

Office/Contact: International Affairs

Source: U.S. Department of State; SDBOR Policy 5.5.4, SDBOR Academic Affairs Guidelines

Link: <https://www.osac.gov/Pages/Home.aspx>;

<https://public.powerdms.com/SDRegents/documents/1722934>;

<https://sdbor.edu/departments/academics-student-affairs/>

Associated Forms: [Travel Warning Waiver Request Form](#)

SOUTH DAKOTA STATE UNIVERSITY Policy and Procedure Manual

SUBJECT: Study Abroad and Travel Warnings

NUMBER: 2:11

1. Purpose

This policy addresses the procedures to be followed when the U.S. State Department or other federal government or state agency with authority over aspects of travel issue travel warning for a country or location in which University undergraduate or graduate students are studying or are planning to study, or where the federal government otherwise takes actions to curtail or prevent international travel.

2. Definitions

- a. Study Abroad: any activity conducted by a University student (undergraduate or graduate) in another country which results in University academic credit being awarded for the activities abroad. Study Abroad consists of the following types of activities:
 - i. Faculty-led Program: A group study abroad program in which a University faculty member serves as the program lead and accompanies the students abroad for all or part of the academic program.
 - ii. Exchange Program: a study abroad program in which a University student enrolls as a foreign student at a partner university and a student from that partner institution enrolls at the University (enrollments may or may not be simultaneous). The credit earned on an exchange program is considered University credit for the purpose of this policy.
 - iii. Affiliated Program: a type of study abroad program in which the academic and other logistics are handled by a third party provider with whom the University has an affiliation. University students may participate in these programs and transfer credit back to the University. This credit is considered University credit for the purpose of this policy.
 - iv. Non-affiliated Program: a study abroad program sponsored by another university or organization with which the University has no ties or affiliation agreements.

- v. Individualized Learning Activity Abroad: any independent activity abroad, supervised or facilitated by a University faculty member, for which a student receives University credit. Such activities include internships, independent studies, and research.
- b. Travel Statement: an official statement from the U.S. State Department or other federal or state agency that recommends enhanced precautions be taken in international travel because of safety, health, and security conditions. Such official statements include, but are not limited to, the following:
 - i. Level 2 Travel Advisories or similar official statements provided by the U.S. State Department, or successor authority that do not specify an end date and are in effect until updated by the Department.
 - ii. Alert Level 2 Travel Health Notices or similar official statements provided by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, or successor authority, that detail health safety risks associated with disease outbreaks, natural disasters, or special events.
- c. Travel Warning: an official statement from the U.S. State Department or other federal or state agency that recommends avoiding international travel because of safety, health, and security conditions. Such official statements include, but are not limited to, the following:
 - i. Level 3 or Greater Travel Advisories or similar official statements provided by the U.S. State Department, or successor authority that do not specify an end date and are in effect until updated by the Department. Travel Advisories are not the same as “Alerts,” which the U.S. Department of State issues when temporary conditions in a country (such as scheduled elections or temporary weather concerns) create specific safety and security concerns for U.S. travelers.
 - ii. Warning Level 3 Travel Health Notices or similar official statements provided by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, or successor authority, that detail health safety risks associated with disease outbreaks, natural disasters, or special events.
- d. Travel Ban: an official act from the United States Government prohibiting international travel because of safety and security conditions.
- e. The Office of International Affairs, or successor, is responsible for monitoring changes to any applicable travel warning or classification system, their relevant definitions, and for ensuring that they are accounted for in this policy.

3. Policy

- a. Required Consultation With Director of Study Abroad: When a Travel Statement is issued for a country or a region within a country in which University students are participating or are planning to participate in a faculty-led, exchange or affiliated program, the faculty leader or, in the case of an exchange or affiliated program, the student, shall consult with the Director of Study Abroad, or successor.

- b. Automatic Suspension: When a Travel Warning or Travel Ban is in place or is issued for a country in which University students are participating or are planning to participate in a faculty-led, exchange or affiliated program, all programs in that country are automatically suspended. A program under a Travel Warning may not continue unless a Travel Warning Policy Waiver is granted.
 - i. In addition to the suspension of all University-sponsored study abroad activities in countries where a Travel Warning has been issued, students are not permitted to participate in an Individualized Learning Activity Abroad in countries with Travel Warnings. Students, with the support of the supervising faculty, may apply for consideration of a waiver by contacting the Office of International Affairs for more information.
 - ii. Students may not participate in non-affiliated study abroad programs to countries with a current Travel Warning.
 - iii. Programs that involve travel to multiple countries can still go forward after removing from the itinerary the country that is subject to the Travel Warning.
- c. Waiver of Travel Warning : University faculty who are leaders of or liaisons to suspended programs may petition the International Committee’s Subcommittee on Health and Safety, or successor, at any time for a program suspension waiver. Students who planned an Individualized Learning Activity in a country with a Travel Warning in effect may also petition for a waiver of the policy, provided the faculty member supervising the Individualized Learning Activity supports the waiver petition. Travel Warning waivers are granted to programs, not countries. Each program operating in a country with a Travel Warning must request a waiver if the program is to continue.
- d. Policy Implementation and Authority: The Office of International Affairs, or successor, monitors all locations in which University students are studying and ensures compliance with this policy. All requests for waivers to this policy must be submitted on the *Travel Warning Policy Waiver Request Form* to the Office of International Affairs, or successor, in advance of the proposed activity abroad. The International Committee (a shared governance committee), via its Subcommittee on Health and Safety, will review the request and make a recommendation to the VPAA, or successor. The VPAA, or successor, has final authority regarding the waiver of this policy for any particular program or activity.
- e. Denial of Travel Warning Waiver Requests: Faculty leaders of programs, or students in the case of an Independent Learning Activity Abroad, may renew a request for a waiver if the Subcommittee denies a request. For a renewed request to be considered by the Subcommittee, it must include new or additional information. If the Committee denies a requested waiver, the requesting person may appeal the decision to the VPAA; in such event, the requesting person must provide the Chair copies of all documents and communications that are provided the VPAA. The VPAA will make the final decision on any appeal of the Subcommittee’s decision.

4. Procedures

- a. Waiver Application Process for Program Suspension:

- i. A waiver request should be made in writing using the *Travel Warning Waiver Request Form* and submitted to the Office of International Affairs, or successor. The Office of International Affairs, or successor, will forward the request to the Chair of the Subcommittee on Health and Safety Committee, or successor unit. The request should specifically address dangers or concerns mentioned in the Travel Warning, with reference to the program's location and activities, and related implications.
 - ii. Once the Chair has received and shared a waiver request, the Chair will set a date for the Subcommittee discussion of the request. Subcommittee reviews of waiver requests will be scheduled as soon as possible after the request is received, usually no later than two (2) weeks.
 - iii. The faculty member (or student, in the case of an Individualized Learning Activity Abroad) making the request will be invited to address the Subcommittee. In addition to evaluating the information the faculty member or student provides, the Subcommittee may draw upon other sources of information, such as:
 1. The U.S. Department of State and other bodies (e.g., the Center for Disease Control and Prevention or the World Health Organization, for health concerns);
 2. Other experts from the University who know or travel in the country in question, for additional insight and an independent assessment of pertinent concerns;
 3. Additional U.S. Department of State sources (e.g., U.S. Department of State information or desk officers);
 4. University faculty on the ground in the host country, or colleagues in those countries, for their own independent views regarding current or evolving conditions; and,
 5. Colleagues from other U.S. colleges and universities with students or programs in the country.
 - iv. If the Subcommittee concurs that a waiver to the Travel Warning policy should be granted, it can recommend approval of the waiver request to the VPAA.
- b. Duration of Policy Waiver: A Travel Warning waiver lasts for two (2) years from the time of issue, unless significant changes occur, in which case the waiver may be curtailed. Office of International Affairs, or successor, will monitor current Travel Warnings to determine if conditions have deteriorated. If, after two (2) years, a Travel Warning is still in effect and the sponsoring faculty wish to continue operating the study abroad program, a new waiver request must be made following the same procedures required of the original request.

c. Timing of Policy Waiver Requests

- i. When a Travel Warning is issued before a program's departure: The program is automatically suspended, as per 3.b above. The program may not continue as planned unless and until the faculty leader(s) or affected student(s) successfully petition for a waiver of the Travel Warning Policy.
- ii. When a Program is underway and a Travel Warning is announced for the first time, or an updated or revised Travel Warning is announced while a Waiver exists:
 1. If circumstances pose no immediate threat to student health or safety, the program will be reviewed by the Health and Safety Subcommittee to evaluate whether a continuation of the program may be warranted. If continuation is deemed appropriate, a recommendation to continue the program will be made to the VPAA. The VPAA has final authority to continue, cancel or alter the program.
 2. If circumstances pose an immediate threat to student health, safety or welfare, the Office of International Affairs has discretion to suspend a program and begin evacuation proceedings immediately. Such action will be immediately communicated to the VPAA.

- d. Denial of Travel Warning Waiver Requests: Faculty leaders of programs, or students in the case of an Independent Learning Activity Abroad, may renew a request for a waiver if the Subcommittee denies a request. For a renewed request to be considered by the Subcommittee, it must include new or additional information. If the Committee denies a requested waiver, the requesting person may appeal the decision to the VPAA; in such event, the requesting person must provide the Chair copies of all documents and communications that are provided the VPAA. The VPAA will make the final decision on any appeal of the Subcommittee's decision.

5. Responsible Administrator

The Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs or successor is responsible for biannual review of this policy and its procedures. The University President is responsible for approval of this policy and its procedures.

SOURCE: Approved by President on 05/01/2014. Revised; Approved by President on 05/12/2020. Revised 01/26/2024 (clerical).