

University of Hartford Policy Related to Department of State Travel Warnings and University-Sponsored Travel Abroad

Responsible University Office: Office of the Provost

Responsible Officer: Provost

Original Issue Date: 12/10/2008

Date Last Reviewed: 01/28/2019

Policy Statement

This policy applies to all University of Hartford faculty, staff, and students traveling abroad or studying abroad on University business, or University-sponsored programs and approved affiliated programs. In order to protect the health and safety of the aforementioned individuals, the University of Hartford restricts travel in those countries or regions of countries for which the U.S. Department of State has issued a Travel Advisory Level 3 or 4, or for which the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has issued a Travel Health Notice – Level 3 (Avoid Nonessential Travel). An exception to this policy for faculty and staff may be granted by the International Situation Management Team (ISMT) under extraordinary circumstances.

Reason(s) for the Policy

This policy is an update of the former “University of Hartford Policy Related to Department of State Travel Warnings and University-Sponsored Travel Abroad,” previously issued on January 30, 2015. The University of Hartford is committed to providing a broad spectrum of international experiences for students, faculty, and staff. We highly encourage study abroad on University-approved programs, participation in other credit and non-credit international experiences, and faculty international research. At the same time, in the face of the safety risks in the world today, we are also committed to protecting the health and safety of students, faculty, and staff when they journey outside the borders of the United States. This policy outlines procedures for restrictions on University-sponsored travel abroad to countries or regions of countries for which the State Department has issued a Travel Advisory Level 3 or 4, or for which the CDC has issued a Travel Health Notice – Level 3. In addition, this policy sets forth procedures for all travel and study abroad to locations not currently under a Travel Advisory.

Primary Guidance to which this Policy Responds

Not applicable

Who is Governed by this Policy

All faculty, staff, students, and others traveling abroad on University business or University-affiliated programs are expected to comply with this Policy.

Definitions

“*ISMT*” is an acronym for the International Situation Management Team. The ISMT is a cross-functional team comprised of select department management critical to addressing and responding to an international incident that places in danger students, faculty, staff, and other members of the University community on a University of Hartford-sponsored program. The ISMT reports to the President of the University of Hartford, and its members consist of the Chair and Associate Vice President for Institutional Effectiveness and Continuing Education (who has supervisory responsibility for international travel), Vice President for Marketing and Communication, Chief Financial Officer, Dean of Students, Co-Chair and Director of the International Center, and General Counsel ex-officio.

“*CDC*” stands for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the health protection agency of the United States.

- The CDC issues three types of Travel Health Notices: Watch Level 1 (Practice Usual Precautions), Alert Level 2 (Practice Enhanced Precautions), and Warning Level 3 (Avoid Nonessential Travel). The University of Hartford restricts travel in those countries or regions of countries for which the CDC has issued a Travel Health Notice – Level 3.

“*GeoBlue*” is the name of the company which provides the University’s medical insurance and travel assistance policy. This policy provides medical, security, and travel-related assistance in the event of an emergency abroad.

“*Travel Advisories*” are issued by the Department of State to advise U.S. citizens of the risks of traveling to a region or country, and to encourage them not to travel to these destinations until such time as the situation improves and the Travel Advisory has been lifted. Travel advisories may be issued in response to unstable government, civil war, ongoing intense crime or violence, frequent terrorist attacks, natural disasters, etc.

- Any reference to “Travel Advisory” in this document refers to the specific kinds of warnings referenced in the “Procedures for implementing this Policy” section below. When the State Department Warning targets a specific region(s) of a country, but not the country as a whole, travel is only restricted in those regions identified by the Travel Advisory. For example, a University of Hartford program or an affiliated program in Madrid would not be affected by a Travel Advisory that applied to the Basque region of Spain. A faculty member’s participation in a conference in Manchester, England would not be affected by a Travel Advisory that applied to London only.
- The State Department’s Travel Advisory system consists of four levels. The University restricts travel to any destination with a Travel Advisory of Level 3 or 4:
 - Level 1: exercise normal precautions
 - Level 2: exercise increased caution
 - Level 3: reconsider travel
 - Level 4: do not travel

Contacts

Associate Vice President for Institutional Effectiveness and Continuing Education and Chair of the International Situation Management Team; Office of the Provost, 860-768-4401

Director, International Center and Co-Chair of the International Situation Management Team; International Center, 860-768-5101

Related Documents, Forms, and Tools

To view current Travel Warnings on the State Department's website: <http://travel.state.gov>

To view current Travel Health Notices by the CDC: <http://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/notices>

Prior to travel abroad, all faculty, staff, students, and others participating on a University-sponsored or approved affiliated program are required to attend a pre-departure safety training hosted by the International Center, and submit the following to the International Center:

- Copy of flight itinerary, daily itinerary including accommodation and emergency contact information, passport copy, and visa copy if applicable
- Payment of the GeoBlue travel assistance fee
- Signed Assumption of Risk and Release of Liability Form

Policy Web Address

<http://www.hartford.edu/international-center/study-abroad/files/pdf/University%20of%20Hartford%20Policy%20Related%20to%20Department%20of%20State%20Travel%20Warnings%20and%20University.pdf>

Related Policies

None

Procedures for Implementing this Policy

We strongly recommend that before traveling to any part of the world, students, faculty, staff, and other members of the University community familiarize themselves with the country specific information, advisory messages and health issues from both the U.S. Department of State (<http://travel.state.gov>) and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) (<https://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/notices>). It is the responsibility of the individual traveler to consult the State Department website to obtain current information about the health and safety conditions of the proposed destination, paying particular attention to the "Travel Advisory" section which lists countries and regions about which the U.S. Government has serious concerns for American travelers. Although the University of Hartford does not prohibit travel to countries for which "Travel Advisories – Levels 1 or 2"

have been issued by the State Department, we urge all travelers to consider seriously the risks in visiting such locales.

In order to protect the health and safety of its students, faculty, staff, and others, the University of Hartford restricts:

- **University-sponsored travel in those countries or regions of countries for which the State Department has issued a Travel Advisory that includes any of the following phrases:**
 - orders departure of U.S. dependents and non-emergency personnel;
 - recommends that any U.S. citizens remaining in the country should depart;
 - (strongly) warns U.S. citizens against (all) travel to the country (region); or
 - warns (urges) U.S. citizens to defer (all) (non-essential) travel to the country (region)
- **University-sponsored travel in those countries or regions of countries for which the CDC has issued a Travel Health Notice Warning – Level 3 (Avoid Nonessential Travel).**

In addition, all individuals traveling or studying abroad on University business, or University-sponsored programs and approved affiliated programs must sign the appropriate “Assumption of Risk and Release of Liability” form. All individuals participating in University-sponsored travel as indicated above must also obtain GeoBlue coverage from the International Center (Gengras Student Union 309) prior to departure.

Nothing in this policy shall serve to extend to any University of Hartford student, faculty, or staff the right to engage in University-sponsored travel abroad, and the University reserves the right to cancel any University-sponsored travel at any time, regardless of whether prior approval has been granted.

1.0 Student Travel

1.1 No University of Hartford student is permitted to embark on study abroad in the country/region under a U.S. Department of State Travel Advisory – Level 3 or 4 or CDC Travel Health Notice– Level 3 (per the Travel Policy above), nor are any short-term programs led by University faculty permitted to depart as long as the Travel Advisory – Level 3 or 4 and/or Travel Health Notice – Level 3 (per the Travel Policy above) are in effect. This restriction applies to the University’s own study abroad programs, University-sponsored travel programs (e.g., sports teams, performing groups, volunteer activities, organized tours for community members, or alumni, etc.), and study-away experiences sponsored by affiliated programs. Approval for University-sponsored study abroad or travel in these locations is suspended for the duration of the Travel Advisory – Level 3 or 4 and/or the Travel Health Notice– Level 3 (per the Travel Policy above).

1.2 If a student receives formal approval to participate in a program location prior to the issuance of a Travel Advisory – Level 3 or 4 or Travel Health Notice – Level 3 (per the Travel Policy above) or to the development of a critical situation, the University’s approval will be suspended until such time as the Travel Advisory – Level 3 or 4 and/or Travel Health Notice – Level 3 has been lifted or the critical situation is no longer a concern.

1.3 In the event that a Travel Advisory – Level 3 or 4 and/or Travel Health Notice – Level 3 (per the Travel Policy above) is issued or a critical situation arises while a University of Hartford student is participating in a University or an affiliated program already in progress, the University’s International Situation Management Team (ISMT) will do all that it reasonably can to facilitate actions that will improve the safety of the individuals in the program.

1.4 If a University of Hartford student chooses on his or her own to apply for “active status” and to enroll in a study abroad program or pursue any academic work in a country/region where a Travel Advisory – Level 3 or 4 and/or Travel Health Notice – Level 3 (per the Travel Policy above) has been issued prior to or during the process of applying for study abroad, the student will not receive:

- support or advice from any University of Hartford office or department,
- University of Hartford grants, stipends, or financial aid to support research or travel in the affected areas,
- GeoBlue coverage issued through the University of Hartford, or
- pre-approved credit for the work undertaken in that location.

An exception to this provision of pre-approved credit may be made in cases in which students return to their home countries (they must possess the passport of that country) and are under their parent(s)’s or guardian’s care. With special permission, these students can receive prior approval for courses taken in their home countries.

2.0 Faculty and Staff Organizing Group Travel Experiences in Countries on the State Department’s “Travel Advisory – Level 3 or 4” and/or on the CDC’s Travel Health Notice – Level 3 List

No University of Hartford sponsored travel programs may embark for affected areas while the Travel Advisory – Level 3 or 4 Warning and/or Travel Health Notice – Level 3 (per the Travel Policy above) is in effect. This restriction applies to the University’s own study abroad programs, University-sponsored travel programs (e.g., sports teams, performing groups, volunteer activities, organized tours for community members, or alumni, etc.), and study-away experiences sponsored by affiliated programs. Approval for University-sponsored study abroad or travel in these locations is suspended for the duration of the Travel Advisory – Level 3 or 4 and/or the Travel Health Notice – Level 3 (per the Travel Policy above).

A Travel Advisory – Level 3 or 4 and/or Travel Health Notice – Level 3 must be lifted before a University-sponsored program may depart. In the case of University of Hartford programs already underway when a Travel Advisory – Level 3 or 4 and/or Travel Health Notice – Level 3 for the country/region is issued or a critical situation arises, the University’s International Situation Management Team (ISMT), in consultation with the faculty member on site and other knowledgeable sources, will do all that it reasonably can to facilitate actions that will improve the safety of the individuals in the program.

3.0 Staff Travel

3.1 Before traveling to a region of the world on university-related business, staff is required to familiarize themselves with the U.S. Department of State (<http://travel.state.gov>) and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) (<https://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/notices>) websites to carefully assess the health and safety risks posed by travel to a particular area.

3.2 Normally, staff may not use any monies paid from a University of Hartford administered account to support travel to countries/regions that have been designated by the State Department “Travel Advisory – Level 3 or 4” and/or Travel Health Notice – Level 3 specified in the Travel Policy above.

3.3 If staff makes the personal decision to travel to countries/regions that have been designated by the State Department with a “Travel Advisory – Level 3 or 4” and/or by the CDC with a Travel Health Notice – Level 3 specified in the Travel Policy above, and to use their own funds to support this travel, they do so as private individuals with no connection to the University of Hartford.

3.4 An exception to the policy articulated for staff (3.2; travel to high-risk regions) may be granted under extraordinary circumstances. Staffs who seek personal exceptions to this policy should submit in writing a rationale for travel that contains the following:

- a) Details about the geographic environment of the work and its relation to security issues;
- b) Information about travel advisories or warnings of other countries (e.g., Britain, Australia, New Zealand, Canada) about the country under the U.S. State Department Warning;
- c) The local support structure available to the individual and evacuation plans in case of an emergency;
- d) The individual’s familiarity with and experience of the locale, its language, and culture prior to this program;
- e) The importance and significance to the University of the staff member’s travel and the necessity of doing the work in that particular locale;
- f) Documentation that the staff member has appropriate health insurance coverage in the locale in question;
- g) Documentation about whether the location is covered under the University’s UHCG assistance program (travel to some high risk regions may involve additional payment beyond what is included in the premium);
- h) A signed copy of the “Assumption of Risk and Release of Liability, High-risk Regions” form should be included with the request for an exception.

This rationale must be submitted to the individuals who supervise the program, department, and college/school that are funding the program. Each of these supervisors must review the submitted materials and provide a written assessment of the proposed travel based on its feasibility, importance, and necessity. Each assessment should also contain a recommendation about whether the travel should be permitted to proceed with University support. The staff member’s rationale and the supervisors’ assessments must be submitted to the International Situation Management Team, who will review the documents and decide whether to allow the travel to proceed with University support. The decision of the International Situation Management Team is final and not subject to appeal.

4.0 Faculty Consulting, Travel, and Research

4.1 The University of Hartford encourages faculty to develop international connections and to pursue international research. We do, however, strongly recommend that before traveling to a region of the world, faculty familiarize themselves with the U.S. Department of State (<http://travel.state.gov>) and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) (<https://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/notices>) websites to carefully assess the health and safety risks posed by travel to a particular area. A faculty member traveling for professional reasons must check both the State Department's "Travel Advisories" and the CDC's "Travel Health Notices – Level 3".

4.2 A faculty member who for professional reasons (e.g. research, teaching at an international university, attending a conference) wishes to travel to a region which falls under the State Department "Travel Advisory – Level 3 or 4" and/or the CDC Travel Health Notice – Level 3 specified in the Travel Policy above and whose travel/research costs are paid from a University-administered account (whether its own monies or those received through external granting agencies) may undertake such travel only after completing the steps outlined below and receiving the appropriate approvals.

4.2.1 A rationale for the proposed professional activities must be filed with each program, department, or school that is funding the program. It must contain the following:

- a) Details about the geographic environment of the work and its relation to security issues;
- b) Information about travel advisories or warnings of other countries (e.g., Britain, Australia, New Zealand, Canada) about the country under the U.S. State Department Warning;
- c) The local support structure available to the individual and evacuation plans in case of an emergency;
- d) The individual's familiarity with and experience of the locale, its language, and culture prior to this program;
- e) The academic importance and significance of the program/research to the faculty member and the necessity of doing the work in that particular locale;
- f) Documentation that the faculty has appropriate health insurance coverage in the locale in questions
- g) Documentation about whether the location is covered under the University's GeoBlue assistance program (travel to some high risk regions may involve additional payment beyond what is included in the premium);
- h) A signed copy of the "Assumption of Risk and Release of Liability, High-risk Regions" form should be included.

4.2.2 This rationale (4.2.1) must be submitted to the individuals who supervise the program, department, and college/school that is funding the program. Each of these supervisors must review the submitted materials and provide a written assessment of the proposed travel based on its feasibility, importance and necessity. Each assessment should also contain a recommendation about whether the travel should be permitted to proceed with university support. The faculty member's rationale and the supervisors' assessments must be submitted to the International Situation Management Team, who will

review the documents and decide whether to allow the travel to proceed with university support. The decision of ISMT is final and not subject to appeal.

4.3 If faculties make the personal decision to travel to countries/regions that have been designated by State Department "Travel Advisory – Level 3 or 4" and/or the CDC Travel Health Notice – Level 3 specified in the Travel Policy above and use their own funds to support this travel, they do so as private individuals with no connection to the University of Hartford.

Effective date: 06/18/2018