> </ul>            |          |            |                |                     |
| 3.4.4 - Staff must have specific training or knowledge that includes special consideration for environmental hazards such as dangerous local flora and fauna and how to prevent & respond to them (snakes, spiders, scorpions, poison oak / ivy, poisonous fruits, etc.). <i>(In backcountry settings, annoyances can turn majorly problematic, but major concerns can be fatal. Concern for risk management, preparation, and safety must be addressed.)</i>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Copy of staff training highlighting specific concerns at left</li> <li>• Copies of support materials that are given to staff addressing concerns at left</li> </ul> |          |            |                |                     |

| Indicator  | Possible Evidence of Indicator<br>(these are simply possible examples and do not constitute a comprehensive list)  | In Place | In Process | Not Applicable | Exception Requested |
|--|--|----------|------------|----------------|---------------------|
| <p>3.4.5 - Staff must have specific training or knowledge that includes special consideration for local diseases, sicknesses, and vectors of infection (e.g., dengue, HIV, malaria, staphylococcus, giardia, etc.).<br/> <i>(Often times students exposed to new locations are also exposed to new and foreign bacteria that put them at a higher risk. Staphylococcus, for instance, is different in different locations and without previous exposure and thus basic antibodies, the bacteria can grow dangerously fast, representing one of the most common bacteria-related death. Knowing when something is relatively minor and when it warrants deeper investigation / treatment is paramount. Please refer to COVID-19 Working Policies Document.)</i></p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Copy of staff training highlighting specific concerns at left</li> <li>• Copies of support materials that are given to staff addressing concerns at left</li> </ul> |          |            |                |                     |
| <p>3.4.6 - Staff must have specific training or knowledge that includes special consideration for safety with regard to political concerns, and how to address them. <i>(Staff must have a strong plan for how to respond in the event of a political crisis. Ultimately the quality of response will hinge on a staff persons ability to understand local political concerns and, to a degree, anticipate how to steer their students to avoid negative outcomes.)</i></p>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Copy of staff training highlighting specific concerns at left</li> <li>• Copies of support materials that are given to staff addressing concerns at left</li> </ul> |          |            |                |                     |

#### **4.X.X - INDEPENDENT STUDENT EXPERIENCES**

Organizations that coordinate students' specific independent experiences should allow Community Partners to select participants and understand that there are greater risks at hand for their students. Students choosing an experience of an independent nature must be informed about the relevant concerns and the full details to which they're committing. However, setting the student up for a successful experiences will ultimately require planning, and adequately empowering the student to supervise themselves. Preparation is a central component in this certification level.

#### **4.1 - "Organization has protocols to vet independent experiences for safety of student and community partners."**

Students, parents, and community partners must be informed about the risks. The results of a thorough vetting process must be transparent and access to the results must be shared with key stakeholders prior to final commitments.

| Indicator  | Possible Evidence of Indicator<br>(these are simply possible examples and do not constitute a comprehensive list)  | In Place | In Process | Not Applicable | Exception Requested |
|--|--|----------|------------|----------------|---------------------|
| <p>4.1.1 - Prior to beginning the experience, organization must collect relevant feedback from key stakeholders and proactively share the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(A) Reliability of access to student basic needs</li> <li>(B) Reliability of contact, including supervisor's name and information</li> <li>(C) Report about student accommodation safety</li> <li>(D) Expectations of the student while on program/experience</li> <li>(E) Reasonable communication expectations</li> <li>(F) Financial arrangements</li> </ul> <p><i>(There are very few certainties in working with individual experiences, however, it is the responsibility of the organization to verify that any independent experience is verified rather than put students into a potentially negative or unsustainable position.)</i></p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Copy of expectation to share these items with students prior to their arrival on site</li> <li>• Copy of template for MOUs that include experience vetting</li> </ul> |          |            |                |                     |

| Indicator  | Possible Evidence of Indicator<br>(these are simply possible examples and do not constitute a comprehensive list)  | In Place | In Process | Not Applicable | Exception Requested |
|--|--|----------|------------|----------------|---------------------|
| <p>4.1.2 - Gap year organizations work with community partners to optimize fit for participants and:</p> <p>(A) Have regular feedback between student, community partner, gap year organization and other concerned stakeholders</p> <p>(B) Community partner has an assigned emergency contact from the gap year organization</p> <p>(C) Community partner provides input during the acceptance process including the agency to say no to any student without retaliation (through loss of business, negative publicity, etc.)</p> <p><i>(Working with students on independent experiences works best when everyone is excited to work together and have clear expectations for success.)</i></p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Copy of expectation to share these items with students prior to their arrival on site</li> <li>• Copy of template for MOUs that include student placement vetting</li> </ul>                            |          |            |                |                     |
| <p>4.1.3 - Gap year organization supports community partner to provide resources and structured opportunities for student learning &amp; reflection. <i>(Learning through independent experiences yields better results when additional opportunities for reflection are offered. Gap year organizations should support community partners in developing such opportunities for their students on a challenge-by-choice basis.)</i></p>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Write up (or curricular template) of an experience given to prospective students</li> <li>• Copy of template for MOUs that include learning opportunities</li> </ul>                                    |          |            |                |                     |
| <p>4.1.4 - Focus on experiential education that include elements of mentorship either through a local contact or remotely through organization staff personnel. <i>(Individual experiences, in order to be considered an educational gap year, must have some degree of mentorship. This may be in the form of specific job counsel, or better yet mentorship aligned with standard 1.1.1.)</i></p>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Copy of mentorship expectations for the local contact</li> <li>• Copy of staff expectations requiring mentorship component</li> <li>• Copy of remote-mentorship methodology and expectations</li> </ul> |          |            |                |                     |

#### 4.2 - "Organization provides basic pre-departure support."

The demands of an independent experience require a high level of self-reliance by each student. Many efforts can be made to safeguard students and provide the highest chances for a successful experience, but they all start with thorough pre-departure support.

| Indicator  | Possible Evidence of Indicator<br>(these are simply possible examples and do not constitute a comprehensive list)  | In Place | In Process | Not Applicable | Exception Requested |
|--|--|----------|------------|----------------|---------------------|
| <p>4.2.1 - Student receives applicable pre-departure information (and preferably training) relevant to each of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(A) Culture &amp; Language - to understand context, support integration, and navigate potential emergencies,</li> <li>(B) Daily Essentials - including transportation, accommodation, food &amp; water, and communication,</li> <li>(C) Social-Emotional Health - including self-care and available support systems (mentors, organization, family, friends, professionals, etc.),</li> <li>(D) Independent Project Goals - to understand the capacity, limitations, and network of the project,</li> <li>(E) Managing Risk (sexual assault training, theft &amp; scams, etc.).</li> </ul> <p><i>(Students must be prepared for the independent experience they are immersing themselves in. Adequate preparation must be given to the student to foster a positive and healthy experience. NOTE this does not mean coddling the student for a predictable experience.)</i></p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pre-departure written materials for student</li> <li>• Organizational checklist for student preparedness</li> </ul> |          |            |                |                     |

| Indicator   | Possible Evidence of Indicator<br>(these are simply possible examples<br>and do not constitute a<br>comprehensive list)   | In<br>Place | In<br>Proce<br>ss | Not<br>Appli<br>cable | Excep<br>tion<br>Reque<br>sted |
|---|---|-------------|-------------------|-----------------------|--------------------------------|
| <p>4.2.2 - Organization provides applicable pre-departure logistical support including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(A) Enrollment in the State Department’s STEP program (for international destinations),</li> <li>(B) ID, passport &amp; visa requirements, including timelines for validity &amp; renewals,</li> <li>(C) Vaccination requirements (&amp; any recommendations), based on CDC and/or WHO guidelines,</li> <li>(D) Transportation logistics including arrival transfer information,</li> <li>(E) Financial preparedness, including budgeting, regional expectations &amp; norms, and how to access &amp; spend money,</li> <li>(F) Communication methods &amp; expectations (who, how, when, and why),</li> <li>(G) Regional safety concerns such as environmental, flora, fauna, political, religious, cultural, etc.,</li> <li>(H) Student emergency procedures, including access to local medical care and use of medical/evacuation insurance,</li> <li>(I) Community-based organizational representative (name, contact information, and availability),</li> <li>(J) Packing list that includes medical kit and regional specific clothing.</li> </ul> <p><i>(When on an independent experience, the student is responsible for all of the details that would typically be managed by a staff person. The organization should educate students to be as self-reliant as possible with their logistical needs.)</i></p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Copy of student preparation list addressing all points at left</li> <li>• Copy of staff expectation to connect with students and address all points at left</li> </ul> |             |                   |                       |                                |

| Indicator   | Possible Evidence of Indicator<br>(these are simply possible examples<br>and do not constitute a<br>comprehensive list) | In<br>Place | In<br>Proce<br>ss | Not<br>Appli<br>cable | Excep<br>tion<br>Reque<br>sted |
|---|---|-------------|-------------------|-----------------------|--------------------------------|
| <p>4.2.3 - Organization shares with the student any details arranged on the student's behalf. Examples include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(A) Financial &amp; timeline commitments,</li> <li>(B) Meals, accommodation, and transportation obligations,</li> <li>(C) Project/activity information including supervisor, expectations, and commitment,</li> <li>(D) On-site orientation must-haves (see 4.3.1).</li> </ul> <p><i>(Students are their own best advocates on independent experiences, however, having the information to be an advocate for themselves is required.)</i></p> |   |             |                   |                       |                                |



### 4.3 - "Organization has a local contact for each student."

Critical to a positive experience for the student is a local contact person: this person should provide local information, guidelines for how to deal with specific local problems, and help in case of an emergency. Organizations should work with local contacts to help them uphold relevant standards for students.

| Indicator  | Possible Evidence of Indicator<br>(these are simply possible examples and do not constitute a comprehensive list)  | In Place | In Process | Not Applicable | Exception Requested |
|--|--|----------|------------|----------------|---------------------|
| <p>4.3.1 - Organization arranges an on-site orientation by each local contact in congruence with the orientation standards in the Philosophy and Ethics section (e.g., 1.5.1) for each relevant:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(B) Community-Based Learning (2.x.x)</li> <li>(C) Independent Experience (4.x.x)</li> <li>(D) Partnerships (eg, homestays, &amp; 5.x.x)</li> </ul> <p><i>(Orientations are critical to preparing students for both a successful and risk-aware experience. The local staff must be able to provide either independently or in concert with organization staff, all details that would otherwise be given to the student as part of the Philosophy and Ethics section. Community-Based Learning can include conservation efforts, working with animals, and especially anywhere a power-differential is present.)</i></p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Copy of expectation given to local contact detailing orientation specifics</li> <li>• Copy of orientation template used by local contacts</li> </ul>                                      |          |            |                |                     |
| <p>4.3.2 - Organization's protocols require regular contact (at least every 21 days and preferably via video/in-person) between the student and a designated local contact. <i>(Students working independently often will not reach out for help unless prompted and part of an existing relationship. Conversations and check ins should focus on mental health, physical health, safety, and quality of experience. Any concerning health issues are communicated to the organization.)</i></p>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Copy of staff expectation for regular communication</li> <li>• Copy of checklist for communication with students</li> <li>• Organizational calendar detailing check-in details</li> </ul> |          |            |                |                     |

**4.4 - "Organization has policies & resources for students to support their own personal health and risk awareness."**

*Students need to be educated as independent, empowered and informed advocates for their own well being.*

| Indicator   | Possible Evidence of Indicator<br>(these are simply possible examples and do not constitute a comprehensive list)  | In Place | In Process | Not Applicable | Exception Requested |
|---|--|----------|------------|----------------|---------------------|
| 4.4.1 - Organization has specific language on release and waiver forms that outlines the unique and inherent risks of an independent experience. <i>(Paperwork should clearly articulate the additional risks of an independent experience such as: limited organizational support, greater delays in communication and transportation, as well as the unique mental health challenges of being an independent student away from home.)</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Copy of release and waiver form that highlights specific concerns for student health and safety</li> </ul>  |          |            |                |                     |
| 4.4.2 - Students must be certified in basic first-aid. <i>(In the absence of Direct Supervisory Staff, students become responsible for their own medical needs. Certification will help identify early, any emergencies.)</i>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Copy of expectation for students to be certified in first-aid prior to commencement</li> </ul>  |          |            |                |                     |
| 4.4.3 - Organization educates students on how to contact organization in the event the local contact(s) is unable to meet students' needs. <i>(Students should know how to contact the organization's headquarters, this might include international dialing, satellite phone, HAM radio, etc. Additionally, having a backup local contact is also advised.)</i>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Copy of instructions given to every student for contacting HQ</li> <li>• Copy of student orientation that details how to contact organization headquarters</li> </ul> |          |            |                |                     |

| <i>Indicator</i>   | <i>Possible Evidence of Indicator<br/>(these are simply possible examples<br/>and do not constitute a<br/>comprehensive list)</i>                       | <i>In<br/>Place</i> | <i>In<br/>Proce<br/>ss</i> | <i>Not<br/>Appli<br/>cable</i> | <i>Excep<br/>tion<br/>Reque<br/>sted</i> |
|--|---|---------------------|----------------------------|--------------------------------|--|
| <p>4.4.4 - Organization shares any critical risk management plans and resources with students that include at least:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(A) Medical emergency - including site-specific clinics/hospital services as well as adequate response strategies beyond the scope of a basic first-aid course</li> <li>(B) Weather / natural disaster</li> <li>(C) Flora / fauna and terrain</li> <li>(D) Drug and alcohol mitigation (legal &amp; safety)</li> <li>(E) Terrorist attack</li> <li>(F) Student evacuation</li> <li>(G) Political crisis</li> <li>(H) Sexual assault</li> </ul> <p><i>(Independent students may need to navigate emergencies with little support from HQ. Thus, having relevant &amp; updated emergency protocols is vital. Note, student versions of these may be less complicated (aka, "light") to support ease of use.)</i></p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Copy of student orientation or on boarding documents that share the core emergency protocols</i></li> </ul> |                     |                            |                                |  |

## 5.X.X - PARTNERSHIPS

Partnerships are critical relationships in many organizations' programming, examples might include: adventure outfitters, educators outside of the organization, project managers, transportation companies, homestays, etc. Oftentimes, the best educational experience is facilitated by working with an outside expert in that particular field. Bringing an organization into relationship with a local contact or partner organization can endanger students if it's not properly vetted, or if the expectations of the partner are not clear.

### 5.1 - "Organization maintains integrity with GYA standards through their partnerships."

Partnerships should be clearly understood and mutually beneficial in order to best serve student development and safety. The integrity of such partnerships must be maintained or risk student outcomes and organizational relationships.

| Indicator   | Possible Evidence of Indicator<br>(these are simply possible examples and do not constitute a comprehensive list)  | In Place | In Process | Not Applicable | Exception Requested |
|---|--|----------|------------|----------------|---------------------|
| 5.1.1 - Organization has written agreements that clearly outline the division of responsibilities; including considerations for partner expectations, risk management, finances, daily necessities, etc..<br><i>(Clarity around who is responsible for what, can help prevent critical oversights around things such as drinking water, doors that lock, emergency funds, food, mosquito nets, etc.)</i>                  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Copy of template used in detailing partnership agreements</li> <li>• Copy of staff expectation to clarify partnership expectations</li> </ul>   |          |            |                |                     |
| 5.1.2 - Organization has policies in place to annually research and assess the partner's recent history with safety, additionally, this must be done prior to the beginning of a new partnership. <i>(When partnering with an organization assumptions should never be made based on a history of no known incidents. Regular review is necessary to verify the partner's ongoing commitment to effective practices.)</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Copy of template used in verifying partnership competencies</li> <li>• Copy of staff expectation requiring them to assess partner strengths and certifications</li> <li>• Written letter of commitment from the Executive Director</li> </ul> |          |            |                |                     |

| Indicator  | Possible Evidence of Indicator<br>(these are simply possible examples and do not constitute a comprehensive list)  | In Place | In Process | Not Applicable | Exception Requested |
|--|--|----------|------------|----------------|---------------------|
| <p>5.1.3 - Organization has policies in place to research that the partner does not carry any current ties to illegal organizations or activities.<br/><i>(Partnering with someone who could unintentionally put the students in harms way through external affiliations is critical. Additionally, this standard is meant to not create additional hierarchies in responsibility to the local host communities.)</i></p>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Copy of staff expectation requiring them to assess partner relationships</li> <li>• Written letter of commitment from the Executive Director</li> </ul> |          |            |                |                     |
| <p>5.1.4 - Organization has professional references who have specifically visited the site prior to sending students. <i>(In the best circumstances, a staff person will be able to physically visit each site for safety and security. However, this is unreasonable in every case, and thus making contact with a professional reference of a partner should be made in advance, or performing a background / reference check to the fullest extent possible.)</i></p>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Copy of organizational policy to physically visit each site</li> <li>• Copy of staff expectation requiring them to perform reference check</li> </ul>   |          |            |                |                     |
| <p>5.1.5 - Organizational partners must abide by the provider’s policies (including digital and in-person) related to romantic / sexual relationships, fraternizing, and substance use with students.<br/><i>(Homestay families, volunteer supervisors, and institutional partners all are de facto extensions of the program and thus power-differentials and responsibilities to safeguard students become problematic in a relationship. Organizations must therefore maintain as sacrosanct the integrity of the student-educator relationship.)</i></p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Copy of partner staff expectations that clearly outline provider’s policies.</li> </ul>   |          |            |                |                     |

## 5.2 - "Organization has policies for managing risk on hired transportation."

Whether airborne, on land, or in the water, transportation remains an often critical element of a gap year and thus an important safety matter. Local and public transportation have intrinsic educational value but also intrinsic risks; road transportation in particular remains the most common cause of death.

| Indicator  | Possible Evidence of Indicator<br>(these are simply possible examples and do not constitute a comprehensive list)  | In Place | In Process | Not Applicable | Exception Requested |
|--|--|----------|------------|----------------|---------------------|
| 5.2.1 - Organization researches the reputation of the contracted operator and make appropriate decisions based on results. If available, insurance, licensure, and documentation are verified. <i>(Vetting a contracted operator is often possible through external sources. Inquiries must be made about the reputation of the operator prior to contracting.)</i>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Copy of organizational policy requiring research of reputation prior to contracting</li> <li>• List of questions to ask or methods for verifying history and reputability of contracted operator</li> </ul> |          |            |                |                     |
| 5.2.2 - Organization has a policy to give priority when available to vehicles with seatbelts, and use them. <i>(Unless there is some specific educational motive or logistical impossibility for doing so, vehicles with functioning seatbelts for each student must be used.)</i>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Copy of staff policy requiring preference for vehicles with seatbelts</li> <li>• Copy of staff policy requiring students wear seatbelts when available</li> </ul>   |          |            |                |                     |
| 5.2.3 - Staff and/or organization research routes for possible external threats related to weather, landslides, or security prior to each trip. <i>(It cannot be assumed that every hired transportation company has researched potential external threats. It is obviously not, for instance, safe to travel in areas where bandits regularly hijack a vehicle, but the hired hands may not choose to share that information for fear of losing the business. Research might lead to cancelling a trip, changing the itinerary, or hiring specialized vehicles or escorts.)</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Copy of staff policy &amp; procedure requiring they research / assess external threats prior to departure on any road</li> <li>• Staff contract clearly stating such responsibility</li> </ul>              |          |            |                |                     |

| Indicator   | Possible Evidence of Indicator<br>(these are simply possible examples and do not constitute a comprehensive list)   | In Place | In Process | Not Applicable | Exception Requested |
|---|---|----------|------------|----------------|---------------------|
| <p>5.2.4 - Whenever possible, staff should check with every vehicle operator personally for awareness prior to boarding; short conversations with the driver to ascertain their road-worthiness.</p> <p><i>(Asking about the vehicle, trip, cost, or the weather is usually sufficient. If working with any non-organizational driver, whether overseas or domestic, fatigue and drug use can be common and significant contributors to accidents. Staff should do their best within reason to ascertain the roadworthiness of every driver.)</i></p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Copy of staff policy requiring verification of driver safety</li> <li>• List of possible measures for assessing driver safety</li> </ul> |          |            |                |                     |