

ADMINISTRATIVE DIVISION ACAF Academic Affairs		POLICY NUMBER ACAF 2.09
POLICY TITLE International Travel Policy for Students		
SCOPE OF POLICY USC Columbia		DATE OF REVISION April 14, 2025
RESPONSIBLE OFFICER Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs and Provost		ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE Office of the Provost

PURPOSE

This policy outlines the university's requirements with regard to international travel registration, international travel insurance, the University Higher Risk Travel List, and international travel involving student groups.

DEFINITIONS

For purposes of this policy, the terms abroad, overseas and international refer to any location outside of the fifty United States of America and District of Columbia (Washington, D.C.).

POLICY STATEMENT

The University of South Carolina encourages students to engage internationally in educational, research, and service activities. This International Travel Policy is intended to promote the health, safety, and security of all students at the University of South Carolina while traveling outside of the United States for university-related purposes.

For purposes of this policy the terms abroad, overseas, and internationally refer to destinations outside of the fifty United States of America and District of Columbia (Washington, D.C.).

This policy applies to all students (undergraduate, graduate, and professional) traveling internationally for university-related purposes, which may include but are not limited to study, research, internships, service, conferences, presentations, teaching, performances, or athletic competitions.

International travel is considered university-related when the travel is facilitated by the student's connection to the university. Specifically, international travel is defined as university-related if it meets any of the following criteria:

- International activity is credit-bearing or intended to fulfill a degree requirement;
- Travel is funded in part or in full using university funds;
- Travelers will act as official representatives of University of South Carolina on site; or
- Travel is undertaken with or organized by the university- associated student organization, division, department, or office, even when travel is not for an academic purpose.

International travel by students will not be considered university-related if it meets all of the following criteria:

- International activity is not credit-bearing or related to a degree requirement;
- Only non-university funds are used to fund the travel;
- Travel is unrelated to the student's study, course of research, or teaching, at the university; and
- No university structure, associated student organization, division, department, or office is used to recruit participants. (Per STAF 3.10 Student Organizations, associated student organizations are defined as organizations to which the university has delegated certain limited authority to perform specific tasks aligned with the university's mission. These groups are required to maintain a university advisor who is acting within the context of their university employment. Registered student organizations are defined as student organizations that are independent legal entities from the university, have no delegated authority from the university, and do not perform functions on behalf of the university. These groups are not required to maintain a university advisor. The university views RSOs as private affiliations and does not endorse the mission, goals, or purpose of the organization. As such, travel organized by RSOs is not considered to be university related.)

A. Student International Travel Registration

The university's Student International Travel Registry is a confidential and secure database for maintaining key travel information for all students traveling internationally for university-related purposes. The Student International Travel Registry is the official and authoritative source of traveler information that forms the basis for the university's emergency response protocols and communications strategy (e.g., alerts, warnings, evacuation notices) when responding to an emergency or critical incident abroad.

All students (undergraduate, graduate, and professional) traveling abroad for university related purposes are required to register their international travel in the Student International Travel Registry maintained by the Education Abroad Office by an established deadline before the expected departure date.

Students are required to immediately notify the Education Abroad Office should any changes to their location occur during the duration of their overseas stay so that their Student International Travel Registry file may be updated.

B. International Emergency Travel Insurance

All students (undergraduate, graduate, and professional) traveling abroad for any university-related purpose are required to obtain international emergency travel insurance from the university's authorized vendor. This insurance provides benefits while traveling overseas for coverage of accident and illness medical expenses, emergency medical evacuation, security evacuation, and repatriation of mortal remains. The university's authorized international emergency travel insurance must be obtained for/by students traveling internationally regardless of whether the student traveler has other related coverage. Only in exceptional

circumstances can purchase of this insurance coverage be waived. Students who believe that they have insurance coverage that will meet the minimum requirements of the USC policy may attempt to waive this requirement by completing the formal waiver process by the posted deadlines. Completion of this waiver process does not guarantee that a waiver will be granted.

C. University Higher Risk Travel List

The university may advise travelers against and/or impose additional requirements or restrictions on students seeking to travel to destinations where health, safety, or security concerns pose risks that warrant such a decision.

The university reserves the right to prohibit or suspend travel by students for university related purposes to any destination if health, safety, or security concerns pose risks that warrant such a decision.

The university's Higher Risk Travel List is composed of areas for which the U.S. Department of State has issued a Level 3 or Level 4 Travel Advisory, as well as other sources of information, including but not limited to travel advisories from other countries and the university's international security vendor's travel risk ratings..

In accordance with policy [ACAF 2.06 International Academic Agreements](#), the university will not approve new or renew agreements for student-oriented programs that involve university student travel to countries that are subject to a U.S. Department of State Level 4 Travel Advisory, or for which the university has prohibited travel. According to policy ACAF 2.06, upon petition from an academic unit, an exception to this policy may be made when there is a compelling reason to do so.

University-related travel to destinations on the Higher Risk Travel List should conform to the following guidelines:

1. Students cannot be required to participate in any education abroad experience in destinations on the Higher Risk Travel List to satisfy a degree requirement.
2. Education abroad programs in destinations on the Higher Risk Travel List may be suspended. This applies, but is not limited, to exchange programs, instructor-led programs, affiliate programs, internships, research, and service-learning programs.
3. Individual students (undergraduate, graduate, or professional) may submit a petition to the Education Abroad Office requesting authorization to travel for university-related purposes to destinations on the Higher Risk Travel List. If approved, the individual student must (i) register in the Student International Travel Registry and comply with related requirements, (ii) obtain university-approved international emergency travel insurance, and (iii) submit a *Destinations of Higher Risk–Assumption of Risks and Waiver of Liability* form. The university reserves the right to revoke such approval should

the safety, security, and/or health situation in a destination deteriorate, either prior to the student's departure or while the student is abroad.

4. Students already in a destination at the time it is added to the Higher Risk Travel List will be advised of the change in the risk status of their location.

In some cases, students will be advised to evacuate that location. Students who choose to remain in an international location after being advised by the university to evacuate must submit a *Destinations of Risk–Assumption of Risks and Waiver of Liability: In Country* form to the Education Abroad Office.

In other cases, students will be required to evacuate that location. Students who choose to remain in an international location after being required by the university to evacuate will not be eligible for university funding or academic credit for the student's current travel activity, may be held accountable for violating the student code of conduct, and may be subject to restrictions in other benefits or services.

- a. Should evacuation occur, any potential refund of USC tuition will be handled in accordance with policy [FINA 8.07 Study Abroad Refund](#).

D. International Travel Involving Student Groups

The University of South Carolina encourages faculty and staff members to create and lead programs that provide groups of students with overseas experiences. These student group programs include credit-bearing courses with an international travel component as well as non-credit bearing international travel programs.

In accordance with policy [ACAF 2.08 Instructor-Led International Programs for Students](#), group leaders leading students to any international destination for study, research, or other reasons must have their plans reviewed and approved in advance by the established deadline.

Group leaders are responsible for:

1. ensuring all students traveling in the group enter their travel information into the University's International Travel Registry;
2. ensuring all students traveling in the group have obtained international emergency travel insurance through the university's authorized vendor;
3. following all university guidance, including guidance related to destinations on the Higher Risk Travel List;
4. complying with best practices for health, safety, and security planning for pre-departure orientation, during the program, and post-travel review; and

5. upholding all other faculty leader responsibilities as outlined in the Education Abroad Instructor-Led Program Handbook maintained by the Education Abroad Office.

Group leaders and their assistants accompanying students internationally must be covered by the university's authorized international emergency travel insurance for the duration of the international travel. In addition, they must complete emergency management training provided by the Education Abroad Office prior to travel and otherwise comply with the requirements in policy [ACAF 2.08 Instructor-Led International Programs for Students](#).

When the destination of an approved instructor-led international program is added to the Higher Risk Travel List after the program's initial approval, the approval may be rescinded. Should approval be rescinded, any USC tuition refund that may be due will be handled in accordance with policy [FINA 8.07 Study Abroad Refund](#).

E. Judicial Information

All students (undergraduate, graduate, and professional) who wish to travel abroad for any university-related purpose are required to disclose to the Education Abroad Office their judicial records as managed by the Office of Student Conduct and Academic Integrity.

In cases related to drug-related misconduct, dangerous behaviors, abusive conduct, sexual misconduct, severe alcohol-related misconduct, and misconduct involving weapons, students may not be eligible to travel internationally for university-related purposes if the incident(s) occurred within one calendar year of the student's intended departure date. Students on disciplinary probation as a result of such an offense (drug-related misconduct, dangerous behaviors, abusive conduct, sexual misconduct, severe alcohol related misconduct, and misconduct involving weapons) are not eligible to travel internationally for any university-related purpose. Any student with a prior disciplinary offense or behavioral incident, regardless of the nature of that offense or incident, will not be allowed to travel internationally for university-related purposes if they have not completed all sanctions and/or recommendations issued by the Office of Student Conduct and Academic Integrity and/or the Behavioral Intervention Team by stated deadlines. Students found responsible for a disciplinary offense(s) after they have been approved to travel abroad for university-related purposes, but prior to departure or the completion of their international experience, are required to disclose the incident(s) to the Education Abroad Office and may not be permitted to continue with international travel for university related purposes if to do so would violate the policy guidelines outlined above. Students who are under investigation by the University of South Carolina for a conduct violation may not be permitted to register to travel internationally for university-related purposes until a disposition is reached in their case.

In certain cases, students will be required to meet with representatives from the Education Abroad Office and the Office of Student Conduct and Academic Integrity to discuss past disciplinary offense(s) and how they can promote their own health, safety, and security while abroad.

While traveling internationally for any university-related purpose, students will be held to the codes of conduct of both the University of South Carolina and their host university/program provider. Illegal, prohibited, or otherwise inappropriate behavior is cause for dismissal from the program by officials of the University of South Carolina or the host university/program provider at the student's expense. Students will also be subject to the judicial process administered by the Office of Student Conduct and Academic Integrity upon return to the University of South Carolina. Violating the codes of conduct of either the University of South Carolina or the host university/program provider while abroad may preclude the student from traveling internationally for university-related purposes in the future.

PROCEDURES

A. Student International Travel Oversight Committee

The Student International Travel Oversight Committee is chaired by a Vice Provost with an oversight of Global Carolina. Other committee members include, but are not limited to, representatives from Education Abroad, Risk Management, General Counsel, Student Affairs, and university Faculty. Committee members are appointed by the committee chair. Additional individuals with specific country expertise may be asked to participate in committee deliberations as needed.

The Student International Travel Oversight Committee has the following responsibilities:

1. Determine international destinations under University Higher Risk Travel Status and maintain a list of those destinations;
2. Review and approve or deny student petitions for authorization to travel to destinations on the University Higher Risk Travel List;
3. Decide whether students already in an international location at the time the destination is added to the University Higher Risk Travel List will be advised or required to evacuate that location;
4. Decide whether approval will be rescinded for an approved instructor-led international - led program to a location that is added to the University Higher Risk Travel List after initial program approval;
5. Review and approve or deny academic unit petitions for authorization to enter into an international academic agreement that involves student travel to an area that is subject to a U.S. Department of State Level 4 Travel Advisory;
6. Develop procedures and provide guidelines for compliance with this policy;
7. Work to ensure compliance with this policy; and

8. Other responsibilities related to student international travel as charged by the university's Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs and Provost.

RELATED UNIVERSITY, STATE AND FEDERAL POLICIES

[ACAF 2.06 International Academic Agreements](#)

[ACAF 2.08 Faculty/Staff-led Overseas Programs for Students](#)

[FINA 8.07 Study Abroad Refund](#)

[STAF 3.10 Student Organizations](#)

HISTORY OF REVISIONS

DATE OF REVISION	REASON FOR REVISION
June 4, 2013	New policy approval
January 26, 2017	Policy revised to include disclosure of student judicial records to the Study Abroad Office and adherence to code of conduct while studying abroad.
August 8, 2022	Updated to standard template
June 13, 2023	Updated terminology for consistency with STAF 3.10 Student Organizations
April 14, 2025	Policy reviewed, revalidated and updated to standard template.