

Guidelines and Procedures
University-sponsored Travel to Locations with U.S. State Department Travel Warning Status

University of Kansas
Office of International Programs

January 16, 2013

Policy Statement

The quality of the educational experiences and the safety of students, faculty, and staff are the first priorities of the University of Kansas. Due to concerns for student and faculty safety, the University of Kansas does not support education abroad (to include all international, for-credit and non-credit experiential learning activities) to locations where a U.S. State Department Travel Warning has been issued. Students may not receive university sponsorship - including credit for academic programs, financial aid and scholarships, funding for research, or endorsement of co-curricular and extracurricular activities – if traveling to these countries. The countries currently appearing on the list can be accessed at the [U.S. State Department Current Travel Warnings Page](#). This list is updated regularly.

In unique circumstances, exceptions to this policy may be considered by petition to the Education Abroad Review Committee (EARC), a standing committee of faculty and administrative personnel that meets three times each year to consider proposals for KU-sponsorship in countries where U.S. State Department Travel Warnings have been issued. Approval by the EARC will only be granted following a full review of the proposed international program, a detailed assessment of student/faculty risk based on the program proposal and destination country, and a finding of compelling reasons to permit the proposed program to operate. The University of Kansas, at the discretion of the Provost, may require students to depart the country should circumstances change thereby creating a significant risk to the safety and well-being of students.

Information on the petition process is available at: www.international.ku.edu.

The University of Kansas recognizes that faculty and graduate students may wish to conduct academic research in countries currently under a U.S. Department of State Travel Warning, and has made special provisions to accommodate these needs. Faculty and graduate students who wish to conduct University-sponsored research in dangerous locations should refer to the [Faculty, Staff, Post-Doctoral Fellows and Research Scientist Assumption of Risk and General Release Form](#) or [Graduate Student Assumption of Risk and General Release Form](#), as appropriate, found at www.international.ku.edu/~oip/travel/Foreign_Research_Liability_Waiver.pdf. The original form will be maintained in the Office of International Programs. A copy of the form will be forwarded to the KU Center for Research. Forms must be completed and on file prior to departure for University sponsorship to be approved.

The University will not support student travel to countries for which the State Department has warned U.S. citizens to depart, ordered dependents of U.S. State Department and non-emergency personnel to depart, strongly warns U.S. citizens against travel to the country, or recommends that U.S. citizens to defer travel to that country.

Procedures

The University of Kansas wishes to provide high quality and appropriate international academic experiences for all students. While the University strongly urges faculty, students and staff to avoid travel, study, and research in countries where the U.S. Department of State has issued travel warnings, it has established a review process by which faculty and students may request exceptions to the policy prohibiting study, research and experiential learning in locations with U.S. State Department Travel Warning status.

Education Abroad Review Committee (EARC). A standing committee of institutional representatives will be appointed by the Associate Vice Provost for International Programs. The committee is charged with reviewing proposals from faculty for undergraduate or graduate group programs and from students for individual study or research opportunities in countries on the U.S. State Department Travel Warning list. The committee will determine whether proposed programs should be offered and recommend to the Office of the Provost that KU sponsor the proposed programs.

Voting members of the committee shall be tenured or tenure-track faculty. Committee members shall serve staggered three-year terms and may be reappointed. The following units/constituencies should be represented:

- Associate Deans/Chairs, College Liberal Arts and Sciences
- Associate Deans, Professional Schools
- Area Studies Centers
- Faculty members at large
- *ex officio:* Associate Vice Provost for International Programs
Director of Study Abroad
General Counsel and/or Office of Risk Management
Chair/Director of Unit Offering Program
Faculty with expertise in the regions in question

EARC faculty members will select a chair annually. The Chair-elect will be selected near the end of each academic year to serve the following academic year. Faculty members in their second year on the EARC are eligible to be nominated or self-nominate for chair-elect.

Petition for Exception to Policy – Education Abroad

Faculty-Led Study Abroad Programs. KU faculty and staff interested in offering undergraduate or graduate group programs to a country currently appearing on the State Department Travel

Warning list should complete the following steps. *(NOTE: completing the process below does not guarantee that the program will be approved by the EARC.)*

1. Schedule a meeting with the Director of Study Abroad to discuss the proposed program and the program approval process. At this meeting, the faculty member will be provided copies of the country-specific information developed by the U.S. Department of State and the Overseas Security Advisory Council (OSAC). The specific risks outlined in these documents will be discussed along with the faculty member's expertise and past experiences in the country in question. Copies of the Faculty-Director Program Proposal Forms will be distributed, and future steps in program development outlined.
2. After meeting with the Study Abroad Director and staff, the faculty director must submit the following documents to the Office of Study Abroad for review by the EARC by the deadlines listed below:
 - Faculty-Directed Program Proposal form completed in collaboration with the Office of Study Abroad. Special attention should be given to the areas of "Academic Program Overview," "Health and Safety Concerns" and "Risk Management," ensuring the proposal addresses the academic rationale for study/research/experiential learning in the proposed country as well as each of the concerns outlined in the Department of State Travel Warning and/or other travel advisory documents.
 - Detailed program itinerary.
 - Course syllabus, including course objectives, assignments, modes of assessment, and expected outcomes.
 - Qualifications and experience of the faculty director (i.e., professional and/or personal experience in the host country, experience in leading study abroad programs, etc.)

Student-Initiated Study Abroad Programs. Individual students seeking approval to participate in a Student-Initiated Program (SIP) of international study, an internship, or research program in a country currently appearing on the State Department Travel Warning list should complete the following steps. *(NOTE: completing the process below does not guarantee that the program will be approved by the EARC.)*

1. Schedule a meeting with the Office of Study Abroad Program Coordinator who oversees the geographic region to which the student hopes to travel. For a list of Study Abroad Program Coordinators and their regional oversight, visit <http://www.studyabroad.ku.edu/index.cfm?FuseAction=StaffMain.Home> At this meeting, students will be provided with copies of the country-specific information developed by the U.S. Department of State and the Overseas Security Advisory Council (OSAC). The specific risks outlined in these documents will be discussed, along with other alternate programs which potentially meet the academic and personal needs of the student.

2. After the meeting with the Office of Study Abroad, should the student still want to pursue approval for study abroad in a dangerous location, the following must be submitted to the Office of Study Abroad for review by EARC by the deadlines listed below:
 - Petition letter outlining why the student is interested in studying in this particular country/region, how this program will enhance his/her KU education, why these academic goals cannot be achieved through an alternate program/destination, and what steps the student will take to minimize personal risk.
 - Detailed information on the study abroad program and/or host institution to which the student hopes to apply, including contact information (name, address, phone/fax, email, web, other).
 - Crisis management plans for the study abroad program and/or host institution abroad.
 - Undergraduate Student Assumption of Risk and General Release Form for Travel to a Dangerous Location. (*NOTE: this document must also be signed by a parent or legal guardian and notarized prior to submission*).

Submission Instructions

The EARC meets three times each year to review proposals for travel to countries currently under a U.S. State Department Travel Warning. Late proposals cannot be accommodated.

Proposal Submission Deadlines

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| March 15 | <u>Individual student proposals</u> for travel occurring between May 15 and December 31 |
| May 15 | <u>Faculty-directed program proposals</u> for travel occurring between December 15 through May 14
(Winter Break, Spring Break, and Spring semester programs) |
| October 15 | <u>Individual student proposals</u> for travel occurring between January 1 and May 14
<u>Faculty-directed proposal proposals</u> for travel occurring between May 15 and December 14
(Summer and Fall semester programs) |

Proposals must be submitted to the OSA:

The Office of Study Abroad
1410 Jayhawk Blvd. Room 108
Lawrence, KS 66045
Phone: 785-864-3742
Fax: 785-864-5040
studyabroad@ku.edu

The Office of Study Abroad will forward all petitions received by the deadlines listed above to the EASRC for review. Only complete proposals will be reviewed. If approved, students and faculty must work within the procedures established by the KU Office of Study Abroad for overseas study and/or faculty-led program administration.

Emergency and Unforeseen Circumstances

In the event a U.S. State Department Travel Warning is issued or materially amended for a country to which KU study abroad, research, or experiential learning programs have been approved or are currently operating, as permitted under the circumstances, the EARC will be consulted or convened. University administration, and the EARC as appropriate under the circumstances, will review all relevant sources of information (Department of State and OSAC documents, news and media reports, briefings by experts, etc.) to determine the appropriate course of action. KU may respond by withdrawing approval for a proposed program, which may include cancelling a program or requiring students leave the country of a program already in progress. All participating parties will be notified of the U.S. Department of State Travel Warning and KU's response. In the event programs are in-progress, copies of the notification will be sent to students' emergency contacts and/or parents or legal guardians, as appropriate.