

University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire
Travel Advisory Resources and Policy
Adopted July 8, 2019
Revised March 1, 2022

1) Introduction

The University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire is committed to providing a broad spectrum of international experiences to the University community as international travel and rigorous, experiential inquiry are integral to fulfilling our mission of “fostering in one another creative, critical insight, empathy, and intellectual courage, the hallmarks of a transformative liberal education and the foundation for active citizenship and lifelong learning.” At the same time, in the face of the safety risks in the world, the University is also committed to protecting the health and safety of students, faculty, and staff when they journey outside the borders of the United States. In order to help protect our students and employees, the following policies were adopted to ensure a consistent set of standards are followed to address concerns about the health and safety of UW-Eau Claire (“University”) employees and students during University-affiliated international travel.

2) Scope

- a) This policy applies to all students and University employees participating in international travel sponsored, organized, supported or recognized by UW-Eau Claire. Travel is sponsored, organized, supported, or recognized by the University when any of the following occurs:
 - i) Travel is part of a University-sponsored program – a program organized and administered by a University employee, student, or student organization;
 - ii) Travel is funded by or disbursed through a University account or University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire Foundation account;
 - iii) Travel is part of a program or official University trip administered by another institution or organization under an agreement with UW- Eau Claire;
 - iv) Students receive University academic credit for courses taken during the travel or fulfill a University degree requirement (e.g. service learning, liberal education experience) during the travel;
 - v) University employees (faculty, staff, or students) receive financial compensation or are traveling on official University business; or
 - vi) Travel is organized by the University, such as trips organized and led by members of the

faculty or staff, acting in their official capacity.

- b) Examples of international travel sponsored, organized, supported or recognized by UW- Eau Claire may include:
- (1) Education abroad programs– study abroad and exchange, faculty-led immersions, internships, or international research;
 - (2) Departmental/Unit travel- field trips, musical performances, athletic training or athletic events;
 - (3) Travel by any University employee, student, or student group for the purpose of University-related research, sabbatical, professional conferences, site visits, service projects, or participation on official delegations.
- c) This policy does not apply to any personal travel a University student or employee elects to undertake, including non-UW-Eau Claire spring break travel or travel between semesters. It equally does not apply to personal travel taken prior to, after, or during travel covered by this policy, such as a weekend trip taken by a student participating in a University-sponsored or affiliated education abroad program.

3) General Guidance

- a) All travel and experiential learning involves some risk; the University strongly encourages all University travelers to consider their own risk tolerance prior to traveling and to choose locations and activities that corresponds with their personal risk tolerance.
- b) The University strongly encourages participation in University-approved and organized international programs such as study abroad and exchange programs, faculty-led international immersion experiences (FLIIE), the International Fellows Program (IFP) for faculty-student collaborative international research/creativity activity, and departmental field experiences.
- c) Prior to and during traveling, all University travelers are expected to read and monitor the U.S. Department of State travel information including Travel Advisories and Alerts, as well as the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) alerts and notices. To receive the latest travel updates and country information, University travelers are encouraged to register on-line with the U.S. Department of State Smart Traveler's Enrollment Program (STEP).
- d) Important web sites include:
- U.S. State Department.
- General: <http://www.state.gov/travel>
 - Tips for Traveling Abroad: http://travel.his.com/travel/tips/tips_1232.html

- STEP Program Registration:
http://travel.his.com/travel/tips/registration/registration_4789.html

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

- General: <http://www.cdc.gov/travel>
- Survival Guide to Safe and Health Travel:
<http://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/page/survival-guide.htm>

- e) University-affiliated travelers should address any health and safety concerns prior to departure. Recommended steps include consultation with personal medical and/or mental health providers to develop plans for ongoing healthcare needs, a visit to a specialized travel medicine provider for required or recommended preventive immunizations and medications, a dental check-up, and education about health and safety in the travel destination.

4) University Employees

- a) For the purposes of this document, student employees are considered student travelers and subject to the guidelines established in section “5) University Students.”
- b) For the purpose of this document, the term “University Employees” includes all persons employed by the University as faculty, academic staff, university staff, project hires, limited appointees, and limited term employees as defined by applicable University policies and as applicable to the particular travel experience.
- c) Documentation regarding international travel:
- To ensure coverage by the Wisconsin State Liability and Worker’s Compensation programs, University Employees are advised to complete the Travel Authorization form and receive approval confirmation before commencing travel and/or follow all university travel purchase/payment policies. The travel authorization or purchase/payment serves to confirm the University-affiliated travel is deemed to be related to the mission of the University and that the University Employee will be acting within the scope of employment while traveling.
 - Please note that undocumented travel and personal side trips unrelated to University business may not be covered under the State’s Liability or Worker’s Compensation programs. Employees are encouraged to obtain supplementary medical and repatriation coverage independently for such activities.
- d) While traveling abroad, University Employees involved in educational/research activities abroad are automatically enrolled in a special medical evacuation and repatriation program (currently through the [“Europ Assistance”](#) program) and are strongly encouraged to enroll in the

[Cultural Insurance Services International](#) (CISI) program for other health and medical support coverages. University Employees are covered by worker's compensation if injured in the course of employment regardless of work location.

- e) The University strongly recommends against, but does not prohibit, University Employee travel to locations where the U.S. Department of State has issued a Level 3 or Level 4 advisories or where CDC has issued a Level 3 Travel Notice or where there is other reliable information of significant health or safety risks. The final decision regarding travel to such areas lies with the University employee and their respective employment supervisor.
- f) The University reserves the right to require the execution of an appropriate assumption of risk form and/or release before authorizing any arrangement of and/or funding for travel to locations where the U.S. Department of State has issued a Level 3 or Level 4 Advisory, the CDC has issued a Level 3 Travel Notice or where there is other reliable information of significant health or safety risks.
- g) University Employees who are in a location at the time the State Department Level 3 or Level 4 advisory or CDC Level 3 Travel Notice is issued, are advised to contact the nearest U.S. Embassy or Consulate to obtain all relevant information and guidance, and are advised to follow the issued guidance. They are further advised to contact their sponsoring University department or unit at the earliest opportunity with information about their whereabouts and plans.

5) University Students

- a) University Students Participating on University-Affiliated Travel
 - i) University-affiliated travel is operated by a variety of units at the University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire. However, regardless of the unit, participating students will follow all activity or program-specific requirements, as applicable. These may include, but are not limited to, submitting pre and post application paperwork, paying deposits, attending pre-departure orientation sessions, reading all pre-departure materials, completing travel documentation forms and providing copies of their passports' information pages, and acquiring the necessary documentation and/or visa to legally enter the host country.
 - ii) The affiliated University department/unit will make a good faith effort to disclose known risks by supplying student travelers with the country-specific Department of State travel advisory and the Center for Disease Control country-specific health information.
 - iii) University students are required to have comprehensive health insurance that provides coverage for medical care while abroad, including medical evacuation and repatriation.

Students studying/traveling abroad under a University-affiliated program must enroll in health insurance through the University of Wisconsin System approved insurance plan. For more information visit:

https://studyabroad.apps.uwec.edu/index.cfm?FuseAction=Abroad.ViewLink&Parent_ID=95F870D3-5056-B565-C48237EC0B2FE5E0&Link_ID=A0AB1772-5056-B565-C4AEA838D53A65F7&pID=4&IID=10

- iv) The University will approve and operate university-affiliated international programs or approve university international student travel based on the guidelines outlined in “5.b) Travel Advisory Guidelines for Student Travel.”.
- v) All University student travel to countries or regions within countries with Department of State designated Level 3 and Level 4 advisories and/or Center for Disease Control Level 3 Travel Health Notice Level 3 must be reviewed by University Travel Risk Committee.
 - (1) The committee will be composed of the following ex-officio members:
 - (a) Director of Risk Management or designee
 - (b) Director of the Center for International Education or designee
 - (c) Intercultural Immersion Coordinator or designee
 - (d) Chair of the Council of Global Engagement or designee
 - (e) Director of Student Health Services or designee
 - (2) Faculty and staff with geographic and other relevant expertise may be consulted where no conflict of interest exists.
 - (3) For all Center for International Education, Intercultural Immersions, and department/unit-based programs, the review will occur during the normal implementation process or in the event of a level change for the entire student group.
 - (4) Individual student travelers on university-organized travel must submit required documentation to the University Travel Risk Committee.
- b) Travel Advisory Guidelines for Student Travel
 - i) In order to safeguard the health and safety of its students, UW-Eau Claire considers seriously the advisory levels of the U.S. Department of State and Center of Disease Control, when approving University-affiliated travel. Of particular concern is student travel in countries or regions of countries for which the State Department has issued a Level 3 and Level 4 advisory and/or Center for Disease Control has issued Watch Level 3 Notice.
 - ii) Travel involving UW-Eau Claire students, including student employees, is evaluated using the following matrix for both countries and regions within countries under advisory.

iii) Additionally, advisories from other national governments or international organizations may be consulted.

U.S. State Department Travel Advisory

Travel Advisory Level	Permission Status
Level 1- Exercise normal precautions	Travel permitted upon standard unit-based review and approval.
Level 2- Exercise increased caution	Travel permitted upon standard unit-based review and approval.
Level 3-Reconsider travel	Travel may be permitted with review from University Travel Risk Committee and approval from Academic Affairs.
Level 4-Do not travel	Travel may be permitted with review from University Travel Risk Committee and approval from Academic Affairs.

Center for Disease Control Travel Notice

Travel Notice	Permission Status
Watch Level 1- Practice Usual Precautions or COVID Level 1	Travel permitted upon standard unit-based review and approval.
Alert Level 2- Practice Enhanced Precautions or COVID Level 2	Travel permitted upon standard unit-based review and approval.
Watch Level 3-Avoid Nonessential Travel or COVID Level 3 or Level 4	Travel may be permitted with review from University Travel Risk Committee and approval from Academic Affairs.

c) Approval Process for Student Travel to U.S. State Department Level 3 and 4 and Center Disease Control (CDC) Watch Level 3 Regions or Countries

i) UWEC-affiliated units (e.g CIE, Intercultural Immersions, academic department, office, club, etc.) or individual student travelers seeking program, performance, or project travel to countries or regions of countries with a Department of State Level 3 or Level 4 Advisory or CDC Watch Level 3 must consult and seek review and approval from University Travel Risk Committee and Academic Affairs. Organizing units will consult with University Travel Risk Committee on behalf of all student travelers. Students traveling independently for

university affiliated purposes such as an internship or research project are responsible for scheduling a meeting with University Risk Management and Safety at least one month prior to the intended departure date. The Director of Risk Management will serve on the University Travel Risk Committee.

ii) As part of the approval process, the organizing unit/department or individual traveler will need to submit written information on risk and risk mitigation to the University Travel Risk Committee. The following factors will be considered:

- Travel dates
- Destination information
- Program purpose
- In-country resources and support
- Student host-country knowledge and language abilities
- Risk assessment of basic necessities: the natural environment, accommodations, local transportation, food, and routine health care.
- Risk mitigation; Can the safety, security, and financial risks posed by the travel be adequately mitigated?
- Student experience: Can the student successfully accomplish the academic and cultural goals of the proposed program of study and experience?

iii) Student travel to Department of State Level 3 or Level 4 or CDC Watch Level 3 countries or regions of countries with the following conditions as expressed in the advisory are less likely to be approved:

- The U.S. State Department has assigned multiple risk indicators related to the travel advisory.
- The U.S. State Department personnel have limited ability to provide “emergency assistance” to U.S. citizens due to security-based travel restrictions for U.S. government personnel.
- U.S. government has ordered the departure of all non-emergency U.S. government personnel.
- Access to basic necessities such as food, electricity, water, medical supplies, and/or access to medical care is compromised due to ongoing civil unrest.

iv) If travel to a U.S. State Department Level 3, Level 4, or a CDC Watch Level 3 country or region within a country is approved, all students must sign a release detailing risk associated with travel. Any student who fails to sign the release will have their approval cancelled. In

the case of group travel, the cancellation should only impact the student who did not sign a release, not the entire group or the program.

d) Addressing Changes to Travel Advisories After Program Approval

i) In the event that a Department of State designated Level 3 and Level 4 advisory and/or Center for Disease Control Level 3 Travel Health Notice Level 3 is issued after the UW-Eau Claire program or individual student travel has been approved and/or advertised, but prior to program departure, the organizing department/unit (e.g. CIE, Intercultural Immersions, academic department, etc.) or individual student traveler will submit a written request to the Director of Risk Management to determine whether the approved travel should be suspended, modified, or cancelled. The Director of Risk Management will liaise with the University Travel Risk Committee.

- If it is determined that there is no immediate risk to the student(s) based on the proposed program/project itinerary or if a similar risk exist in the home environment, the University Travel Risk Committee may opt to monitor the situation closely and recommend program or itinerary changes as needed in lieu of immediately suspending or cancelling the program.
- If it is determined that the program must be suspended or cancelled, every effort will be made to redirect the student to a program and/or location that meets the guidelines outlined in “5.b Travel Advisory Guidelines for Student Travel” and where the students are able to complete their educational goals. Every effort will be made to minimize the financial and academic impact on students.

ii) In the event that a Department of State designated Level 3 and Level 4 advisory and/or Center for Disease Control Level 3 Travel Health Notice Level 3 is issued while a program or project is currently underway, the affiliated unit will meet with University Travel Risk Committee to evaluate the risk posed to health and safety of the students.

- If University Travel Risk Committee in collaboration with Academic Affairs and/or Student Affairs, and the affiliated unit determine that there is no immediate threat to the students or if a similar risk exist in the home environment, they may opt to monitor the situation closely and/or recommend program changes or itinerary changes in lieu of immediately suspending the program and beginning evacuation procedures.
- If University Travel Risk Committee in collaboration with Academic Affairs and/or Student Affairs and the affiliated unit determines that there is an immediate threat to the

health and safety of students, they have the discretion to suspend the program and begin evacuation immediately.

- In the event that a program is suspended while underway, the affiliated unit will work with the University of Wisconsin contracted evacuation insurance provider (e.g. Cultural Insurance Services International) to facilitate the use of benefits. Every effort will be made to minimize the financial and academic impact on students.
- If a UW-Eau Claire student chooses to remain in country after the University has suspended the program and issued an evacuation order, the student will not receive:
 - (a) formal support from any UW-Eau Claire office or department,
 - (b) any financial assistance from UW-Eau Claire,
 - (c) CISI insurance coverage issued through UW-Eau Claire or the UW System, or
 - (d) pre-approved credit for the work undertaken in that location.

Questions about this policy should be directed to the University Travel Risk Committee.

This policy was drafted by the Center for International Education with input from Intercultural Immersions, Council for Internationalization and Global Engagement, ASK Center, University Risk Management and Loss Prevention, and Latin America Studies, and Department of Geography faculty Paul Kaldjian and Harry Jol.

This policy was adapted from policies at the University of Hartford, University of Wisconsin-Madison, University of Wisconsin-Platteville, and University of Michigan.

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