REASONS FOR THIS POLICY

The University of Missouri supports students as they participate in university-related international travel, such as credit-bearing study abroad programs, internships, research, service-learning and volunteer opportunities, conferences, registered student organization activities, student groups affiliated with academic departments and other noncredit-bearing university programs. The purpose of this policy is to facilitate the following objectives:

1. Ensure student access to information deemed pertinent to their travel abroad.
2. Assess any potential risks and take appropriate actions to reduce those risks.
3. Monitor when and where students are traveling abroad on university-related opportunities.

APPLIES TO

This policy applies to all MU undergraduate and graduate students traveling internationally for university-sponsored or university-related purposes. University-sponsored or university-related purposes include credit-bearing study abroad programs, internships, research, service-learning and volunteer opportunities, conferences, registered student organization activities, student groups affiliated with academic departments and other noncredit-bearing MU programs. This includes the following:

- Any travel in connection with activities for which academic credit is being sought, including:
  > Programs operated through the International Center or any authorized academic division study abroad office;
  > Travel as part of a formal academic program or course of study;
  > Internship credit; and
  > Travel for independent study credit (including retroactive requests for academic credit).
- Any travel for purposes of performance, sporting events, service-learning, conferences, meetings, professional development or university-contracted volunteerism organized by a registered student organization or student group affiliated with an MU academic department.
- Any travel for which funding is sought through a university-administered account or a student government-administered account within MU.
- Any travel that is university-contracted.

This policy does not apply to personal travel. This policy does not include students who make the personal decision to travel internationally for recreational purposes and use their own funds, or other non-university funds, to support this travel.

Personal travel includes additional independent travel before or after travel for university-sponsored or university-related purposes, that is not part of the official university-sponsored or university-related itinerary. University-contracted international health insurance does not cover personal travel.
DEFINITIONS

- **Level one country or region**: A country or region determined by the U.S. Department of State to be at the lowest advisory level for health, safety and security risks (exercise normal precautions/blue).

- **Level two country or region**: A country or region determined by the U.S. Department of State to pose increased health, safety and security risks (exercise increased caution/yellow).

- **Level three country or region**: A country or region determined by the U.S. Department of State to pose serious health, safety and security risks (reconsider travel/orange).

- **Level four country or region**: A country or region determined by the U.S. Department of State to pose the highest level of potentially life-threatening risk to health, safety and security (do not travel/red).

- **CDC warning country**: A country determined by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention was a warning level three country, a country that poses a high risk to travelers’ health (avoid all nonessential travel/red).

POLICY STATEMENT

In general, the University of Missouri **does not permit** students to participate in university-related international travel in countries or regions for which the U.S. Department of State has issued a travel advisory level three (reconsider travel) or level four (do not travel), or in CDC travel warning countries. This prohibition includes international travel for study abroad programs, independent studies, research, service-learning, conferences, athletic competitions, arts performances or exhibitions, or internships. Accordingly, the university may not grant academic credit or provide funds for any such activities.

However, exceptions may be made in certain circumstances when the student’s experience is facilitated, sponsored, monitored or controlled by an MU faculty or staff member. As a result, all students requesting exceptions must identify a faculty or staff member to oversee the academic purpose of their international travel. The student must submit a request for an exception to the stated MU student international travel policy. This request must be completed and submitted at least **eight weeks** prior to the student’s planned departure. It will be reviewed by the **Student Travel Abroad Review Committee**, which will advise the International Center director. For more information, see the **international travel policy exception request process**.

Program suspension/revocation of travel permission/withdrawal

The university reserves the right to withdraw its approval at any time should conditions presented in a request for approval change materially. Students are responsible for monitoring conditions in approved travel locations. The International Center director or director of student international health, safety and security may communicate information and an assessment to affected individuals when there is a sudden change of condition (see below).
Financial responsibilities

MU does not assume responsibility for financial risks associated with participation in its study abroad or university-related international activities. If the university cancels a program before departure or while the program is in process for reasons beyond its control, including, but not limited to, political unrest or danger to participant safety, changes to the U.S. Department of State travel advisory, issuance of a CDC travel warning, natural disaster, etc., in accordance with the MU Office of Cashiers refund policy, only recoverable fees or tuition refunded to the university by service providers or institutions will be returned to participants. The university will make reasonable efforts to obtain refunds for applicable service providers or institutions, but no refunds are guaranteed. In addition to lost fees and tuition, participants may incur additional travel expenses in connection with program cancellation. Participants may or may not receive academic credit if a program is canceled. The university assumes no responsibility for the financial or other losses of program participants resulting from cancellation.

Sudden change of condition

In addition to reviewing requests for permission under the MU student international travel policy, the Student Travel Abroad Review Committee may recommend whether or not to suspend an ongoing or previously-approved study or travel abroad experience if a significant health, safety or security concern is raised regarding that experience. In making this assessment, the committee may consider the risk management plan for the students, staff and faculty involved in the study abroad program or university-related international activity, and the balance between the value of the experience in that specific location versus the risks associated with that location/activity.

Though uncommon, it is possible that a specific program, activities in a specific location (city, region or country) or all activities abroad would need to be modified or suspended by the university due to a health or safety concern. This concern may arise if a new/revised U.S. Department of State travel advisory or CDC travel warning is issued for a location, or if conditions presented in an International Travel Policy Exception Request change materially. If this occurs, the International Center will work with program sponsors, the students (and other program participants) and, if necessary, the university’s contracted insurance provider in an effort to accomplish safe and timely evacuation of all MU students and program participants.

International travel policy exception request process

Note: The director of the International Center reserves the right to adjust these procedures without notice.

Requests for permission to engage in university-related student international activities in countries or regions for which the Department of State has issued a travel advisory of level three (reconsider travel) or level four (do not travel) or in CDC travel warning countries are made to the International Center director. Faculty/staff requesting permission to establish a new university-related international activity in a restricted country or region must submit an International Travel Policy Exception Request: Faculty/staff form. Individual students requesting permission to participate in study abroad or a university-related international activity in a restricted country or region must submit an International Travel Policy Exception Request: Individual student form.
All review materials should be submitted at least eight weeks prior to the envisioned start of the program to the director of the International Center. The director will forward the request to the STAR Committee for recommendations. The STAR Committee will not review requests until all relevant materials have been submitted. Due to the complexity involved in making a quality exception request, applicants should expect the entire review process to take six to eight weeks. Failure to allow for sufficient time for review may result in a denied request or a delayed program start. Please note that the international travel policy exception will only apply to the specific program or experience approved, not to the entire country or region.

In cases where a new Department of State travel advisory of level three or level four or a new CDC travel warning is issued less than eight weeks before an already-approved program’s request deadline, every effort will be made to facilitate an emergency meeting of the STAR Committee to conduct a thorough and timely review of the situation.

**Special note: Expedited review**

Certain requests for international travel policy exceptions may qualify for an expedited review, such as:

- Individual travelers who wish to return to a previously approved location to continue a project or activity.
- Travel to high traffic locations that have been recently reviewed by the STAR Committee and involve low-risk activity (such as archival research).
- A request that is a renewal of a prior approval (unless conditions have changed – for example, issuance of a CDC travel warning or elevation from a Department of State travel advisory from level three to level four).
- Individuals or groups proposing study abroad or university-related international activities in a country with an overall travel advisory of level one or level two, which contains level three or level four regions, but who do not plan to travel to or through the level three or level four areas.

The International Center director will determine whether an expedited review is appropriate.

**Exemptions**

MU international students (F-1 or J-1 visa holders) who are returning to their home countries for university-sponsored international travel activities need not apply for an international travel policy exception. However, proof of citizenship or permanent residency in that country must be provided to the International Center at least eight weeks prior to departure. Such students are still required to complete all other pre-departure requirements, including enrollment in MU’s [international travel registry](https://international.missouri.edu).

**Approval criteria**

The request must be strongly linked to academic program goals, and the safety issues raised in the request must be adequately addressed and documented. The STAR Committee will only recommend approval of requests when there is a compelling justification for the program.
In addition to the materials provided by the applicant, the STAR Committee may also consider the following at its discretion.

- Consultations with on-site individuals, such as alumni, students, staff and faculty of other programs, as well as the nearest U.S. embassy or consulate.
- Consultations with representatives from government agencies such as the U.S. Department of State, Overseas Security Advisory Council, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and World Health Organization.
- Policies and decisions of other universities and colleges.
- Travel advisories issues by other countries.
- Other relevant material and advice.

Approval decisions

Requests for international travel policy exemption are reviewed by the Student Travel Abroad Review Committee. Approval decisions are made by the director of the International Center and recommendation by the STAR Committee.

Permission/limited duration

Absent change of condition that warrants earlier evacuation, programs/experiences that operate with permission under the policy are valid for three years and, upon expiration, the program’s administrative sponsor (or the individual’s faculty/staff sponsor) must submit a renewal request.

Code of conduct

While away from campus, students are required to honor the university’s Student Standard of Conduct, as well as any appropriate documents that pertain to the MU study abroad or university-related international program in which they are participating. Students must further adhere to the codes of conduct established by program directors, hosting institutions/organizations and professional practice applicable to the MU international program in which they are participating. Students traveling internationally are subject to all local laws and to discipline under the Student Standard of Conduct.

ENFORCEMENT

Violations of the policy may results in disciplinary measures in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct.

The university reserves the right to deny academic credit, funding or reimbursement for any student international travel that is inconsistent with its policies and practices.