International Group Travel

Responsible Executive: Executive Vice Chancellor and Provost
Responsible Office: Office of the Vice Chancellor for Research (Oversight)
Institute of International Studies (Administration)
Contact: International Travel Policy Coordinator
Institute of International Studies
Tel: (510) 642-8542
e-mail: intlgrouptravel@berkeley.edu

Policy Statement

The Campus International Group Travel Policy applies to all travel in connection with University of California, Berkeley sponsored and organized activities outside the United States, i.e. any group travel activity that is funded or partially funded and/or supervised by the University.

Who Is Affected by This Policy

- All faculty, staff or students participating in campus sponsored and organized international group travel
- Deans of colleges and schools, department chairs, research center/institute directors whose campus unit is sponsoring and/or funding international group travel activities

Who Administers This Policy

International Travel Policy Coordinator
Institute of International Studies
Tel: (510) 642-8542
e-mail: intlgrouptravel@berkeley.edu
Why We Have This Policy

Whenever travel activity takes place on behalf of the University, we have a moral and institutional responsibility to alert the traveler to the risks entailed in that travel, to mitigate those risks, and to ameliorate them when they cannot be eliminated. Since international travel generally involves greater risk to the health and safety of the traveler than domestic travel an international travel policy has been adopted by the campus. Its purpose is to provide structure and appropriate guidance to travelers and to those who sponsor and organize the University’s travel activity.

The great deal of foreign travel engaged in by members of the campus community is of great value to research, teaching, and service. It also represents extraordinary diversity in travel experiences with regard to areas visited and the type of activity in which the travelers are engaged. Hence our policy has been designed to avoid elaborate rules and procedures that might discourage or stultify foreign travel by subjecting it to an overly centralized regime of standardization, mandated requirements, and bureaucratic control. The policy allows for flexibility, nimbleness, and spontaneity in planning for and conducting foreign travel, while responsibly recognizing, mitigating, and ameliorating the risks involved in much of the international travel engaged in by members of the campus community.

Responsibilities

UC Berkeley faculty or staff members who organize or supervise international group travel activities:

- Submit to the head of the relevant campus sponsoring unit (i.e. school or college, academic department, research institute, center or program) a risk assessment and mitigation plan prior to departure. If travel is to a destination that is on the State Department Travel Warning List the faculty or staff member organizing the group travel activity submits the required documentation directly to the International Group Travel Coordinator to obtain approval from the International Group Travel Committee.

Deans of colleges and schools, department chairs, research center/institute directors whose campus unit is sponsoring and/or funding international group travel activities:

- Approve, deny, or return for further review the materials submitted by the faculty or staff member organizing international group travel activity.
- Notify the International Group Travel Coordinator of the destination and time period of the travel activity; the name and contact information of the supervisor/responsible individual; the name and contact information of the on-site leader, if different than the supervisor.

International Group Travel Coordinator:

- Maintains information about international group travel activities submitted by deans of colleges and schools, department chairs, research center/institute directors whose campus unit is sponsoring and/or funding international group travel activities.
- Coordinates work of International Group Travel Committee.
- Works with responsible executives and offices on policy development.

International Group Travel Committee:
UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, BERKELEY
Policy on International Group Travel

- Approves, denies, or returns for further review the materials submitted by the faculty or staff member organizing the international group travel activity, if the proposed destination is on the State Department Travel Warning List.

Procedures

I. Scope

The Campus International Group Travel Policy applies to all travel in connection with campus sponsored and organized activities that take place outside the United States. The International Group Travel Policy does not apply to individual travel for study, teaching, research or business purposes.

II. Definitions

Sponsored and Organized means any group activity that is funded or partially funded and/or supervised by the University. Programs, courses, and other activities with a designated faculty sponsor/supervisor fit this definition of sponsored and organized. Likewise, a summer service-learning project organized as a DeCal class, although not funded by the campus, is considered sponsored and organized because the activity has a faculty sponsor.

The travel of a graduate student conducting dissertation field research abroad would in most circumstances not be subject to this policy, whatever its funding source, because the student is engaged in individual travel, not participating in a group activity. The same would hold for a faculty member participating in an international conference, or a staff member attending a meeting abroad on campus business. In contrast, a group of graduate or undergraduate students participating in an archeological excavation or a study tour that is part of a campus program would be subject to the campus International Group Travel Policy.

III. Approval of International Travel

A. All campus sponsored and organized international travel (through courses, study tours, excavations, service learning, and the like) are required to obtain formal approval prior to commencing travel.

B. To obtain the necessary approval the following must be satisfied:

1. The proposed international travel activity has a campus sponsoring unit (a school or academic department, an Organized Research Unit [ORU], etc.).

2. The activity has a named campus employee who will be the responsible individual or supervisor of the international travel activity.
UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, BERKELEY
Policy on International Group Travel

3. Prior to departure, the travel activity supervisor shall develop a brief risk assessment and mitigation plan to communicate to prospective travelers the risks associated with the particular international activity to be undertaken, and to mitigate the said risks.

   a. The risk assessment and mitigation plan shall include planning for a pre-departure orientation that will incorporate a discussion of potential health and security risks, the measures to be taken to avoid them, and the steps that need to be taken should serious problems arise.

   b. An emergency communications and procedures plan should be an explicit component of the travel risk assessment and mitigation plan.

4. In those instances when the activity supervisor will not be on-site or accompanying the travelers, the risk assessment and mitigation plan must include a section on how the travel activity will be supervised from afar, and should in most cases include the naming of an on-site leader.

IV. Approval Process

A. Except when proposed travel is to countries for which the U.S. Department of State has issued a travel warning (see item IV. B. below), the campus approval of international group travel activities is delegated to the heads of the units within which the activities will occur (e.g., deans of schools, chairs of departments, directors of ORUs, centers, institutes, and programs such as Summer Sessions).¹

   1. In approving an international travel activity, the unit head is expected to vet the program with respect to the four criteria set forth under item III.B, above.

   2. At the time of approval, the unit head shall send a notification via email or campus mail to the International Group Travel Coordinator. The notification shall contain the destination and time period of the travel activity; the name and contact information of the supervisor/responsible individual; the name and contact information of the on-site leader, if different from the supervisor.

B. Travel to high risk areas: When travel is to be undertaken to countries for which the U.S. Department of State has issued a travel warning, special consideration must be given and precautions taken before such travel is approved. Therefore, a campus standing committee, the International Travel Committee, has been established to review proposals for travel to countries on the State Department’s Travel Warning list. Approval of travel to these high risk areas rests with the International Group Travel Committee, not with the unit head as in IV.A, above. If a travel warning is issued after international group travel has already commenced, the group leader/on-site leader should immediately contact the International Group Travel

¹ When the unit head is the sponsor/supervisor of the travel, approval is delegated to the unit’s next higher Approval Authority (e.g. Dean, Chair, Vice Chancellor, etc.).
UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, BERKELEY
Policy on International Group Travel

Coordinator. The International Travel Committee will re-assess risks and may ask the group to return to the United States.

1. International Group Travel Committee:

   a. Composition: The International Group Travel Committee is appointed by the Executive Vice Chancellor and Provost, and is composed of individuals (faculty and administrators) with extensive international travel experience, and, as far as is possible, should include individuals who have led travel groups and who have had experience in countries on the travel warning list. Where it lacks expertise, the Committee will consult with individuals outside the Committee who do possess expertise about and experience in the country of the proposed travel activity. The Committee will also consult with other external sources of information, such as Center for Disease Control advisories, detailed country-specific information compiled by the State Department, and country reports available through the University of California’s travel insurance carrier.

   b. Approval Process: Individuals or units seeking to sponsor travel to countries on the State Department’s Travel Warning list shall provide the International Group Travel Committee with a proposal detailing the benefits of the proposed travel, the factors that mitigate the risks attendant to the proposed travel, and the reasons the proposed travel should be considered sufficiently safe in light of the existing travel warning. The Committee, in considering proposals and deciding on approvals, weighs a variety of factors. Key questions include: How significant is the travel in relationship to the University’s research, teaching, and service missions? Who will be traveling: graduate students, undergraduates? What type of in-country activity will the travelers engage in? How relevant are the concerns raised in the travel warning to the particular locale in which the travelers will reside and the specific activity in which they will be engaged?

Web Site Address for This Policy

http://campuspol.chance.berkeley.edu/policies/intlgrouptravel.pdf

Related Documents

1. UC Traveler Insurance Coverage Application (free for UCB sponsored and organized travel): http://www.uctrips-insurance.org/