

Student International Travel Policy

I. Introduction and Scope

Increasing numbers of Vanderbilt students undertake international travel for the purpose of study, research, service learning, and volunteer activities. These travel activities range from individual educational and research projects, through traditional study abroad, to service projects conducted by student organizations. As Vanderbilt's students expand their global reach, the University must balance the value of participation in international education activities with the potential risk to its students. As such, certain international travel may require additional review prior to being approved as an official Vanderbilt sponsored activity.

The Vanderbilt Student International Travel Policy has been adopted to set forth a consistent set of standards to be followed by students in connection with Vanderbilt-sponsored activities that take place outside the United States. Vanderbilt strongly encourages all members of the Vanderbilt community who are considering travel abroad to review and familiarize themselves with the political, health, crime and other safety-related conditions of any country and specific locations within it.

II. Definitions

- A. "Student(s)" includes any individual who has been officially admitted into Vanderbilt University, and who is enrolled for at least one class at Vanderbilt at the time of travel; or during the summer, is enrolled for at least one class at Vanderbilt, or was a student the previous spring semester and is enrolled for at least one class for the fall semester.
- B. "Sponsored activities" (group or individual) include:
 - 1. All credit-bearing or degree-advancing international travel (e.g. study abroad, including Maymester; thesis and dissertation research)
 - 2. Travel organized on behalf of a registered student organization, varsity athletic team, or residential facility.
 - 3. Activities funded in whole or in part by Vanderbilt University (e.g. Vanderbilt money held or disbursed through student organization agency funds¹, fellowships, grants, International Summer Awards, research assistantships).
- C. "Non-sponsored activities" include:
 - 1. Travel that has no connection to Vanderbilt University or its educational, research, service, and patient care activities. Examples include personal travel (vacation), mission/service trips that are unaffiliated with a Vanderbilt organization, and any other travel not described in the definition of "sponsored activities."
 - 2. Travel that is organized by an entity other than Vanderbilt, even when participants are recruited through Vanderbilt student organizations or other on-campus marketing efforts, as long as Vanderbilt has no role in overseeing or funding the travel.

¹ Agency funds affected by this policy include, but are not limited to, AcFee, tax-receipted donations, money donated to Vanderbilt that is raised by student organizations through fundraisers, and contributions from other Vanderbilt entities, such as other student organizations, schools and academic departments or administrative offices. Money deposited in agency funds by individual students or their parents or relatives for which there is no tax receipt is not affected by this policy.

**Note: if you have questions about whether your travel is considered a sponsored activity, please e-mail vio@vanderbilt.edu.*

III. Scope

This policy applies to students taking part in sponsored activities. Vanderbilt University assumes no responsibility for non-sponsored activities as defined in this policy.

IV. Requirements

A. Travel Registration

1. All Vanderbilt students participating in a sponsored activity (as defined above) must register their travel with the [Global Education Office](#) (GEO) at least two weeks prior to departure.
2. Students must also register their travel with [International SOS \(ISOS\)](#) at least two weeks prior to departure. ISOS provides emergency evacuation, repatriation and other travel support services to Vanderbilt travelers.

B. Travel Waiver Form

1. All Vanderbilt students participating in a sponsored activity (as individuals or in groups) must execute a “standard” travel waiver form with Vanderbilt acknowledging that they understand the risks of travel, affirming that they have reviewed and understand relevant safety-related materials, and acknowledging that they assume the risks related to their international travel. Students may sign and submit this document electronically when [registering their travel](#) on the GEO website. Forms must be signed and submitted at least two weeks prior to departure.
2. Students under the age of 18 must obtain a parental signature on the form.

C. Orientation and Pre-approval

1. Undergraduate students traveling for credit-bearing Vanderbilt study-abroad programs must check with the GEO or the faculty member organizing their activities for a list of required pre-departure tasks, including orientation.
2. Undergraduate students traveling as part of a registered student organization should work with their group’s adviser to plan the trip and to fulfill required pre-departure requirements.

D. Health Insurance

1. All students participating in a sponsored activity are required to have medical insurance that will provide coverage in the country in which they will travel. Undergraduate students must obtain this insurance through [HTH Worldwide](#), a short-term international medical insurance provider.
2. Undergraduate students enrolled in credit-bearing, Vanderbilt-approved study abroad activities will be automatically enrolled in international medical insurance when they register travel with GEO. Undergraduates participating in other programs are responsible for enrolling themselves through the [HTH website](#).
3. Graduate and professional students are responsible for determining whether their existing insurance policy provides coverage in the country in which they will travel. These students may purchase coverage through HTH or another provider of their choosing.

E. Laws and Conduct

1. While abroad, students are expected to abide by the laws of the host country.
2. Vanderbilt regulations concerning student conduct, as codified in the [Student Handbook](#), also apply to students abroad.

3. Students traveling on a sponsored activity are strongly discouraged from driving any type of motorized vehicle, especially motorcycles, mopeds, and similar vehicles. Graduate or professional students who must use a vehicle to conduct their research or to access clinical facilities should use utmost care while driving.

F. Export Control

If you are taking with you any equipment (such as a laptop computer) or information (including collaboration or training with foreign nationals), or working with a country subject to a US trade embargo, please contact the [Vanderbilt Export Compliance](#) office to seek clarity with regard to compliance with US laws concerning export control. Vanderbilt Export Compliance will also provide information about laptop safety and security while traveling internationally.

V. Restricted International Travel

A. Vanderbilt-sponsored travel (as defined in section II.B.) may be restricted in countries for which one or more of the following applies:

1. The U.S. State Department has issued a travel warning;
2. International SOS has rated the country as High Risk or Extremely High Risk;
3. The World Health Organization, Centers for Disease Control or other governmental health agency has information that there are serious disease or other health hazards present that warrant suspension of travel to that country;
4. The Study Abroad Risk Assessment Committee (SARAC) has determined that there are other safety concerns that warrant restriction of travel.

B. A list of countries to which travel is restricted can be found [here](#).

1. SARAC will review and update the list of restricted travel sites semi-annually based on the criteria listed in V.A.
2. Locations may also be added to the list on an as-needed basis, should unexpected changes occur related to the level of risk in a country.
3. The criteria for inclusion in the list are detailed in section V.A. above.

C. Requests for Exception to Restricted Travel Destinations

1. Students who wish to travel to a country included on the restricted travel site list referenced in V.B. must submit a "Request for Exception to Travel" to SARAC for review. SARAC is responsible for deciding whether to permit an education abroad opportunity in a restricted country or to suspend an education abroad opportunity when health or safety concerns emerge shortly before a program starts or while it is in progress.
2. Request forms can be found [here](#), and should be completed as soon as students are aware of plans to travel to a restricted site, and no later than sixty days prior to travel. Students are asked to provide the following information:
 - a. A proposal for the project or study abroad program. This should include a description of the project, how the project meets the student's academic, research, service or career goals, and how those goals could not be met by travel to an alternative location.
 - b. Information on prior experience in the location, other travel experience that prepares the student for travel to this region, and pre-departure preparation that the student will receive.

- c. Evidence that the student understands the safety, security and/or health risks involved in travel to this country and a plan to mitigate or avoid the risks.
 - d. Information on the security and facilities at the local partner organization, the accommodations during travel, and modes of transportation the student will use. Students should be as specific as possible and provide supporting information from sources in the country and/or at the local organization.
 - e. An explanation of how the student can be contacted while overseas.
 - f. A detailed plan of evacuation in the case of a medical emergency or crisis situation, including knowledge of how to travel to the capital city or evacuation point and knowledge of local hospital facilities.
 - g. A copy of the student's itinerary with all travel arrangements. This should include a backup plan in the event that there are unforeseen changes in the itinerary (e.g., the person meeting the student at the airport does not arrive).
 - h. A recommendation letter from the student's advisor, confirming the academic value of travel to the prohibited region, and attesting to the student's maturity related to the proposed travel.
3. SARAC may determine that a restricted travel destination does not require a "Request for Exception to Travel" if that destination has already been approved by SARAC and there have been no major changes in safety or security since the approval. SARAC may reinstate the requirements for a "Request for Exception to Travel" at any time.

D. Approved Requests for Exception

1. If travel is approved, the student will continue to receive support from the University, including financial aid, course credit, or other assistance, as applicable.
2. In addition to the waiver signed by all students traveling abroad, the applicant will be asked to sign an additional waiver acknowledging that he or she has read and understands the risks associated with travel to a country under a travel warning, or other warnings, as applicable.
3. SARAC reserves the right to place conditions on approval (i.e. prohibit certain aspects of the proposed itinerary or require additional safety or security measures).
4. Vanderbilt reserves the right to suspend or cancel travel at any time, should SARAC determine that the situation in a country deteriorates to a level that is no longer acceptable. In such cases, the applicant understands that the university is not responsible for reimbursement for expenses related to withdrawal.

E. Denied Requests for Exception

1. If a request for exception is denied by SARAC, university support for travel, including course credit, financial aid, insurance through HTH and ISOS, and logistical support, will be withdrawn.
2. Student organizations may not make use of funding from AcFees, tax-receipted donations, or fundraising events held or disbursed in their organization's agency fund to support travel that has been denied after a review of a request for exception.
3. If the applicant moves forward with travel, he or she does so with the understanding that the travel is in no way supported or sponsored by Vanderbilt University.
4. The use of Vanderbilt University logos, websites, or other use of the Vanderbilt name associated with the proposed travel will be prohibited.