

**International Group Travel RISK ASSESSMENT:**

**GVSU-SPONSORED TRIPS**

As part of GVSU’s efforts to manage health, safety and security risks, all proposed faculty and staff-led international group trips and programs must be reviewed by the university’s International Risk Assessment Committee (IRAC) before given final approval. As part of its review process, the committee examines risk-related factors such as infectious diseases, crime, severe weather events, and political instability, while also considering in-country support and the availability of medical care and other resources. This risk assessment is required for all international group travel, including faculty-led study abroad programs, international research projects, and one-time field trips, regardless of the length of the proposed trip. Because risks in a particular region may change significantly over time, programs that are offered repeatedly are required to undergo a risk assessment process every three years.

**Review Process:**

1. Faculty member submits required documents to the International Risk Assessment Committee (IRAC), at least 6 months before the proposed trip.
2. IRAC meets to discuss the proposed trip and assess the level of risk. When possible, the faculty or staff trip leader should attend this meeting to clarify points and address committee members’ questions.
3. IRAC submits a brief report summarizing its review to the Provost, the faculty member’s appointing officer, and the Padnos International Center.
4. Faculty member will be notified in writing of IRAC’s recommendation. If the recommendation is to approve, the faculty member provides Padnos International a complete itinerary, in-country emergency contacts, and a list of local medical and mental health resources, register the group in OASIS, register for the mandatory health insurance, and with the State Department’s Smart Traveler Enrollment Program (STEP).

**SUBMISSION INSTRUCTIONS**

*Provide responses to all questions below. If there are questions you aren’t able to answer and/or are not applicable to your trip, indicate that in your response.*

*In addition to your responses to the questions, please provide a comprehensive itinerary for the proposed trip. If the trip is part of a course, also include a copy of the syllabus.*

*Submit all documents to GVSU’s International Risk Assessment Committee (IRAC), c/o Ehren Kuzekov,* *kuzekove@gvsu.edu**.*

**PART A: Description of proposed trip**

Faculty director & department:

Program title:

Location(s):

Dates of travel & trip duration:

1. **Objectives.** Describe the purpose, objectives, and learning goals for the proposed trip, and describe the rationale for the proposed location(s).
2. **Leader experience.** Describe your experience and/or connections with the proposed destination, such as personal experience in the country, professional networks, family connections, or language proficiency. Describe your experience leading student travelers domestically or internationally, and describe your experience in managing emergency situations.
3. **Orientation sessions.** Describe your pre-departure orientation for the students, including the approximate length of the session(s) and the content covered.
4. **In-country support.**
5. Wil you be working with a host institution or organization? If so, describe the organization’s experience hosting international groups, and describe their specific role in the group’s stay. Please provide the host organization’s website, if available.
6. Who wills serve as your primary contact(s) in the host country? Will these contacts be available at all times or only during certain hours during the day?
7. Will you have a phone that can be reached at all times?
8. If your host country is not primarily English-speaking, explain how the group will address language barriers.
9. **Housing.** Describe proposed housing arrangements for the group, including the type of accommodations (hotel, hostel, host family, etc.) and safety and security considerations. If students will be staying with host families, indicate how the host families were vetted and oriented to hosting international students.
10. **Transportation.** Describe in-country transportation you plan to use, including the mode of transportation and information related to its safety and security. Describe the safety record for public transportation you will use and if you plan to use private transportation, describe the individual or organization’s safety record and the qualifications and licensure of the drivers.
11. **Field Trips.** Describe any field trips you plan for the group, including who will lead them, their locations, and planned activities.

**PART B: Risk identification and management plan**

*Please describe the risk and mitigation strategies relevant to your proposed destination(s) for each domain listed below. Use information provided on the U.S. State Department, CDC, and International S.O.S. websites to inform your responses. The committee is particularly interested in situations, conditions, or activities that present greater than minimal risk (i.e., risks greater than those ordinarily encountered in students’ daily life or during routine activities).*

**1. Health concerns**

Description of risks

Describe health risks, such as outbreaks of contagious disease or poor water quality.

Resources & mitigation strategies

* Identify hospitals and clinics near your planned destination(s).
* Identify any required or recommended immunizations or prophylactic medications.
* Describe your plans for mitigating risks of serious health concerns in the group.

**2. Natural disasters and severe weather**

Description of risks

Describe risks involving natural disasters and severe weather (e.g., earthquakes, floods, hurricanes, volcanic eruptions, dust storms, wildfires, landslides, tsunamis, and severe heat).

Resources & mitigation strategies

* Describe in-country resources for managing the natural disasters and severe weather-related risks you described above.
* Describe your plans for preparing for the natural disasters and severe weather events and minimizing their effects on the group.

**3. Crime and security concerns**

Description of risks

Describe crime and significant security concerns, such as increased risk of terrorist activity.

Resources & mitigation strategies

* Describe your plans for preparing students for and mitigating these risks.
* Describe in-country resources available to assist you in managing the risks.

**4. Conflict and political unrest**

Description of risks

Describe any concerns related to in-country conflict or political unrest that might impact the trip.

Resources & mitigation strategies

* Describe your plans for preparing students for and mitigating these risks.
* Describe in-country resources available to assist you in managing the risks.

**5. Bias and inequality**

Description of risks

Describe concerns related to biased treatment based on race, nationality, religion, gender identity/expression, or sexual orientation that could impact student health or safety.

Resources & mitigation strategies

Describe your plans for preparing students for and mitigating these risks.

**6. High-risk activities**

Description of risks

Describe any potentially high-risk activities, such as physically strenuous activities, high altitude activities, swimming with no lifeguard, scuba diving, bungee-jumping, white water rafting, camping in severe conditions, traveling to remote or hard to reach locations, and traveling to unstable or restricted areas. Indicate which activities will be required and which will be available but not part of the planned trip.

Resources and mitigation strategies

Describe your plans for mitigating risks for activities you described above. This is particularly important for activities that are required or considered part of the trip. For activities arranged by a third party, provide the name of the agency or organization, describe their safety record, and indicate how long they have been in operation and if they are insured and licensed.

**PART B: Risk identification and management plan**

*Please describe your plan in the event your trip is impacted by a natural disaster, terrorist incident or some other significant event,* including your communication plan for reaching members of the group and your designated locations. Will you have a phone that can be reached at all times?

**ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS**

1. *All students must be registered in the Padnos International Center’s OASIS system.*
2. ***Department of State registration****. All GVSU-sponsored group trips must be registered with the State Department’s Smart Traveler Enrollment Program (STEP)* [*https://step.state.gov/step*](https://step.state.gov/step)*.*
3. ***International insurance coverage.*** *All faculty and students on GVSU-sponsored trips must be enrolled in Chubb’s international health insurance program for the duration of the trip.*
4. ***International SOS app*** should be downloaded by each traveler. This is GVSU’s 24/7 Emergency Assistance Provider.