

Overseas Study Trips—Destination Restrictions and Crisis Management

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As a global university, USC encourages students to gain international experience through a variety of programs, including study abroad, internships overseas, and international service trips. In light of the growing number of overseas programs, it is important to be prepared from a university-wide perspective to respond to emergencies that might occur overseas, and to make well-reasoned decisions about appropriate destinations for USC-sponsored student travel and study.

Destination Restrictions

It is at the discretion of the Provost and/or the Vice President for Student Affairs to restrict travel by USC-sponsored student international trips to destinations with State Department travel warnings, Center for Disease Control (CDC) warnings, or other indicators that might suggest conditions are unhealthful or particularly dangerous for travel. Additionally, travel (or any university-related activities) to countries with U.S. sanctions is prohibited and can only be undertaken after obtaining legal review from the General Counsel's office and approval of the Provost.

All program coordinators are expected to consult State Department and CDC information resources early in the program planning process for any anticipated overseas programs for both graduate and undergraduate students. In the event of State Department or CDC warnings advising against travel to a specific destination, the sponsoring department must inform the Director of Student Support and Advocacy and/or the Vice President for Student Affairs, as far in advance of the program start date as possible if you wish to propose continuing the program. The Vice President for Student Affairs will consult with other members of the USC community, and outside experts as needed, to determine if the university will allow the continuation of the program, with the ultimate decision to be made by the Provost.

The health and safety factors of vulnerable locations can change drastically without warning. Programs are strongly urged to take necessary precautions (such as trip cancellation insurance through a travel agent) in case it becomes necessary to change plans or cancel a trip on short notice. Students should also be encouraged to have back-up plans for alternative study destinations in the event that their first-choice program is suspended for health or safety reasons.

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Crises/Emergencies during an Overseas Program

In the event of an emergency or crisis that threatens the immediate safety of USC students during overseas programs, the university's travel emergency hot line should be called immediately. All faculty and staff traveling overseas, as well as all students on a sponsored-study abroad trip, should be in possession of USC's emergency wallet card. Wallet cards can be downloaded at <http://fbs.usc.edu/depts/travel/page/3765/emergency-procedures/>.

In response to an emergency call, an Overseas Emergency Response Team will be immediately convened by the Vice President for Student Affairs. This group, which would typically include representatives from Student Affairs, the sponsoring academic/administrative unit responsible for the overseas program, and the Provost's office, will gather information and make a recommendation to the Provost about whether to cancel/suspend a program and how to best respond to the needs of student participants. In a serious emergency, the hotline will coordinate the evacuation of students, faculty and staff.

Coordinators of USC overseas student programs will monitor the health/safety situation of their study/travel destinations before and during their program dates. When circumstances arise that call into question the safety of participants, the sponsoring department should immediately contact the Vice President for Student Affairs to initiate the discussion about an appropriate university response.

Additional information and resources for overseas health and safety issues, including the full text of the USC Overseas Emergency Response Plan, are available through the Student Support and Advocacy office and on their Web site www.usc.edu/student-affairs/programs/ssa/overseas_resources. Questions about overseas health and safety issues may be directed to (213) 740-2421.