

Padnos International Center

**Faculty-Led International Travel Advisory Appeal**

GVSU’s International Travel Advisory Policy indicates that countries with increased safety, crime, health or other risk factors may automatically trigger a review by the International Risk Assessment Committee (IRAC). In such cases, Faculty Directors will be notified of the appeal process for travel to a country or region that poses an increased risk. In some instances, we may know well in-advance of concerns, but this is not always the case. Issues can arise at any time without warning. The International Risk Assessment Committee will provide a recommendation to Padnos International Center (PIC) and the Brooks College Dean on whether travel to that location should be approved or not.

All countries listed by the US Department of State as Level 3: Reconsider Travel, or Level 4: Do Not Travel will automatically trigger a review by the International Risk Assessment Committee. There may be circumstances where a country is listed as a Level 1: Exercise Normal Precautions, or Level 2: Exercise Increased Caution, which will require a review of the International Risk Assessment Committee. Some examples of when a Level 1 or Level 2 country may trigger a review would be a recent natural disaster that is impacting the region, heightened political conflicts, **or recent outbreaks of contagious or infectious disease**, just to name a few examples.

This appeal process is designed to ensure that Faculty-Led Programs are carefully reviewed with a particular focus on the health and safety of all participants. There is also a focus on contingency planning to ensure best practices are employed.

**APPEAL REQUIREMENTS**

**Faculty Directors are required to respond to *all* of the following when preparing the appeal. Please provide the source of information, including websites, where appropriate. If you do not have information on any particular question, please indicate that you do not know.**

1. General Program Overview

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| --- | --- |
| **Countries to be visited** |  |
| **Dates of Travel** |  |
| **Program Director(s)** |  |
| **Maximum # of students** |  |
| **In-country Contacts-**  Please provide details on any host organizations or individuals that you are working with in the host country. |  |
| **Proposed Activities-**  Please indicate if students will be in a classroom, conducting research or participating in service-learning activities. Describe the activities in detail. |  |
| **Proposed field trips, excursions, etc. –** Please describe any site visits, field trips, excursions that are part of the program. |  |
| **Describe in detail the mode of transit in-country** (i.e. van, bus, public transit, train, etc.) |  |
| **Independent Travel** - Will students have free time or opportunities for independent travel during the program? |  |

1. Please carefully review the following information for the countries you will be visiting:

CDC:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/travelers/international-travel-during-covid19.html>

US Department of State

<https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/traveladvisories/traveladvisories.html/>

OSAC – Country Security Reports

<https://www.osac.gov/Content/Browse/Report?subContentTypes=Country%20Security%20Report>

1. Describe in detail your familiarity and/or experience with the host country.
2. What special skills or experience do you bring that would benefit the group traveling abroad during an on-going pandemic?
3. Is the US Embassy nearest to your destination open with full services available? If the Embassy is not open or has limited services available, please provide details.

**Compelling Academic Purpose**

1. What are the academic goals for this specific program?
2. What is the compelling academic reason why this travel must take place at this location, at this time, despite the current risks?
3. Could this coursework be completed at another location that poses less risk?

**COVID-19 Considerations and Risk Mitigation Strategies**

**Notice:**

* Travel restrictions may be imposed at any time without warning.
* Variants are emerging which could quickly change the conditions in the host country
* Health care systems around the world can be quickly overwhelmed and unable to adequately treat any critical health issue that might arise.
* Any COVID-19 infection in the group could impact the entire group and could impact the student’s ability to return home in a timely manner.
* In-country hosts and service providers may have been significantly impacted by COVID-19. We expect that some service providers have scaled back on the number of staff who attend to such programs. This could impact the level of service that can be provided.
* In-country service providers (housing, transportation services, etc.) may not issue a refund if a last-minute cancellation needs to be made.
* Testing for COVID-19 may be significantly limited in the host country.

**Entry Requirements & Government Restrictions**

1. Does the host country require travelers to quarantine upon arrival?

Yes No

1. If yes, how long is the mandatory quarantine?
2. Is your program viable if the group is required to quarantine for 7-14 days?
3. Is the host country testing visitors for COVID upon entry into the country? What is the plan if a student tests positive upon entry?
4. Is the quarantine in a government-mandated or designated facility, a hotel, or your study abroad housing? *If the quarantine is required in a government-mandated facility, provide specific details on what is known about the facilities, cost, access to meals, number of people sharing space, length of time, and conditions for getting released from quarantine.*
5. If you are required to quarantine in your place of residence, what do you anticipate will be the option for securing food during the time you are not allowed to leave the residence?
6. What is your plan if a student falls ill during the program with any major medical issue?
7. What is the plan if a student falls ill with COVID and is required to isolate for 10-14 days? Is the housing set-up to accommodate individual rooms? Will the housing provider allow people testing positive for COVID to isolate in the facility? If you are staying in a homestay, what protections are in place for the host family?
8. If your program requires movement to different locations throughout the trip, what will you do if a student is sick with covid, and is in isolation?
9. If homestays are being utilized, please attach a copy of the terms and conditions that govern the homestay arrangement. If the document is not in English, please provide an English translation.
10. Are there restrictions on taking public transportation upon arrival to the host country?
11. How do you plan to get the group to the housing for quarantine?
12. For those who will travel by bus or van, who will be the driver? What measures are in place to protect the driver and passengers given the ease of spread of COVID-19? If the driver were to become infected with COVID-19, would there be back-up drivers available? Could students be tested for COVID if known exposure takes place?
13. What kind of on-site support is available through your host organization? Do you have a primary host who is making all of the in-country arrangements or are you making those arrangements?
14. Is your program designed around an organization that may be required by the government to close if COVID cases rise to concerning levels (i.e. K-12 schools, museums, etc.) What is the back-up plan if these entities are not open? How will the program meet the academic goals?
15. What if you, as the Program Director, fall ill? What is the plan for program continuity? If there is a co-leader assigned, what measures will you put in place to minimize the risk of both leaders getting COVID-19 if one is exposed? If there isn’t a co-leader, who will be available to step-in if you are sick and unable to attend to the group?
16. In recent months, has the host country imposed travel restrictions for visitors coming into the country?
17. What is your plan if the host country imposes travel restrictions while you are abroad?
18. In recent months, has the host country imposed strict lockdown or “stay at home” orders? What are or were those restrictions?
19. Does the host country have any provisions for entering the country for people who have received the COVID-19 vaccine?
20. Does the host country have a travel ban on US citizens entering the country?
21. Commercial flights have been reduced this past year due to lower demand for air travel. Are direct flights available to and from the host country from a major US airport? If not, what countries might you have to fly through in order to reach your host country? Are flights available on a daily basis? Are there multiple carriers that travel to and from the host country?
22. Individuals who test positive for COVID-19 within 72 hours prior to returning to the US will not be allowed to board a flight. What are your plans if you or someone in the group were to tests positive for COVID-19 prior to your intended return home? The person testing positive for COVID will need to be in quarantine or isolation. There may be significant expenses added to your budget if you are required to stay longer in your host country until you receive clearance to fly.
23. How will you address students who apply for your program who have a pre-existing condition that leaves them at high risk of severe disease or mortality if they contract COVID-19?
24. How do you plan to prepare students for the potential for itinerary alterations, travel restrictions, or other barriers that might be experienced while in the host country?
25. What would be the additional cost if the entire group is required to extend their stay 14 days due to a COVID-19 outbreak in the group prior to returning to the US?

**COVID-19 Cases**

1. Access to hospitals, emergency medical care, and medications may be limited or not available. Describe the current conditions of the health care system in the host country.
2. Is the health care system in the host country able to manage the number of critical care COVID-19 cases?
3. Is there a dominant variant circulating in the host country? If yes, is that dominant variant more contagious? Does it cause more severe symptoms?
4. Is COVID testing available to visitors in your host country? What will be the cost to you?

**Financial Implications**

1. Why should GVSU approve group travel given the significant increased risk of travel to this location? Address the potential financial implications of a necessary last-minute cancellation of the program, increased cost due to a possible extended stay, and cost to the institution in the event that the group travels, but is unable to complete the program goals due to illness of the in-country contact, COVID-19 outbreak in the group, government lockdowns, or any other issue that would cause significant disruption?
2. What would be the estimated financial impact to the Padnos International Center if this program has a last-minute cancellation or the potential loss if the program departs and is unable to fulfill the program goals on-site?
3. What are the refund policies for the major in-country expenses that are pre-paid?
   1. Housing?
   2. Transportation services
   3. Other

Ethical Considerations

1. What are the ethical considerations of sending students from the United States to other countries with more limited health care infrastructures during this time when health care resources are stretched to the limit? How will the host country benefit from the program?

Submit your completed appeal to Rebecca Morrissey, [hambletr@gvsu.edu](mailto:hambletr@gvsu.edu).