Guidelines for Filing a Request for Student Travel to a Country with a Travel or Travel Health Warning

The U.S. Department of State (DOS) and World Health Organization (WHO) sometimes issue travel warnings related to specific countries or regions. As stipulated in Clemson University’s Student International Travel Policy, the Provost and the President must approve in advance student travel abroad for university purposes to countries subject to a travel or travel health warning. This approval is required for students traveling individually and in groups on university programs abroad (for either academic credit or co-curricular purposes) as well as for students traveling independently for Clemson purposes (e.g. non-Clemson study abroad, Creative Inquiry, conferences, service or club trips, research, teaching abroad, etc.)

• If you are a faculty or staff member preparing a proposal for a student overseas program, please contact the Director of Study Abroad to start this approval process.

• If you are a student preparing for independent travel that requires approval, please visit the Study Abroad web site to start this approval process.

• If you are a faculty director for a Clemson Study Abroad program, please work with your primary contact in Study Abroad or your college liaison to submit your request.

• If you are a faculty or staff member and become aware of any student(s) planning Clemson related travel, please instruct those students to visit the Study Abroad web site to register their travel.

All requests to travel to a country with a travel warning must include the following:

1. Forma l Request for Waiver
2. Emergency Plans
3. Letter of endorsement from the faculty sponsor, department chair, or academic adviser (and if applicable, a letter of admission from a non-Clemson program)
4. Letter of endorsement from the Dean of the sponsoring college
5. Additional materials to support the petition, as needed

All requests should be submitted electronically to the director of Study Abroad at least three months before proposed travel.

Upon receipt of your request, the director of Study Abroad will forward your request to the Vice Provost for International Affairs. The International Travel Advisory Committee, in consultation with other University committees and offices as appropriate, shall review the request and current circumstances on-site to make a recommendation to the Provost and the President as to whether the request to travel should be approved. All decisions made by the Provost and the President in regard to Student Travel Abroad for University purposes are final.
If travel or travel health warning arises during student travel abroad for University purposes, the director of Study Abroad will work with all relevant University offices, the Provost and the President to take appropriate action.

*Please Note:* Before final approval is issued, all participants must purchase required medical insurance and sign a release and indemnification form.

**Required Documents:**

1. **Formal Request for Waiver**
   The request must demonstrate the academic value of the program and how the structure of the program and existing safety procedures mitigate the concerns of travelling to a country subject to a travel or travel health warning. Requests associated with sites not affiliated with a university or established sponsoring agency and requests to countries with high-level warnings in which the U.S. government has evacuated or restricted the travel of U.S. government employees require substantial justification and documentation.

   All requests must include a program proposal or syllabus, program itinerary and proposed dates of travel. The request must provide compelling academic reasons for the educational experience in the specific location. Requests must consider alternative locations in countries for which travel or travel health warnings have not been issued, and explain why those destinations cannot support the educational goals of the experience abroad. Anticipated credit toward the student’s declared degree or another significant requirement must be explained. The request must be strongly linked to the student’s academic program, and the concerns raised in the questions above must be adequately addressed and documented.

   In the absence of a compelling case and justification, it is unlikely that the request will be approved.

**Students proposing independent travel** are responsible for working with their advisers or faculty sponsor to prepare this written request. The request should indicate the student’s degree program, major, student status, and the academic justification for the program should be verified by the student’s academic advisor or faculty sponsor. It is the student’s responsibility to prepare the documentation and work with the college in getting the necessary information.

**Program** requests must be written by Clemson faculty/staff and must include:

a. Rationale stating the need for the proposed program in the specific site and compelling academic reasons for the education abroad experience in the specific location,
b. Estimates of the numbers of students who will participate, and proposed dates of the program, as well as an indication whether the opportunity is intended as a one-time event or a continuing program,
c. Discussion of whether the proposed program will offer credit toward a degree or toward meeting a general requirement for the degree,
d. Precautions planned to mitigate risks to the students, faculty and program as well as how participants will be informed about and prepared to manage any risks of travel,
e. Faculty/researchers’ previous experience in the country and/or leading University programs abroad,
f. Details of any institution or key contacts with which you are partnering. Include a list of their key personnel, contact information and their emergency protocols.

If you have questions, please contact the director of Study Abroad for more information about what is required as part of the formal request.

2. Emergency Plans:
   a. Outline your preparations to mitigate risk and respond to potential crises (e.g., terrorist incident, epidemic, natural disaster). Office of International Affairs template available for this purpose.
   b. Describe housing and meal arrangements on site and plans to ensure continuity of service through emergency circumstances
   c. Describe your communication plan with the group (if applicable), with the University and with emergency contacts in event of a crisis.

3. Letters of endorsement
   All requests must include a letter of endorsement from (1) the faculty sponsor, department chair, or academic adviser, as appropriate and (2) from the Dean of the college that is supporting the program or in which the individual student is matriculated. In addition, independent travel students attending a program abroad not sponsored by Clemson must submit a letter of admission from the overseas program. In order to receive transfer credit, students must also work with their academic advisor and a study abroad advisor to determine the necessary steps to ensure transfer credit approval before engaging in the program abroad.

4. Additional materials
   All requests should include additional materials that may support and strengthen the request for approval. These materials include any additional information that would be useful as background in making a decision, such as any prior relationships that have been established with a site or host institution, written emergency protocols used by the host institution, travel advisories issued by other countries’ governments (e.g. Canada, United Kingdom or Australia). Upon review, the reviewing offices may request additional information.
Note: If a waiver is granted, it is granted under the conditions at the time of approval. If a new travel or travel health warning is issued, the request may need to be reconsidered. If the program is ongoing and the country remains subject to a travel or travel health warning, the program must be re-approved each time an individual student or group of students plans to participate.
Sample Emergency Plan

These procedures pertain to programs abroad supported by the Study Abroad Office, and will be important when we anticipate that an evacuation may be necessary. Individual students or other departments/Units sponsoring a program to a destination subject to a travel or health travel warning must complete this form in consultation with supporting faculty and/or department chair.

Contingency/Emergency Procedures for Sponsored Programs
In an emergency, it may be necessary to contact students quickly and explain the procedures that are necessary for the situation. The Study Abroad Office is required to have this information on file and available to share with the appropriate individuals. Please provide as much detail as possible.

I. General Information for Handling and Emergency:
   Name of Program: ______________________________________
   Location: ______________________
   Host or Partner Institution: _______________________________
   On-Site Contact(s): ______________________________________
   Phone(including country and city codes): _____________________

1. Notify the Clemson University offices in the following order: (program team to fill in)
   (Provide emergency contact list to all on-site staff.)
   o Clemson Police (24 hours—will direct call to appropriate individual)
   o Study Abroad Director
   o Dean of students

2. How can we contact you quickly in the event of an emergency?
   (Include phone number(s) with all necessary codes, email address, home address, etc.)

3. How will students contact you, either as the faculty sponsor remaining in South Carolina, or as the on-site program administrator, in the event of an emergency?

4. Are the students registered at the closest U.S. Embassy? Do you have a name and contact person you can reach at any time, day or night? If yes, please include the information here.
   (Include address and phone number of nearest U.S. embassy or consulate. How far is it to the embassy from the program office? If no embassy or consulate is within a six hours reach of students, suggest another official organization or institution to which they can be directed)

5. How will you contact students and how quickly do you think this can be accomplished?
   (Can this be done in 2 hours, 4 hours, 8 hours – based on where students will be the time?)
II. Contingency Plans for Emergency Situations
1. If students need to be gathered in a central location to transport them to another location, where would you gather them? How will you inform them of the location? How will they get to this location?

2. How will you transport students to the airport or to another designated location away from the program site? (a) plane (b) train (c) motor vehicle (d) bus
(Please answer for all relevant situations.)

3. How will you arrange for the students to fly back to the U.S. if the program is canceled?

4. If the emergency situation only involves one student (i.e., injury, personal health situation), what are the steps you would take to arrange for the student to return home?

5. If the students need to be evacuated to another location, where will this be, what standby arrangements have been made so that the new site is prepared to accommodate students?

6. Students should not be evacuated until you have confirmed plans with the designated Study Abroad staff person (a decision will be made by the crisis management team), unless this is impossible (i.e., complete breakdown of telecommunications). How would you proceed given this situation?

III. Appendix
1. What do you give to students or how do you present health and safety concerns to students during orientation onsite at the beginning of the program? The instructions should include:
   a. Clear and honest discussion of the travel advisories and risk mitigation protocols.
   b. How to register for DOS alerts.
   c. How you will contact students in an emergency.
   d. Mode of transportation they should take to get to a central gathering point and how the program will pay for the transportation cost
   e. What personal items they should bring in an emergency
   f. How to arrange credit if the program is canceled prior to the end of the term
   g. References to the appropriate pages of the Student Handbook and/or Study Abroad orientation manual—review the precautions with them
   (Please provide a copy of the information you give to students.)

2. Additional Comments that would be helpful for us to know.