

December 15, 2023

To: UVA Students Traveling Abroad for University Related Purposes – J-Term & Spring 2024
From: Dudley J. Doane, Director
Catarina Krizancic, International Health, Safety, and Security Manager
Re: Health, Safety, and Security Abroad

Over 1,200 UVA students and Graduate Medical Education (GME) trainees are expected to pursue travel outside the U.S. for university related purposes this J-Term and spring. Activities include study, research, service, internships, training, athletic competitions, performances, and in many cases, a combination of these activities. The University monitors health, safety, and security conditions where our students travel for university related purposes. Our exchange university partners and the provider organizations that offer education abroad programs open to UVA students also monitor those conditions. If risks are identified, students are advised on how to respond and are directed to support services.

UVA has an emergency and communications plan that includes the services of a worldwide emergency assistance provider. We subscribe to security intelligence services which furnish us with regular and emergency updates on health, safety, and security conditions around the world. We are also members of the Overseas Security Advisory Council (OSAC), a division of the Bureau of Diplomatic Security in the U.S. Department of State, and PULSE, a professional association focused on health, safety, and security in university operations outside the U.S.

UVA students and GME trainees who travel outside the borders of the United States are subject to the [University's Policy on Student International Travel](#). All students and GME trainees, along with the faculty and staff who advise them, are expected to comply with the requirements of the policy, which include registration of the travel and enrollment for international health and emergency assistance insurance for use during the time abroad for university related purposes. The ISO strongly recommends that travelers also consider trip insurance that can be tapped in the event travel to or from the education abroad destination is interrupted or in the event a change in itinerary is required.

The World Health Organization (WHO) announced the end of the public health emergency of international concern triggered by COVID-19 on May 5, 2023. In the US, the public health emergency declared because of COVID-19 ended May 11. **Nonetheless, all students and GME trainees are advised to be up to date on all COVID-19 booster shots before departure.** See [CDC booster guidance](#) for more information. Travelers are also reminded to confirm entry requirements for their destination(s) before their departure date.

The Centers for Disease Control ([CDC](#)) is the central U.S. clearinghouse for individual and public health guidance, including for international travel to and from the U.S. The guidance provides information on required and recommended inoculations and medicines for your destination(s). Travelers are strongly advised to confer with the [UVA Student Health and Wellness International Travel Clinic](#) or their family physician pre-departure. Students who are managing ongoing health needs (mental as well as physical) are encouraged to work with ISO staff to identify resources and providers to support them while abroad.

Pre-departure, please stay well informed of events in your destination(s) and the surrounding region(s) and encourage family members and others interested in your time abroad to do the same. This will help you prepare for your sojourn and begin the engagement with your new environment. U.S. Embassy web sites are good sources of information on all aspects of host country conditions as is the [U.S. Department of State travel site](#).

U.S. Department of State Travel Advisories, Centers for Disease Control Travel Notices, U.S. Department of Treasury Sanctioned Countries, and University Travel Restrictions can be accessed on the [ISO's Travel Alerts, Notices & Warnings page](#). This is also a good time for you and your family to review the [ISO's Health & Safety Abroad web page](#), the [Education Abroad Handbook](#), and the [University's Policy on Student International Travel](#).

The Centers for Disease Control ([CDC](#)) remains the central U.S. clearinghouse for individual and public health guidance, including for international travel to and from the U.S. All travelers should review [U.S. border policies for re-entering the United States](#) last updated by the CDC on August 24, 2022.

While you are abroad it is important to [practice situational awareness, maintain a low profile, communicate responsibly and proactively](#), and attend to updates from your hosts, local authorities, and the nearest U.S. Consulate. The U.S. Consulate will also be your best resource for staying abreast of local laws and policies as they affect U.S. visitors. Make sure that you have contact information for emergency assistance in your destination(s) – local equivalent(s) of 911, your international health and emergency insurance provider (generally [CISI](#)), your program/university/local host, and the nearest U.S. embassy or consulate. It is important to carry a hard copy of this information and not rely solely on your phone to store the emergency assistance information since phone batteries can die, networks may be unavailable, and phones may be lost or stolen.

You and your family are welcome to direct questions to the International Studies Office ([ISO](#)). Please note that in the event of an emergency, **the ISO can be reached 24/7 at +1 434 982 3010**. Those of you enrolling at one of our exchange partner universities or in a program offered by an organization such as IES or SIT should feel free to direct your questions to the host university or study abroad organization.

Your time abroad is likely to be both exciting and challenging – a unique opportunity to learn more about the world and yourself. Good preparation pre-departure and mindful behaviors while you are abroad will help you gain the most from it.