



Policy on Risk Assessment and Management for Education Abroad Programs	
Responsible Official: Provost	Responsible Office: International Programs and Services Office

POLICY PURPOSE

This policy specifies how East Tennessee State University will assess and manage risk related to Students and Employees traveling in conjunction with an Endorsed Education Abroad Program.

POLICY STATEMENT

This policy applies to: (1) Students who participate in any type of education abroad program approved by East Tennessee State University (ETSU), whether credit-bearing or non-credit bearing; and (2) Employees traveling in conjunction with an education abroad program approved by ETSU. Employees who are traveling abroad, but not in conjunction with an education abroad program should review the Policy on Risk Assessment and Management for Employee International Travel. An Endorsed Education Abroad Program may provide educational, research, or professional development opportunities.

Education abroad programs are opportunities for Students and Employees to travel outside the United States, including to U.S. Territories for an academic purpose. Students and Employees may travel in conjunction with an education abroad program if the program is an Endorsed Education Abroad Program and if, as required under this policy, the ETSU International Travel Risk Assessment and Advisory Committee (the "Committee") approves the travel. ETSU, in its sole discretion, may withdraw approval for an Endorsed Education Abroad Program at any time.

This policy applies only to the outlined risk assessment and management related to an Endorsed Education Abroad Program and does not address any other processes, requirements, policies, or guidelines for the participation in an education abroad program.

I. Request to Travel Required.

Students and Employees who wish to participate in an education abroad program must follow the application processes and procedures of the Office of International Programs and Services prior to traveling. The application must demonstrate the academic value of the travel and the safety procedures in place to mitigate the concerns of a travel advisory or relevant authority. The

application should be submitted at least six weeks prior to the proposed departure date. Applications received fewer than six weeks before the requested departure date will be reviewed at the discretion of the Committee.

A request to travel that does not include an academic purpose will not be approved.

II. Authorization to Travel.

The Senior International Officer or their designee, except as noted below, will approve or deny a request to travel based on a risk assessment and the current information and advisories published by the U.S. State Department and Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). It will prioritize student and employee health, safety, and security both prior to international travel and during their time abroad. It has no authority to certify the safety of the proposed travel; it only makes a determination as to whether the travel has an academic purpose and that the known health and safety risks have been reasonably mitigated. If the request is denied, the applicant may request the Committee reconsider the decision of the Senior International Officer.

Approval of an application only applies to the Student or Employee who filed the form. The approval only applies to the dates listed on the form.

A. Travel to Countries with Level 1, Level 2, or No Advisory Countries.

Students and Employees who receive approval to travel may engage in an Endorsed Education Abroad Program in countries or regions where the U.S. State Department has issued a Level 1 Advisory (Exercise Normal Precautions) or a Level 2 Advisory (Exercise Increased Caution) and where the CDC have issued No Advisory, a Level 1 Advisory (Practice Usual Precautions), or a Level 2 Advisory (Practice Enhanced Precautions).

B. Travel to Level 3 Countries.

Where the U.S. Department of State has issued a Level 3 Advisory (Reconsider Travel) or where the CDC has issued a Warning Level 3 (Avoid Non-Essential Travel), Students and Employees are only permitted to travel to these countries if they receive approval from:

1. the Committee and
2. the Provost in consultation with the respective college dean or designee.

C. Travel to Level 4 Countries or Mandatory Evacuation Zones Not Permitted.

Students and Employees are not permitted to travel to countries or regions with a State Department Level 4 Advisory (Do not Travel) or to any location for which the State Department has issued a mandatory evacuation order.

III. Change in State Department or CDC Advisory Prior to Travel.

Students and Employees are required to monitor the travel advisories and warnings and to contact the Committee in the event of a change in travel advisories and warnings.

If a Student or Employee has not commenced travel on an Endorsed Education Abroad Program and the Risk Designation for a country or region is upgraded to a U.S. Department of State Level 3 (Reconsider Travel) and/or the CDC risk level is upgraded to Level 3 (Avoid Non-Essential Travel), the Student or Employee is not permitted to travel until the Committee approves travel under the changed circumstances.

If a Student or Employee has not commenced travel on an Endorsed Education Abroad Program and the Risk Designation for a country or region is upgraded to Level 4 (Do Not Travel) Advisory, the Student or Employee is not permitted to travel.

IV. Change in State Department or CDC Advisory After Departure.

In the event a Student or Employee has departed for an Endorsed Education Abroad Program and a significant health or safety concern arises or the Risk Designation of the country or region to which the individual(s) is traveling is upgraded to a U.S. Department of State Level 3 Advisory (Reconsider Travel) or Level 4 Advisory (Do Not Travel) and/or the CDC's Warning Level rises to a Level 3 (Avoid Non-Essential Travel), the Committee will convene to determine if travel may continue or if the individual(s) should return to the U.S.

V. Required Insurance.

Prior to traveling, a Student or Employee is required to purchase illness, accident, travel, medical evacuation, repatriation, and security evacuation insurance coverage from an insurance provider approved by ETSU.

VI. Compliance with U.S. Export Control Regulations.

Students and Employees are required to comply with U.S. export control regulations including sanctions imposed by the Office of Foreign Assets Controls and with restrictions on the export and re-export of commodities, software, technology, and technical data subject to Export Administration Regulations and International Traffic in Arms Regulations. It is the responsibility of a Student or Employee to ensure that the country to which they are traveling is not covered by sanctions, and to comply with requirements for an export license, even for commonplace items.

VII. Costs.

ETSU cannot insure cost and academic credit recovery to Students and Employees who comply with a mandated withdrawal or evacuation order from the U.S. Government or ETSU. ETSU will only refund fees paid to individuals to the extent the fees are refunded to ETSU.

VIII. Exclusions.

This policy does not apply to:

- A. ETSU student-athletes travelling abroad for athletic related activities; or
- B. International travel that is not explicitly endorsed by ETSU.

IX. Leave of Absence.

If Unendorsed Travel is occurring during a required term, the Student must take a leave of absence from ETSU. Students on leave of absence from ETSU are not eligible for financial aid, scholarship, travel stipends, and other ETSU supports, including but not limited to credit. Students who travel in violation of or outside of the parameters of this policy risk losing their status as an ETSU student.

X. Violation of this Policy.

Students or Employees who choose to travel abroad and participate in an education program that is not an Endorsed Study Abroad Program or chose to operate outside the parameters of an Endorsed Education Abroad Program do so at their own risk.

Authority: Tenn. Code Ann. §§ 49-8-203 (a)(4)

Defined Terms

Endorsed Education Abroad Program	An education abroad Program that the university takes specific and deliberate action to support or offer and that includes international travel outside the United States, including to U.S. Territories. The Office of International Programs and Services must approve the program. Endorsed Education Aboard Programs do not include instances where an Employee has informally discussed or organized international travel with a student or instances where an Employee forwards information about a program to a Student or group of Students.
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Student	An individual enrolled at ETSU in any credit or noncredit bearing course or participating in any academic program administered by ETSU. For the purposes of this policy, Students include undergraduate, graduate, professional, graduate medical education, and any other individual who
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partakes in educational programs under the guidance of the ETSU academic structure. Postdoctoral students and visiting scholars are not Students for purposes of this policy.

Employee	Any person defined as an employee in ETSU’s Employment Classification policy regardless of employee type. For purposes of this policy, graduate students, volunteers, and independent contractors are not considered employees.
Risk Designation	A travel safety designation provided by U.S. State Department Advisories, CDC Advisories, and other government or international entities.
Unendorsed Travel	When any student or employee chooses to travel abroad without approval and/or participate in an education program that is not an Endorsed Study Abroad Program or choose to operate outside the parameters of an Endorsed Education Abroad Program, the travel is unendorsed.
International Travel Risk Assessment and Advisory Committee	The Committee responsible for reviewing all proposed Student and Employee travel in conjunction with a study abroad program. The Committee is composed of the Senior International Officer (Chair), the University Counsel, the Director International Programs and Services, the Coordinator of Education Abroad, the Dean of the College of Public Health, the Dean of Students, Director of Public Safety, the Associate Vice President and Director of Emergency Management, as well as additional members who may be added from time to time in the discretion of the Chair (officials may delegate their responsibilities to others within their areas of authority and consult other administrators, faculty, and experts as they choose).

Policy History

Effective Date:
Revision Date:

Procedure(s)

I. Procedures for Filing Applications with Office of International Programs and Services.

In accordance with this policy, Students and Employees apply for approval through the application processes and procedures of the Office of International Programs and Services which includes filing the following forms prior to traveling:

- A. Application; and
- B. Travel Disclosure Form.

Specific application instructions including templates and FAQs can be found on the Office of International Programs website.

II. Procedures for Review of Applications.

When a complete application is received, the Senior International Officer will call a meeting of the Committee either by phone, email, or in person. In deciding whether to approve travel, the Committee reviews:

- A. the academic purpose of the opportunity;
- B. whether the opportunity is for undergraduate, graduate, or professional development;
- C. the educational, research, or professional development importance of the opportunity in relation to the Students' academic program;
- D. alternative program options and why none were chosen;
- E. the political and physical conditions in the site country;
- F. geographic location of the activity and its relation to the threat addressed by the travel advisory;
- G. steps taken to minimize the threat;
- H. the level of risk to Students' health and safety;
- I. traveler experience, both in general and related to the specific country;
- J. travel conditions and the ability to evacuate Students, if necessary;
- K. legal risk to the University; and
- L. information from governmental sources, the University's insurance carriers, and other expert sources.

If a unanimous decision cannot be made, the procedure is to refer the application to the Vice President for Academic Affairs and Provost.

In the event the Committee is considering a rejection of a travel application by a graduate student, the procedure is to consult the Dean of the Student's college during the decision-making process.

III. Procedure for Notification of Decision.

After a decision is made, Senior International Officer or their designee notifies the Employee or Student.

IV. Procedures for Consideration of Change in State Department or CDC Advisory Before or After Departure.

In the event that a significant health or safety concern arises or the Risk Designation of the country or region to which the individual(s) is traveling is upgraded to a U.S. Department of State Level 3 Advisory (Reconsider Travel) or Level 4 Advisory (Do Not Travel) and/or the CDC's Warning Level rises to a Level 3 (Avoid Non-Essential Travel), the procedures for the Committee when they convene to determine if travel may continue or if the individual(s) should return to the U.S. are as follows:

- A. The Senior International Officer will request via email that the Committee review the situation.
- B. In deciding whether to suspend student or program travel, the Committee will review the success of the current program in mitigating health and safety risks thus far, the specific location and situation, as well as information and recommendations from Terra Dotta (if applicable), the education abroad office, insurance providers (if applicable), the onsite staff/affiliate (if applicable), and other trusted local contacts.

A decision regarding the suspension of travel will be communicated to the Student via email and other available forms of communication as soon as possible.

Procedure History

Effective Date:
Revision Date:

Related Form(s)

Scope and Applicability

Primary:
Secondary: