Study Abroad Travel Warning Policy

Texas State University monitors information relevant to the safety of its study abroad students, faculty, and staff as their safety and security is of the utmost importance. In evaluating the safety of travel abroad on university-sponsored study abroad programs, Texas State gives primary consideration to Travel Warnings issued by the U.S. Department of State and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. This policy only applies to persons participating in Texas State Study Abroad Programs.

State Department Travel Warnings

The State Department’s Office of American Citizens Services and Crisis Management (ACS) administers the Consular Information Program (http://travel.state.gov/), which informs the public of conditions abroad that may affect their safety and security. Country Specific Information, Travel Alerts, and Travel Warnings are vital parts of this program. Travel Alerts are issued to disseminate information about short-term conditions, generally within a particular country, which pose imminent risks to the security of U.S. citizens. Natural disasters, terrorist attacks, coups, anniversaries of terrorist events, election-related demonstrations or violence, and high-profile events such as international conferences or regional sports events are examples of conditions that might generate a Travel Alert.

Texas Warnings are issued to describe long-term, protracted conditions that make a destination dangerous or unstable. A Travel Warning is also issued when the U.S. Government’s ability to assist American citizens is constrained due to the closure of an embassy or consulate or because of a drawdown of its staff.

The following policy applies to Texas State Study Abroad participants:

For Faculty-led Programs

Texas State will not offer or support study abroad in destinations that are under a State Department Travel Warning. It is therefore advised that students, faculty, and staff participating in faculty-led study abroad programs purchase travel cancellation/interruption insurance in the event that either 1) a program is cancelled prior to departure due to a Travel Warning being issued or 2) Texas State asks participants to return while en route or after arrival to their study abroad destination because a Travel Warning is issued. If a Travel Warning is issued for a destination following departure, the study abroad participants shall follow the guidance provided by the Travel Warning, which may require evacuation.

For Reciprocal Exchange Programs

Texas State will not offer or support study abroad in destinations that are under a State Department Travel Warning. It is therefore advised that students participating in a reciprocal exchange program purchase travel cancellation/interruption insurance in the event that either 1) their program is cancelled prior to departure due to a Travel Warning being issued or 2) participants are recalled to return home while en route or after arrival to their study abroad destination. If a Travel Warning is issued for a destination following departure, the study abroad participants shall follow the guidance provided by the Travel Warning, which may require evacuation.

For Affiliated Study Abroad Programs

Texas State will not offer or support study abroad in destinations that are under a State Department Travel Warning. However, students may elect to continue with an affiliated provider. If a student elects to participate in an affiliated program located in a destination for which a State Department Travel Warning is issued, it is advised that students purchase travel cancellation/interruption insurance before departure.
Warning has been issued, the student shall complete the Assumption of Risk and Release From Liability form (Attachment A) and submit it to the Study Abroad Office prior to departure. It is therefore advised that students participating in an affiliated study abroad program purchase travel cancellation/interruption insurance in the event that either 1) their program is cancelled prior to departure due to a Travel Warning being issued or 2) participants are recalled to return home either en route or after arrival to their study abroad destination. If a Travel Warning is issued for a destination following departure, the study abroad participants shall follow the guidance provided by the Travel Warning, which may require evacuation.

Note: Texas State reserves the right to recall students on affiliated study abroad programs.

For Non-affiliated Study Abroad Programs

These programs are operated by other institutions or agencies and are not approved by Texas State. Students may elect to continue with a non-institutional program in a destination for which a Travel Warning has been issued. If a student makes such a decision, the student assumes the risk solely and shall complete the Assumption of Risk and Release From Liability form (Attachment A) and submit it to the Study Abroad Office prior to departure. These students are strongly advised to obtain trip cancellation/interruption insurance, medical insurance, and travel assist insurance, in the event of trip cancellation or evacuation. Texas State assumes no responsibility for students participating in non-institutional programs.

Students participating in study abroad programs are urged to register with the U.S. Department of State (http://travel.state.gov/content/passports/english/go/step.html) and to consult the Travel Warning website for the latest information.

CDC Travel Health Warnings

The United States Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) issue different types of notices for international travelers. As of May 20, 2004, these definitions have been refined to make the announcements more easily understood by travelers, health-care providers, and the general public. They describe both levels of risk for the traveler and recommended preventive measures to take at each level of risk. A Travel Health Warning is a notification by the CDC that a widespread, serious outbreak of a disease of public health concern is expanding outside the area or populations that were initially affected. No Texas State-sponsored study abroad program shall depart from the United States for a destination for which the CDC has issued a Travel Health Warning. If a Travel Health Warning is issued for a destination following departure, the study abroad participants shall follow the guidance provided by the Travel Warning and/or the policies stated for Travel Warnings issued by the U.S. Department of State.

This policy does not apply to international travel that only involves university faculty or staff members.
ASSUMPTION OF RISK AND RELEASE FROM LIABILITY
For travel to locations in which a Travel Warning has been issued

This Assumption of Risk and Release from Liability pertains to travel to __________________________
during the __________________________ semester(s) of __________________________.

I, __________________________, wish to travel to __________________________ and hereby state that:

1. Travel to __________________________ is not required as part of any course or degree program in which I am
   enrolled or as a condition of current or future employment and that, therefore, my decision to travel
to __________________________ is entirely voluntary.

2. I understand that certain risks are inherent in any foreign travel experience, and I fully accept those
   risks. These risks may include, but are not limited to, such things as war, quarantine, civil unrest,
   public health risks, criminal activity, terrorism, exposure to communicable diseases, ill effects of
   unfamiliar food and water, incidents related to ground, air or water transportation, adverse weather
   conditions, accident, injuries or damage to property, and other physical, mental, and emotional injury.

3. I also understand that, at this time, travel conditions in __________________________ are particularly
dangerous. Texas State University has brought to my attention the U.S. Department of
State Travel Warning against travel to __________________________ by United States citizens
dated __________________________. I have read and fully understand this warning. I am
proceeding with my travel plans notwithstanding this State Department Warning and suggestion
made to me by University officials that I defer this travel until a lower level of alert for
________________________ is reinstated by the U.S. Department of State.

4. I have been advised that no one can guarantee my safety in __________________________, and I have been
advised to have adequate insurance before my departure, which should include health, medical evacuation,
and repatriation of remains. I have been advised that if I am currently covered by an
insurance policy, I should make sure the coverage is valid overseas for the duration of my travel.

5. I fully understand the above risks involved in the proposed travel and I agree to assume the risks of
this travel, including the risk of catastrophic injury or death.

6. I agree to indemnify, hold harmless, release and forever discharge Texas State University, its Board of
Regents, employees, agents, and cooperating institutions and their offices and agents (if any) from
any and all claims and expenses, including reasonable attorney’s fees, for any injury, loss, or damage
to personal property, including catastrophic injury or death, related to travel to
________________________or suffered by me.

7. I have carefully read and reviewed this Waiver, Release and Hold Harmless Agreement. I understand
it fully and I execute it voluntarily.

Student’s Signature __________________________ Date ____________

Name (printed) __________________________

NOTE: A copy of this document will be sent to the traveler’s parents or guardian.
SIGN AND DATE THIS FORM; SUBMIT IT TO THE STUDY ABROAD OFFICE.