

Travel Abroad Policy for High-Risk Areas

University of Puget Sound Policy Governing Faculty, Student, and Staff Travel Abroad to High-Risk Areas

The University of Puget Sound has both community and legal interests in protecting its students, faculty, and staff who travel abroad. Accordingly, when conditions in a foreign country make travel to or in that country a high risk, the university reserves the right to:

- cancel the university's own abroad programs;
- withdraw approval of participation in a study abroad program supported and overseen by any other provider or consortium, even after a student has been admitted to that program or begun participation in it;
- limit the use of university funds for travel abroad, including student travel with a faculty member for the purpose of research;
- set conditions for student, faculty, and staff traveling to and returning from travel in high-risk areas;
- take other actions deemed appropriate to protect the safety of students, faculty, or staff traveling or intending to travel abroad under any form of university sponsorship.

The university will adhere to the guidelines outlined below in taking action regarding travel to high-risk areas. In any specific situation, however, concern for student, faculty, and staff health and safety will be paramount and may override any particular guideline. However, there is no circumstance under which the university will support travel by students, faculty, or staff to countries that are currently listed for sanctions or embargoes by the U.S. Department of the Treasury Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC).

I. Guidelines for travel to high security-risk areas

With regard to student, faculty, or staff travel to areas of high security-risk, the university's decisions and actions will be guided by information and recommendations provided by the United States Department of State (State Department). The university may recommend or require that students, faculty, and staff take certain precautions when traveling to and within, or returning from, high security-risk areas. In some instances, the university may choose to withdraw altogether its sponsorship of travel in such high-risk areas.

For decisions affecting study abroad programs and other university-sponsored travel to security-risk areas, the university will use State Department travel advisories (<https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/traveladvisories/traveladvisories.html>) and the Center for Disease Control and Prevention's travel health notices (<https://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/notices>).

The University of Puget Sound does not support travel to countries that have Level 3 (Reconsider Travel) and Level 4 (Do Not Travel) advisories issued by the U.S. State Department. In addition, the university does not support travel to regions classified as *'Reconsider Travel/Avoid Travel/Do Not Travel'* within countries that have an overall travel advisory of Level 1 (Exercise Normal Precaution) or 2 (Exercise Increased Caution), unless an exception is explicitly stated in the text of the travel advisory for a specific city or zone within an area classified as *'Reconsider Travel/Avoid Travel/Do Not Travel'* area. The university also does not support travel to countries listed on Warning Level 3 (Avoid Nonessential Travel) in the Center for Disease Control and Prevention's travel health notices.

Faculty and staff wishing to use university funds or other resources for travel to an area for which the aforementioned conditions apply request a special waiver from the Office of the Associate Deans. The waiver must be signed before the faculty or staff member departs for the area under travel advisory. For countries appearing on the U.S. Department of the Treasury's Office of Foreign Asset Control (OFAC) sanctions program list, the university will not offer a faculty or staff member the waiver without first consulting with its insurer regarding the individual case. If the university declines to offer a waiver because of OFAC-related concerns, the faculty or staff member may not use university funds or other resources for the purpose of travel to the area in question.

B. Study Abroad

The university will apply the above State Department risk criteria to assess its own programs and will normally cancel its own study abroad programs based on the above criteria. The university's "own study abroad programs" will be defined by the degree of university input on program content and the hiring, training, and retention of program directors, faculty, and staff; and by the nature of the agreement between the university and any other parties having input on such matters. Should an area be deemed unsafe based on the above criteria while students are studying abroad, the university will review the specific conditions and, if it is deemed in the interest of student health and safety, will immediately cancel its study abroad programs within that area. If students choose to remain in the area after such action, they will be asked to sign a waiver¹ stating that the university is not responsible for their decision to remain in that area. The cancellation and refund policies apply and will be incorporated in student financial agreements signed by students before their departure. A member of the Puget Sound faculty or staff affiliated with one of the university's own programs may petition for an exemption to this policy using the process described in section III of this document.

¹ If a rare instance arises that a student participating in study or research abroad is under 18 years of age, a signed parental or guardian waiver will be required.

(NB: When the university cancels one of its own programs during the academic term, the university will do its best to assist students in completing the term of academic work on the home campus.)

The university will withdraw approval of participation in an externally-sponsored study abroad program that involves travel to an area not approved by the university even if the sponsoring organization or institution does not cancel the program. Should an area be classified as 'Reconsider Travel/Avoid Travel/Do Not Travel' after students have been admitted to a study abroad program but before they begin the program, or while students are abroad, the university will review the specific conditions in the affected area. If it is deemed in the interest of student health and safety, the university will immediately withdraw approval of participation in the program, even if the sponsoring organization itself does not cancel the program. Students will be unable to receive academic credit, even for work completed before the change in safety/health status came into effect, for any program from which the university has withdrawn approval. Further, the university requests that students immediately depart from a country that comes under the 'Reconsider Travel/Avoid Travel/Do Not Travel' restriction once a study abroad program has begun. Students who remain in-country under such circumstances do so entirely at their own risk. The cancellation and refund policies apply and will be incorporated in student financial agreements signed by students before their departure. Externally-sponsored programs are not eligible for the exemption described in section III of this document.

(NB: When the university withdraws approval of participation in a study abroad program during the academic term, the university will do its best to assist students in completing the term of academic work on the home campus.)

C. Research Abroad

Students may not use university funds or other resources in support of independent travel or research in a country where there is a State Department advisory of 'Reconsider Travel/Avoid Travel/Do Not Travel.' This restriction pertains even to situations in which university funding is approved, but the above mentioned advisory is in effect before the student enters the country in question. Independent student travel and research are not eligible for the exemption described in section III of this document.

Students wishing to conduct research under direct, in-country supervision by a Puget Sound faculty member in a country or countries under the above specified travel restrictions must apply for an exception using the process described in section III.

II. Guidelines for travel to areas of high health-risk areas

With regard to student, faculty, or staff travel to areas of high health risk, the university's decisions and actions will be guided by information and recommendations provided by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the World Health Organization, and other appropriate health organizations. The university may recommend or require that students, faculty, and staff take certain precautions when traveling to or returning from high health-risk

areas. In some instances, the university may choose to withdraw altogether its sponsorship of travel in high-risk areas.

For decisions affecting study abroad programs and other university-sponsored travel to health-risk areas, the university will use the following classifications developed by the CDC:

“Travel Health Precaution: *CDC does NOT recommend against travel to the area.* A travel health precaution is notification by CDC that a disease outbreak of greater scope is occurring in a more widespread geographic area. The purpose of a travel health precaution is to provide accurate information to travelers and Americans living abroad about the status of the outbreak (e.g., magnitude, scope, and rapidity of spread), specific precautions to reduce their risk for infection, and what to do if they become ill while in the area. The risk for the individual traveler is thought to be increased in defined settings or associated with specific risk factors (e.g., transmission in a health-care or hospital setting where ill patients are being cared for).

“Travel Health Warning: *CDC recommends against nonessential travel to the area.* A travel health warning is a notification by CDC that a widespread, serious outbreak of a disease of public health concern is expanding outside the area or populations that were initially affected. The purpose of a travel health warning is to provide accurate information to travelers and Americans living abroad about the status of the outbreak (e.g., its scope, magnitude, and rapidity of spread), how they can reduce their risk for infection, and what to do if they should become ill while in the area. The warning also serves to reduce the volume of traffic to the affected areas, which in turn can reduce the risk of spreading the disease to previously unaffected sites. **CDC recommends against nonessential travel to the area** because the risk for the traveler is considered to be high (i.e., the risk is increased because of evidence of transmission outside defined settings and/or inadequate containment). Additional preventive measures may be recommended, depending on the circumstances (e.g., travelers may be requested to monitor their health for a certain period after their return; arriving passengers may be screened at ports of entry).” (<http://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/notices.aspx#TravelNoticeDefinitions>)

A. Study Abroad

The university will normally cancel its own study abroad programs that involve travel to "Travel Health Warning" areas. Should an area be placed on the CDC "Travel Health Warning" list during the academic term, the university will review the specific conditions and, if it is deemed in the interest of student health and safety, will immediately cancel its study abroad programs within that area. If students choose to remain in the area after such action, they will be asked to sign a waiver stating that the university is not responsible for their decision to remain in the "Travel Health Warning" area. The Study Abroad Refund Policy will apply. A member of the Puget Sound faculty or staff affiliated with one of the university's own programs may petition for an exemption to this policy using the process described in section III of this document.

Students traveling on one of the university's own programs will not be permitted to return to the program if they visit a "Travel Health Warning" or "Travel Health Precaution" area during the program. (NB: When the university cancels one of its own programs during the academic term,

the university will do its best to assist students in completing the term of academic work on the home campus.)

The university will withdraw approval of participation in an externally-sponsored study abroad program that involves travel to "Travel Health Warning" areas if the sponsoring organization or institution itself does not cancel the program. Should an area be placed on the CDC "Travel Health Warning" list during the academic term, the university will review the specific conditions and, if it is deemed in the interest of student health and safety, will immediately withdraw approval of participation in the program if the sponsoring organization itself does not cancel the program. If, after such action, students choose to participate in a study abroad program to which they have already been admitted or in which they are already participating, they will be asked to sign a waiver stating that the university is not responsible for their decision to travel to or remain in the "Travel Health Warning" area. The Study Abroad Refund Policy will apply. Externally-sponsored programs are not eligible for the exemption described in section III of this document.

(NB: When the university withdraws approval of participation in a study abroad program during the academic term, the university will do its best to assist students in completing the term of academic work on the home campus.)

B. Research Abroad

Students may not use university funds or other resources in support of independent travel or research in a "Travel Health Warning" country or countries. This restriction pertains even to situations in which university funding is approved, but a travel warning is in effect before the student enters the country in question. Independent student travel and research are not eligible for the exemption described in section III of this document.

Students wishing to conduct research under direct, in-country supervision by a Puget Sound faculty member in a country or countries under "Travel Health Warning" must apply for an exception using the process described in section III.

C. Travel to and return from "Health Warning" areas:

Before returning to campus, all students, faculty, and staff who have traveled for any reason in either a "Travel Health Warning" or a "Travel Health Precaution" area should see their primary care physicians to determine the risk of contagion from potential exposure to disease.

Counseling, Health, and Wellness Services (CHWS) also recommends that members of the campus community be tested for tuberculosis (TB) after any travel abroad. The university requests that students, faculty, and staff release the findings of their primary care physicians' examination and of their TB tests to CHWS for the safety of the campus community.

III. Exceptions to this policy

The university does not normally grant, and presumes against the granting of, exceptions to this policy. The university will not grant exemptions for any type of or purpose for travel by students, faculty or staff to countries listed by OFAC for sanctions or embargoes. Only in the

cases of the university's own study abroad programs, and of student research travel with direct in-country supervision by a Puget Sound faculty member, may faculty or staff members submit a formal proposal to the Dean of the University requesting an exemption. Proposals for both study abroad and faculty-supervised student research in travel warning countries must include recently-revised, detailed plans for risk mitigation and emergency management; explanations of the risk mitigation and emergency management qualifications of site personnel; travel schedules including travel routes; detailed plans for maintaining contact with the university throughout the duration of the program; a clear explanation of why the pedagogical purposes of the study or research program cannot be accomplished in a country not under travel warning; and a detailed discussion of the terms of the travel warning as they pertain to the specific circumstances of the program or research trip in question. The Dean may consult with others and request additional information as needed.

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