University of Hartford Policy
Related to State Department Travel Warnings
and University-Sponsored Travel Abroad

Introduction

The University of Hartford is committed to providing a broad spectrum of international experiences for our students, faculty, and staff. We strongly encourage study abroad in University-approved programs, participation in other credit and non-credit international experiences, and faculty international research. At the same time, in the face of the safety risks in the world today, we are also committed to protecting the health and safety of students, faculty, and staff when they journey outside the borders of the United States.

We strongly recommend that before traveling to any part of the world, faculty, students, staff, and other members of the University community (hereinafter referred to as “others”) familiarize themselves with the U.S. Department of State website (http://travel.state.gov), paying particular attention to the “Current Travel Warnings” section which lists countries and regions about which the U.S. Government has serious concerns for American travelers, and the “Public Announcements” section which articulates health and safety issues in various countries or regions. Although the University of Hartford does not prohibit travel to countries for which “Public Announcements” have been issued by the State Department, we urge all travelers to consider seriously the risks in visiting such locales. It is the responsibility of the individual traveler to consult the State Department website to obtain current information about the health and safety conditions of the proposed destination.

In addition, all individuals traveling or studying abroad on a University program or an affiliated program must sign the appropriate “Assumption of Risk and Release of Liability” form. All individuals participating in University-sponsored programs or approved affiliated programs abroad must also obtain International SOS coverage from the Study Abroad Office of the International Center (Gengras Student Union 328) before departure.

1.0 Policy Governing Travel to Countries on the State Department’s “Current Travel Warnings” List

In order to protect the health and safety of its undergraduate and graduate students, faculty, staff, and others, the University of Hartford prohibits University-sponsored travel to those countries or regions of countries for which the State Department has issued a Travel Warning that includes any of the following phrases:

- orders departure of U.S. dependents and non-emergency personnel;
- recommends that any U.S. citizens remaining in the country should depart;
- (strongly) warns U.S. citizens against (all) travel to the country(region); or
- warns (urges) U.S. citizens to defer (all) (non-essential) travel to the country (region).

Click here to view current Travel Warnings on the State Department’s website (http://travel.state.gov).
Any reference to “Travel Warning” in this document refers to the specific kinds of warnings referenced above in 1.0.

When the State Department Warning (1.0) targets a specific region(s) of a country, but not the country as a whole, travel is only prohibited to those regions identified by the Travel Warning specified in 1.0 above. For example, a University of Hartford program or an affiliated program in Madrid would not be affected by a Travel Warning (1.0) that applied to the Basque region of Spain.

This restriction applies to the University’s own study abroad programs, University-sponsored travel programs (e.g., sports teams, performing groups, volunteer activities, organized tours for community members or alumni, etc.), and study-away experiences sponsored by affiliated programs. Approval for University-sponsored study abroad or travel in these locations is suspended for the duration of the Travel Warning (1.0 above).

2.0 Student Travel

2.1 No University of Hartford student is permitted to embark on study abroad in the affected country/region nor are any short-term programs led by University faculty permitted to depart as long as the Travel Warning (1.0 above) is in effect.

2.2 If a student receives formal approval to participate in a program location prior to the issuance of a Travel Warning (1.0 above) or to the development of a critical situation, the University’s approval will be suspended until such time as the Travel Warning has been lifted or the critical situation is no longer a concern.

2.3 In the event that a Travel Warning (1.0 above) is issued or a critical situation arises while a University of Hartford student is participating in a University or an affiliated program already in progress, the University’s International Situation Management Team will do all that it reasonably can to facilitate actions that will improve the safety of the individuals in the program.

2.4 If a University of Hartford student chooses on his or her own to apply for “active status” and to enroll in a study abroad program or pursue any academic work in a country/region where a Travel Warning (1.0 above) has been issued, the student will not receive:

- support from any University of Hartford office or department,
- any financial assistance from the University of Hartford,
- SOS coverage issued through the University of Hartford, or
- pre-approved credit for the work undertaken in that location.
An exception to this provision of pre-approved credit may be made in cases in which students return to their home countries (they must possess the passport of that country) and are under their parent(s)’s or guardian’s care. With special permission, these students can receive prior approval for courses taken in their home countries.

2.5 If a University of Hartford student chooses on his or her own to enroll in a study abroad program in a country/region where a Travel Warning (1.0 above) has been issued, no University of Hartford grants, stipends, or financial aid may be used to support research or travel in the affected areas.

3.0 Faculty and Staff Organizing Group Travel Experiences in Countries on the State Department’s “Current Travel Warnings” List

No University of Hartford sponsored travel programs may embark for affected areas while the Travel Warning (1.0 above) is in effect. A Travel Warning must be lifted before a University-sponsored trip may depart. In the case of University of Hartford programs already underway when a Travel Warning for the country/region is issued or a critical situation arises, the University’s International Situation Management Team, in consultation with the faculty member on site and other knowledgeable sources, will do all that it reasonably can to facilitate actions that will improve the safety of the individuals in the program.

4.0 Faculty and Staff Consulting, Travel, and Research

4.1 The University of Hartford encourages faculty to develop international connections and to pursue international research. We do, however, strongly recommend that before traveling to a region of the world, faculty and staff familiarize themselves with the U.S. Department of State website (http://travel.state.gov) and carefully assess the health and safety risks posed by travel to a particular area.

4.2 Normally, faculty or staff may not use any University of Hartford administered funds, whether its own monies or those received through external granting agencies, to support travel to or research activities in countries/regions that have been designated by the State Department “Travel Warning” specified in 1.0 above. Furthermore, the University of Hartford will not permit faculty or staff members to travel to these areas on university-related business.

4.3 If faculty or staff make the personal decision to travel to countries/regions that have been designated by State Department “Travel Warning” specified in 1.0 above, they do so as private individuals with no connection to the University of Hartford.
An exception to the policy articulated for faculty and staff (4.2) may be granted under extraordinary circumstances (i.e., travel to high-risk regions) by the President of the University. Faculty and staff who seek personal exceptions to this policy should submit in writing a request that contains the following information:

a. Details about the geographic environment of the work and its relation to security issues;
b. Information about travel advisories or warnings of other countries about the country under the U.S. State Department Warning;
c. The local support structure available to the individual and evacuation plans in case of an emergency;
d. The individual’s familiarity with and experience in the locale, its language and culture prior to this trip;
e. The academic importance and significance of the program/research to the faculty member and the necessity of doing the work in that particular locale;
f. Documentation that the faculty or staff member has appropriate health insurance coverage in the locale in question; and,
g. A signed copy of the “Assumption of Risk and Release of Liability, High-risk Regions” form should be included with the request for an exception.