

INTERNATIONAL TRAVEL WARNING POLICY

I. POLICY STATEMENT

Auburn University (Auburn) discourages travel to countries determined to have high risk factors as indicated by the following: a U.S. Department of State (US DOS) Travel Advisory Level of 3 “Reconsider Travel” or 4 “Do not travel” **and with added advisory codes in addition to Health Issue involving COVID19**, as well as a Center For Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Warning Level “3”, along with other commonly used risk resources. The detailed definitions of US DOS and CDC advisory levels are included in this document. If there is a question about risk prior to traveling to a country, the Auburn traveler can email RAT50@auburn.edu for additional information and resources. Travel to locations with identified increased risk may affect the individual’s ability to obtain medical or other assistance in the event of an emergency. Special approval and forms are required.

II. POLICY PRINCIPLES

This university policy outlines the principles for student participation on all sanctioned Auburn University activities to countries having political, social, or environmental difficulties where such problems cause various U.S. Government and commonly used resources, to issue formal alerts to its citizens about the health and safety of travel. To ensure the safety and security of Auburn students, it is university policy that **all** student travel to any country with health and safety risk issues, as determined by US DOS Travel Alert Level 3 or 4 plus risk codes, CDC level 3 and high risk factors identified by other reliable resources, is prohibited. An appeal of this policy can be made to the Risk Assessment Committee of the Office of International Programs and the restriction on such travel waived by the Provost upon recommendation of the Committee.

Faculty or staff members sponsoring or giving oversight to graduate or undergraduate students planning on visiting countries with health and safety risk alerts indicated by U.S. Government and commonly used resources **for any reason** are expected to petition the Risk Assessment Committee to seek approval for their student’s travel. For those students or student groups working through non-academic units that sponsor travel, leadership in these units will also be expected to interface with the Office of International Programs and the Risk Assessment Committee.

Faculty and staff travel, not associated with student travel, will need to complete Travel Risk Forms if their destination is US DOS Level 3 or 4 with added risk codes and if the CDC level is 3. This form is part of the Banner RAT50 process.

It is recognized that travel alerts are often not specific. Different countries and different regions of a given country may present very different situations. Specific programs present different risk profiles. Given that no overseas program, anywhere, is automatically “safe,” it has become clear that Auburn needs a way to respond flexibly to the information conveyed in travel alerts by commonly used health and safety resources.

III. EFFECTIVE DATE

August 26, 2010. Revised August 23, 2021.

IV. POLICY MANAGEMENT

Responsible Office: Office of the Provost

Responsible Executive: Dr. Bill Hardgrave (Provost)

Responsible Officer: Andrew Gillespie (Assistant Provost, International Programs)

V. POLICY PROCEDURES

THE RISK ASSESSMENT COMMITTEE

This Committee will have the authority to approve the safety of programs and sites for study, research, work, or service abroad, as well as the ability to cancel or revise programs based on safety and security issues. This will apply to all students (i.e. both graduate and undergraduate students) on all sanctioned Auburn University overseas activities, whether students are traveling individually or on an Auburn program. Cancellations or revisions will take place upon knowledge of a US DOS Travel Alert level of 3 or 4 with additional high risk codes within the alert or in the absence of a US DOS Travel Alert or Public Announcement – based on other known safety and risk factors. The latter case will be rare given the speed with which the US DOS assesses and announces danger to its citizens. The Committee's findings will be sent to the Provost as a recommendation, and the Provost's decision will be communicated by the Office of International Programs (OIP) to the relevant members of the faculty and administration.

Student and faculty travel to countries with US DOS Alert Levels 1 and 2 but whose destinations within the country are Level 3 or 4 are under the same requirements for travel review as countries with levels 3 and 4.

The Risk Assessment Committee will meet at least quarterly, or communicate as needed when waiver requests are submitted and be composed of representatives of the following:

- Assistant Provost for International Programs (OIP)
- Office of Study Abroad (Auburn Abroad)
- Division of Student Affairs
- Office of Risk Management
- Office of Communications and Marketing
- Office of the VP for Research
- Office of Campus Safety and Security
- Other medical and student travel expertise
- One or more at-large country experts, not associated with the program (as needed, at the invitation of OIP)

Requests for exemptions from this policy will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis for individuals

and credit/non-credit programs via a waiver process overseen by the Risk Assessment Committee. The request for an exception should be submitted to the Assistant Provost for International Programs and should clearly describe the following:

- The importance of this experience for the individual student or program participants, particularly with respect to its importance in their degree program, and why no other country can provide a similar experience;
- The nature and logistics of the proposed travel and the local support structure, including information on the program organizers (from Auburn or the host institution, government agency, or non-governmental organization);
- The geographic, cultural and political environment of the proposed travel and its relationship to safety and security issues in the country concerned (include modes of travel, routing, other details, and maps indicating traveler routes from airport and when in country on project or program);
- Procedures for keeping track of students' whereabouts and communicating this to Auburn (e.g. housing information, in-country contacts, mobile telephones, and the emergency contact protocol to be followed by the individual and/or the on-site contacts and Auburn personnel);
- Planned orientations both prior to departure and on-site which include information on safety, health, legal, environmental, political, cultural, and security-related issues;
- An emergency response plan for dealing with crisis situations on the program site; including security resources;
- An evacuation plan for moving participants off the site (including key decision makers and how resulting plans will be funded);
- A communication plan for how program leaders or a student's supervisor will monitor and report situations to Auburn University officials during the period of travel;
- Details of how faculty or other program supervisors (affiliated and not affiliated with Auburn) will be instructed in these procedures;
- Other relevant information associated with a specific waiver request.

OBLIGATIONS OF THE INDIVIDUAL STUDENT or PROGRAM AFFECTED

If waivers are granted, the individual student (and their faculty supervisor) or, in the case of a program, the program leader and participants, will be required to complete the following activities prior to departure:

- 1) Submit a signed Travel Risk Agreement Form within the Banner RAT50 site (for individual RAT50 traveler), same form for students going abroad on a program, supplied by the Auburn Abroad Office, in the Office of International Programs;
- 2) Submit a signed Parent Travel Waiver notification, if required by individual program abroad;
- 3) Update their Emergency Response plan, the Communication plan, or the Evacuation plan as needed;

- 4) Complete Auburn University processes for enrollment in international emergency travel medical, evacuation, and repatriation insurance through their Auburn Abroad application (if on a program abroad) or the Request for Travel Outside the 50 United States (RAT50) in AU Access;
- 5) Complete online the Smart Travel Enrollment Program (STEP) with the US Department of State, for each country they will visit.

ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS

Should a travel alert or other crisis situation present itself while a student or program is overseas, OIP will determine whether conditions warrant suspension of the program and/or departure of the student from the host country. When time permits, this will occur following appropriate consultation with the sponsoring Auburn unit, program leaders, the Risk Assessment Committee, any on-site staff, area experts, peer institutions that may be co-located, and other organizations that may be appropriate to the situation.

NOTES ON RISK LEVELS:

US DEPARTMENT OF STATE TRAVEL ADVISORY LEVELS AND RISK INDICATORS:

Level 1 - Exercise Normal Precautions: This is the lowest advisory level for safety and security risk. There is some risk in any international travel. Conditions in other countries may differ from those in the United States and may change at any time.

Level 2 - Exercise Increased Caution: Be aware of heightened risks to safety and security. The Department of State provides additional advice for travelers in these areas in the Travel Advisory. Conditions in any country may change at any time.

Level 3 - Reconsider Travel: Avoid travel due to serious risks to safety and security. The Department of State provides additional advice for travelers in these areas in the Travel Advisory. Conditions in any country may change at any time.

Level 4 – Do Not Travel: This is the highest advisory level due to greater likelihood of life-threatening risks. During an emergency, the U.S. government may have very limited ability to provide assistance. The Department of State advises that U.S. citizens not travel to the country or to leave as soon as it is safe to do so. The Department of State provides additional advice for travelers in these areas in the Travel Advisory. Conditions in any country may change at any time.

Varying Levels

We issue an overall Travel Advisory level for a country, but levels of advice may vary for specific locations or areas within a country. For instance, we may advise U.S. citizens to “Exercise increased caution” (Level 2) in a country, but to “Reconsider travel” (Level 3) to a particular area within the country.

Risk Indicators

Travel Advisories at Levels 2-4 contain clear reasons for the level assigned, using established risk indicators and specific advice to U.S. citizens who choose to travel there. These are:

- **C – Crime:** Widespread violent or organized crime is present in areas of the country. Local law enforcement may have limited ability to respond to serious crimes.
- **T – Terrorism:** Terrorist attacks have occurred and/or specific threats against civilians, groups, or other targets may exist.
- **U – Civil Unrest:** Political, economic, religious, and/or ethnic instability exists and may cause violence, major disruptions, and/or safety risks.
- **H – Health:** Health risks, including current disease outbreaks or a crisis that disrupts a country's medical infrastructure, are present. The issuance of a Centers for Disease Control Travel Notice may also be a factor.
- **N - Natural Disaster:** A natural disaster, or its aftermath, poses danger.
- **E - Time-limited Event:** Short-term event, such as elections, sporting events, or other incidents that may pose safety risks.
- **O – Other:** There are potential risks not covered by previous risk indicators. Read the country's Travel Advisory for details.
- **K – Kidnapping or Hostage Taking:** Criminal or terrorist individuals or groups have threatened to and/or have seized or detained and threatened to kill, injure or continue to detain individuals in order to compel a third party (including a governmental organization) to do or abstain from doing something as a condition of release.

The US Department of State also provide COVID-19 information for specific countries which may be viewed at the following link: <https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/traveladvisories/COVID-19-Country-Specific-Information.html>

B. CENTERS FOR DISEASE CONTROL AND PREVENTION (CDC) WARNING LEVELS:

Travel Health Notices (THN) - Defined as follows:

Warning Level 3 (Red): Avoid all non-essential travel to this destination. The outbreak is of high risk and no precautions are available to protect against the identified risk.

Alert Level 2 (Yellow) Practice enhanced precautions to this destination. The Travel Health Notice describes additional precautions added, or defines a specific at-risk population.

Alert Level 1 (Green): Practice usual precautions for this destination, as described in the Travel Health Notice and/or on the destination page. This includes being up-to-date on all recommended vaccines and practicing appropriate mosquito avoidance. Current list of travel warnings: <https://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/notices>

In addition to the standard travel notices, the CDC provides travel notices specific to COVID-19 travel risks at (Level 4 = very high, down to Level 1 = low and Level Unknown).
<https://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/noticescovid19>

ADOPTED: August 26, 2010

REVIEWED: August 10, 2016

REVISED: August 23, 2021

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

The following resources were consulted in the preparation of this policy:

- ▶ [Association of International Educators \(NAFSA\). “Responsible Study Abroad: Good Practices for Health & Safety.”](#)
- ▶ [Center for Global Education. Safety Abroad First - Educational Travel Information \(SAFETI\)](#)
- ▶ [The Forum on Education Abroad](#)
- ▶ [Indiana University, Office of Overseas Study](#)
- ▶ [Michigan State University, Office of Study Abroad](#)
- ▶ [University of Minnesota, Learning Abroad Center](#)
- ▶ [University of Wisconsin-Madison, Study Abroad](#)
- ▶ [Purdue University, Office of International Programs](#)
- ▶ [SEC Institutional Office of International Programs](#)
- ▶ [University of Georgia Office of Global Engagement](#)
- ▶ [US Department of State \(USDOS\) and Overseas Security Advisory Council \(OSAC\)](#)
- ▶ [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\)](#)