

University of Northern Iowa International Travel Safety Policy (Faculty and Staff)

Purpose:

To ensure the safety of University of Northern Iowa faculty and staff when traveling abroad on university business and to ensure that the University of Northern Iowa does not expose itself to uninsured liability associated with such travel. This policy does not replace, but rather complements, Policy 3.14 International Study Programs.

Policy Statement:

The University of Northern Iowa recognizes that it is frequently necessary for faculty and staff to travel to other parts of the world to attend conferences or meetings, undertake sponsored projects, teach, or for other University business. However, travel to some destinations may be at significant risk. Such risks must be managed in accordance with the University's health and safety obligations to its faculty and staff, and with reference to travel advice issued by the US Department of State ("State Department"). Similarly, UNI faculty and staff need to take reasonable steps to protect themselves when travelling and to ensure that their acts or omissions do not create or increase a risk to the health and safety of themselves or others. The University recognizes that some travel to high risk countries may be necessary and supports the undertaking of such travel where an assessment of the risks is undertaken and appropriate risk management strategies are implemented, and special insurance is secured.

Procedure:

The State Department's travel advisories and University guidance are as follows:

- *Travel Warnings* are issued when long-term, protracted conditions that make a country dangerous or unstable lead the State Department to recommend that Americans avoid or consider the risk of travel to that country. 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.

Neither faculty nor staff are obliged to travel to these countries. However, faculty and staff who have a compelling reason to travel to these countries should take due note of State Department warnings, undertake a risk assessment, and prepare and leave with their department head (in advance of their trip) a travel itinerary including contact information. War and insurrection insurance that will fully cover them (including repatriation of remains) in these countries or regions should be secured in situations where the advisory is based on war or insurrection (whether declared or not), political insurrection, terrorism, invasion or civil strife.

- *Travel Alerts* are issued to disseminate information about short-term conditions, either transnational or within a particular country, that pose significant 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.

Where a Travel Alert has been issued, faculty and staff should not travel to countries or parts of countries specified unless absolutely necessary. Worldwide or regional weather alerts are excluded from this policy. Travelers should take due note of State Department concerns, undertake a risk assessment, and prepare and leave with their department head and the Associate Provost for Faculty Affairs (for faculty members) or their immediate supervisor and the Director of Human Resource Services (for staff members) (in advance of their trip) a travel itinerary including contact information. Employees should consult their current health and life insurance plans to review the extent of coverage in foreign countries. Travelers should ensure that they possess health and life insurance that will fully cover them in these countries.

Faculty and staff should carefully consider the need to travel overseas when the State Department has advised against such travel. The University expects faculty and staff to comply with State Department guidance unless there is a compelling reason not to. No faculty or staff can be compelled to travel to a country where the State Department has issued a Travel Warning. University faculty and staff who are foreign nationals should also consider safety warnings issued by their own governments before deciding to travel overseas. Where a decision not to travel may affect/be affected by particular sponsored projects grants, advice should be sought from the Office of Sponsored Programs. The cost of appropriate insurance should also be considered before any decision is made to travel. The traveler is responsible for paying for such insurance unless it is covered by the University or if specifically authorized by their department head who will then be responsible for funding the insurance.

Most US government funded sponsored projects grants will permit the expensing of such insurance if it was included in the original grant budget.

Insurance

a. Faculty and staff who travel at the University's request

Faculty and staff who travel at the University's request (e.g., travel pursuant to instructions from their department heads or where such travel is required by their job descriptions) will have covered by their University academic or administrative unit:

- travel health insurance if the area to which they are traveling is not covered as "in-network" by their current health insurance plan,
- life insurance if the area to which they are traveling is not covered by their current life insurance plan, and
- inoculations if a qualified physician or nurse determines it to be necessary for the proposed travel and only if not covered by the employee's current health insurance plan.

Faculty or staff who travel to countries or specific regions of those countries affected by war or insurrection (whether declared or not), political insurrection, terrorism, invasion or civil strife should consult with their current health and life insurance plans to review the extent of coverage in foreign countries and determine if war and insurrection insurance coverage or additional travel insurance should be obtained. If the university concurs that pre-existing insurance will not apply, faculty and staff will need to secure, funded by their academic or administrative unit, war and insurrection insurance coverage for travel to such countries or specific regions of those countries.

b. Faculty who travel on their own initiative

Faculty who travel on their own initiative, for professional rather than personal reasons, to countries or specific regions of those countries affected by war or insurrection (whether declared or not), political insurrection, terrorism, invasion or civil strife should consult with their current health and life insurance plans to review the extent of coverage in foreign countries and determine if war and insurrection insurance coverage or additional travel insurance should be obtained. If the university concurs that pre-existing insurance will not apply, faculty and staff will need to secure war and insurrection insurance coverage for travel to such countries or specific regions of those countries. Most US government sponsored projects grants permit war and insurrection insurance premiums to be expensed where the travel is necessary for the funded project. Check with the Office of Sponsored Programs to determine whether your grant permits expensing such policies. University funds cannot be used to cover the cost of such insurance.

c. Workers Compensation

Faculty and staff are covered by Iowa Workers Compensation for an injury or illness that arises out of their course of employment even when working in a foreign country. Employees are required to report any injury that occurs on the job, regardless of how minor it may be, to their supervisor. A first report of injury should be completed and submitted to the Employee Disability and Leave Coordinator, within 24 hours of the injury or as soon as practicable. Questions related to workers compensation should be directed to Human Resource Services.

d. Declining Insurance Coverage

UNI encourages faculty and staff to obtain insurance coverage for war or insurrection. If a faculty or staff member does not obtain such insurance, however, a waiver of university liability must be obtained from the Office of University Counsel; it must be signed by the traveler prior to travel, and returned to the Office of University Counsel.

Export Controls

Faculty and staff intending to travel internationally with laptops, research equipment, and other high-tech items falling under federal export controls laws must comply with government restrictions associated with international travel. Federal law stipulates the penalties for non-compliance. Refer to <http://www.uni.edu/osp/export-control-travel-handout> for more information on Export Controls and tips.

Office of International Programs

Approved by the Academic Affairs Council on August 23, 2011

Approved by the Faculty Senate on _____

Policy Committee Approved, _____

President's Cabinet Approved, _____

University of Northern Iowa International Travel Safety Guidelines (Faculty and Staff)

In determining whether overseas travel should be undertaken where a State Department warning is in effect, the following factors should be considered:

1.1 Whether the travel is essential to the research or other work being undertaken by a faculty or staff including factors such as:

- the timing of the proposed travel vis-à-vis the research or work timetable, including the impact that not traveling may affect/be affected by particular sponsored projects grants;
- alternative options available for completion of the research or other work;
- whether appropriate insurance can be put in place;
- the level of support from the faculty's or staff's department head.

1.2 Whether the faculty or staff member proposing to travel has particular expertise, local networks and support, and language facility to substantially reduce the potential risks; and

1.3 Whether viable risk-reduction strategies for travel to countries that are the subject of a State Department warning can address the points covered in 1.1 and 1.2 above.

Risk reduction strategies should be developed for all travel to countries or regions where there is a State Department travel warning or alert. Such risk management strategies should include University emergency contact details, arrangements for regular reporting to the University, and preparation of an evacuation plan. While traveling, faculty and staff overseas should regularly check <http://travel.state.gov/> for travel advice relating to countries in which they are traveling or intending to travel and ensure implementation of their risk-reduction strategies, including situations where the travel advice changes from an alert to a warning while in the country or specific region of that country. Faculty and staff traveling to countries that are subjects of State Department warnings or alerts should register with the State Department Smart Traveler Enrollment Program at http://travel.state.gov/travel/tips/registration/registration_4789.html. (Faculty and staff who are not United States citizens should register with their own governments.) Travelers should also consult the travel health notices by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention at <http://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/>.

Travel Risk Assessment

The risks which UNI faculty and staff face in traveling are dependent both on the individual characteristics of the traveler (for example, language competence, experience, gender, ethnicity, religion, nationality and sexual orientation may be factors depending on the context) and on circumstances in the destination country. The most important risks are:

- Disease;
- Theft;
- Misadventure (including traffic accidents, natural disasters and hazards, and extreme climatic conditions);
- Harassment (including physical attacks, extortion and arrest by authorities);
- Kidnappings and hostage takings; and
- War or insurrection (whether declared or not), political insurrection, terrorism, invasion or civil strife.

Those faculty and staff wishing to visit a country for which the State Department has issued an alert or warning should undertake a risk assessment that addresses the six issues above and the means by which each category of risk will be reduced. See attached template.

Key Recommendations

Where the State Department has issued an alert or warning, travelers should provide their department head and the Associate Provost for Faculty Affairs (for faculty members) or the Director of Human Resource Services (for staff members) with:

- A detailed itinerary including contact information and passport number;
- A risk assessment;
- An exit strategy; and
- Details of insurance, including war and insurrection insurance when the travel advisory warning is due to war or insurrection.

It is also recommend that travelers register with the State Department Smart Traveler Enrollment Program at http://travel.state.gov/travel/tips/registration/registration_4789.html or the Consulate or Embassy of their country of citizenship in the country to which they will be traveling.

Precautions for Emergencies

Faculty members and staff traveling abroad should be aware that emergency circumstances may arise after their departure which may require an early departure from their destinations. These circumstances may include:

- family or personal crisis requiring the traveler's presence in the US;
- natural disaster such an earthquake or flood;
- outbreak of disease;
- development of civil disorder which makes it unsafe to remain any longer in the destination country;
- changes in the political, social or physical circumstances which make it impossible to continue the program for which the travel was originally undertaken, even if there is no immediate danger to wellbeing; or
- traumatic event such as a terrorist attack which, although it may not itself increase the danger to wellbeing, nonetheless is so disturbing that the traveler feels it advisable to depart.

The appropriate response to each emergency will vary, depending on the nature of that emergency and the individual circumstances of the traveler. In the event of an emergency, the traveler should bear in mind that evacuation may sometimes be more dangerous than remaining. The following precautions should be considered:

- Travelers should notify their department head of any changes to their itinerary and provide contact details as they become available;
- Travelers should check in with the United States consulate or consulate of the government of their nationality, and
- Travelers are required to check their University e-mail accounts regularly to learn about travel risks.

Health

All members of the UNI community are advised to seek medical advice before traveling overseas to ensure that they are appropriately protected by inoculation and prophylaxis, and to take precautions against infection, particularly when traveling to tropical regions. The University recognizes the right of faculty members and staff to choose the medical protection that they consider most appropriate, but strongly urges that this choice be based on medical advice. First-time travelers to tropical regions should seek medical advice at least 3-6 six months before departure. The UNI Student Health Clinic, on West 23rd Street next to the Schindler Education Center, has travel health professionals who provide travel health advice and inoculations to UNI faculty and staff. There is a charge for this service that may be covered by the employee's health insurance. Call (319) 273-2009 to make an appointment. Travelers should also consult the travel health notices by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention at <http://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/>.

Personal Safety

Travelers are vulnerable to theft and assault. Travelers should exercise vigilance. The following are recommended:

- Ensure you have made copies of passport details, visas, travelers' checks and credit card numbers. Carry one copy in a place separate from the original documents and ensure a copy is left with an appropriate person at home;
- Keep in touch with family and work colleagues on a regular basis;
- Be conscious of safety when traveling on public or private transport; and
- Be sensitive to local cultures.

Civil Disorder

Several regions of the world have been affected by short-or long-term civil disorder. There is a risk that UNI faculty members and staff who enter such regions may become accidental victims of this disorder. This risk may be localized or may be acute, so travelers should exercise caution about becoming involved in political protests, demonstrations or other manifestations of potentially violent protest. Avoiding or minimizing this risk depends especially on access to local information. An experienced traveler, fluent in the language of the region with good local contacts, is at much less risk than someone visiting a region for the first time and speaking no local language. In general, UNI faculty members and staff should avoid travel to regions prone to civil disorder if they lack basic proficiency in one of the local languages (and thus access to local advice) or a competent local

sponsor (travel companion, travel agent, conference organizer, or government, business or academic counterpart) who can be relied upon to provide up-to-date advice.

Terrorism

UNI faculty members and staff with concerns about the risk of terrorist attacks in general should avoid travel to destinations that are prone to terrorist attacks. More generally, travelers should note that the aim of terrorist attacks is to create a level of fear that is greater than the actual level of risk. The nature of terrorist tactics means that, although the risk of an attack may be high, the risk to an individual traveler may be low. Sometimes, it is simply a question of being in the wrong place at the wrong time.

Travel Insurance

All travelers should be aware of the available insurance coverage and potential limitations of this insurance coverage, especially in relation to travel to those regions where there is war or insurrection (whether declared or not), political insurrection, terrorism, invasion or civil strife. Employees should consult with their current health and life insurance plans to review the extent of coverage in foreign countries and determine if additional insurance should be obtained. Should war exclusion insurance be necessary, there are several companies that provide such insurance on an individual basis. See, for example, <http://www.worldtravelcenter.com/>, <http://www.aaib-insurance.com/>, and <http://www.clements.com/>.

Sample Emergency Exit Strategy

Preparation:

- Pack luggage with suitable clothing and essential items.
- Always carry a Passport, Driver's license, ATM, credit cards, about \$100 in local currency on your person, and the telephone and address of the nearest US Embassy or Consulate
- In advance, decide which necessary items should be taken with you in the event of evacuation and which items should be sent by airfreight later.
- Keep a current inventory of all your possessions, including valuable items such as jewelry, equipment, and clothing.
- Discuss with your immediate and extended family what they should do in case of an emergency you may encounter (evacuation, hostage taking, illness, or death). Provide them with emergency telephone numbers for your contacts while traveling.
- Learn the location and routes to the closest hospital, police station, and friendly embassy.
- Maintain a separate emergency supply/first-aid kit to be used only for emergency situations.

Information:

Watch or listen to local news reports or Internet sites each day. Knowing what is going on locally could potentially help you avoid an issue when you are out and about. Provide someone at UNI with your itinerary, and contact them for information about your place of travel. Often times, someone back home will have better information than you can get locally about the situation in your country or region of travel.

Evaluation:

Determine the best course of action in response to the emergency situation. Seek advice from the United States Embassy in your country of travel. Evacuation should be weighed in comparison to remaining where you are or finding your way to the nearest United States Embassy. Consider the ease and safety of local, regional, and international transportation. Remember that the goal is to get to a safe haven in the least risky way possible, and the safe haven might be a US Embassy, a neighboring country, or any place in the US.

Notification:

If you decide to evacuate your country or region, inform your UNI contact and communicate with the US Embassy in your country of travel.

Travel:

Contact your airline to confirm flight availability. Travel from the Hotel (or whichever location) to the airport, rail station, border, or embassy should be taken with the utmost caution and with the most secure transport available (e.g., subway if there are riots above ground). Do not return to your hotel to get your luggage and do not be burdened by excessive luggage. You can have your hotel ship luggage to you. Try to look as inconspicuous as possible. Limit speaking in public to the minimum necessary. If you do not speak the local language, have someone you trust write down the name and address of your destination. Should your travel be interrupted, it will help you to get back on track. Avoid locations of civil unrest and locations of loud commotion. Provide your UNI contact with updates that include your location and destination. If you board an

international flight, telephone your UNI contact from the aircraft after it enters international air space. Have your contact notify the State Department of your exit from the country.