

NUMBER: ACAF 2.09 (NEW)
SECTION: Academic Affairs
SUBJECT: International Travel Policy for Students
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Policy for: Columbia Campus
Procedure for: Columbia Campus
Authorized by: Michael D. Amiridis
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I. Policy

The University of South Carolina encourages students to engage internationally in educational, research, and service activities. This International Travel Policy is intended to promote the health, safety, and security of all students at the University of South Carolina while traveling outside of the United States for University-related purposes.

For purposes of this policy the terms abroad, overseas, and internationally refer to destinations outside of the fifty United States of America and District of Columbia (Washington, D.C.).

This policy applies to all students (undergraduate, graduate, and professional) traveling internationally for University-related purposes, which may include but are not limited to study, research, internships, service, conferences, presentations, teaching, performances, or athletic competitions.

This policy outlines the University's requirements with regard to (A) international travel registration, (B) international travel insurance, (C) University travel warnings, and (D) international travel involving student groups.

A. Student International Travel Registration

The University's Student International Travel Registry is a confidential and secure database for maintaining key travel information for all students traveling internationally for University-related purposes. The Student International Travel Registry is the official and authoritative source of traveler information that forms the basis for the University's emergency response protocols and communications strategy (e.g., alerts, warnings, evacuation notices) when responding to an emergency or critical incident abroad.

All students (undergraduate, graduate, and professional) traveling abroad for University-related purposes are required to register their international travel in the Student International Travel Registry maintained by the Study Abroad Office by an established deadline before the expected departure date.

Students are required to immediately notify the Study Abroad Office should any changes to their location occur during the duration of their overseas stay so that their Student International Travel Registry file may be updated.

B. International Emergency Travel Insurance

All students (undergraduate, graduate, and professional) traveling abroad for any University-related purpose are required to obtain international emergency travel insurance from the University's authorized vendor. This insurance provides benefits while traveling overseas for coverage of accident and illness medical expenses, emergency medical evacuation, security evacuation, and repatriation of mortal remains. The University's authorized international emergency travel insurance must be obtained for/by students traveling internationally regardless of whether the student traveler has other related coverage. Only in certain circumstances can purchase of this insurance coverage be waived. Students who believe that they have insurance coverage that will meet the minimum requirements of the USC policy may attempt to waive this requirement by completing the formal waiver process by the posted deadlines. Completion of this waiver process does not guarantee that a waiver will be granted.

C. University Travel Warnings

The University may warn travelers and/or impose additional requirements or restrictions on students seeking to travel to destinations where health, safety, or security concerns pose risks that warrant such a decision.

The University reserves the right to prohibit or suspend travel by students for University-related purposes to any destination if health, safety, or security concerns pose risks that warrant such a decision.

The University will issue University Travel Warnings based upon destinations for which the U.S. Department of State has issued a Travel Warning, as well as other sources of information, including but not limited to travel advisories from other countries and information from the travel and insurance industries.

In accordance with University Policy ACAF 2.06 International Academic Agreements, the University will not approve new or renew agreements for student-oriented programs that involve University student travel to countries on the U.S. Department of State Travel Warning list, or for which the University has prohibited travel. According to University Policy ACAF 2.06, upon petition from an academic unit, an exception to this policy may be made when there is a compelling reason to do so.

Travel to destinations for University-related purposes for which a University Travel Warning has been issued should conform to the following guidelines:

1. Students cannot be required to participate in any education abroad experience in destinations subject to a University Travel Warning to satisfy a degree requirement.

2. Education abroad programs in destinations subject to a University Travel Warning may be suspended. This applies, but is not limited, to exchange programs, faculty-led programs, third party programs, internships, research, and service learning programs.
3. Individual students (undergraduate, graduate, or professional) may submit a petition to the Study Abroad Office requesting authorization to travel for University-related purposes to destinations subject to a University Travel Warning. If approved, the individual student must (i) register in the Student International Travel Registry and comply with related requirements, (ii) obtain University-approved international emergency travel insurance, and (iii) submit a *Destinations of Risk–Assumption of Risks and Waiver of Liability* form. The University reserves the right to revoke such approval should the safety, security, and/or health situation in a destination deteriorate, either prior to the student’s departure or while the student is abroad.
4. Students already in an overseas location at the time the University issues a University Travel Warning for that location will be advised of the change in the risk status of their location.
 - a. In some cases, students will be advised to evacuate that location. Students who choose to remain in an overseas location after being advised by the University to evacuate must submit a *Destinations of Risk–Assumption of Risks and Waiver of Liability: In Country* form to the Study Abroad Office.
 - b. In other cases, students will be required to evacuate that location. Students who choose to remain in an overseas location after being required by the University to evacuate will not be eligible for University funding or academic credit for the student’s current travel activity, may be held accountable for violating the student code of conduct, and may be subject to restrictions in other benefits or services.
 - c. Should evacuation occur, any potential refund of USC tuition will be handled in accordance with University Policy BUSF 4.07 Study Abroad Refund.

D. International Travel Involving Student Groups

The University of South Carolina encourages faculty and staff members to create and lead programs that provide groups of students with overseas experiences. These student group programs include credit-bearing courses with an overseas component as well as non-credit bearing overseas travel programs.

In accordance with University Policy ACAF 2.08 Faculty/Staff-Led Overseas Programs for Students, group leaders leading students overseas to any destination for study,

research, or other reasons must have their plans reviewed and approved in advance by the established deadline.

Group leaders are responsible for: (a) ensuring all students traveling in the group enter their travel information into the University's International Travel Registry; (b) ensuring all students traveling in the group have obtained international emergency travel insurance through the University's authorized vendor; (c) following all University guidance, including guidance related to destinations under University Travel Warnings; (d) complying with best practices for health, safety, and security planning for pre-departure orientation, during the program, and post-travel review; and (e) upholding all other faculty leader responsibilities as outlined in the Study Abroad Program Development Handbook maintained by the Study Abroad Office.

Group leaders and their assistants accompanying students overseas must be covered by the University's authorized international emergency travel insurance for the duration of the overseas travel. In addition, they must attend a crisis management workshop provided by the Study Abroad Office prior to travel and otherwise comply with the requirements in University Policy ACAF 2.08 Faculty/Staff-Led Overseas Programs for Students.

When the destination in an approved faculty/staff-led overseas program becomes subject to a University Travel Warning after approval, the approval may be rescinded. Should approval be rescinded, any USC tuition refund that may be due will be handled in accordance with University Policy BUSF 4.07 Study Abroad Refund.

II. Procedures

A. Student International Travel Oversight Committee

The Student International Travel Oversight Committee is chaired by a Vice Provost. Other committee members include, but are not limited to, representatives from Study Abroad, Risk Management, General Counsel, Student Affairs, and University Faculty. Committee members are appointed by the University's Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs and Provost. Additional individuals with specific country expertise may be asked to participate in committee deliberations as needed.

The Student International Travel Oversight Committee has the following responsibilities:

1. Determine overseas destinations under a University Travel Warning and maintain a list of those destinations;
2. Review and approve or deny student petitions for authorization to travel to destinations subject to a University Travel Warning;
3. Decide whether students already in an overseas location at the time a University Travel Warning is issued will be advised or required to evacuate that location;

4. Decide whether approval will be rescinded for an approved faculty/staff-led overseas program to a location that becomes subject to a University Travel Warning after approval;
5. Review and approve or deny academic unit petitions for authorization to enter into an international academic agreement that involves student travel to a country on the U.S. Department of State Travel Warning list;
6. Develop procedures and provide guidelines for compliance with this policy;
7. Work to ensure compliance with this policy; and
8. Other responsibilities related to student international travel as charged by the University's Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs and Provost.

III. Related Policies

University Policy ACAF 2.06 International Academic Agreements

University Policy ACAF 2.08 Faculty/Staff-led Overseas Programs for Students (NEW)

University Policy BUSF 4.07 Study Abroad Refund