

THE UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA AT CHAPEL HILL

OFFICE OF THE PROVOST

Policy Concerning Study, Travel, and Research in Countries

Under U.S. State Department Travel Warnings and

U.S. Centers for Disease Control Travel Notices

As the daily lives of North Carolinians are affected more and more by events around the world, in order to better serve the State and its citizens, The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill has developed a global focus. Its students take advantage of opportunities for international education and research through organized study-abroad programs, more informal educational trips, and independent study and research funded in whole or in part by the University. Its faculty and staff participate in international educational and research opportunities, both to attain additional knowledge themselves and to share their expertise with other countries. The University is committed to becoming a premiere international institution.

When the University's contacts with the rest of the world expand, additional risk is inevitable as its activities are affected by war, terrorism, political unrest and natural catastrophes in other countries. In addition, a disease outbreak in another country poses both a risk of infection for the student or employee traveling to the affected area and a risk that the student or employee may transmit the disease or health condition to others on returning to the United States. The University endeavors to balance the value of participation in international educational activities against the potential risk to its students and employees of such participation. In balancing these factors, the University relies on information from the U.S. Department of State, most particularly the Travel Warnings issued periodically by that agency, and information in the Travel Notices issued by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control. Consequently, the University has developed this policy governing its educational and other activities in countries for which the Department of State has issued a Travel Warning and countries for which the Centers for Disease Control has issued a Travel Notice.

I. DEPARTMENT OF STATE TRAVEL WARNINGS

Department of State Travel Warnings fall into two basic categories: (1) warnings of conditions that heighten the ordinary risk of travel to a particular country and (2) more urgent warnings that forbid, restrict or otherwise urge U.S. citizens to defer travel to a country.

A. "Heightened Risk" Travel Warnings: Students

No student shall be required to participate in an educational activity under University auspices in a country for which the Department of State has issued a Travel Warning. A student who wishes to travel, under University auspices, to a country for which the State Department has issued a "heightened risk" travel warning may do so, under the following conditions:

(1) The student must review the Travel Warning and the U.S. Department of State Consular Information Sheet for the country in question. Both documents may be accessed on the web at <http://www.state.gov>.

(2) The student must consider carefully the risks described in the Travel Warning and, weighing those risks against the value of the educational opportunity to the student, make his or her own determination about whether to continue with the planned research or study activity. In balancing these factors, the student should take into consideration the possibility that the existing Travel Warning may be changed to a more urgent type of warning, triggering section I.B of this policy and possibly affecting the student's ability to receive a refund of monies already expended for the research or study activity. The student should also take into consideration the possibility that, if he or she encounters difficulties abroad, the University and even the U.S. Department of State may be unable to assist.

(3) The student must sign a release, acknowledging the existence of the travel warning and his/her decision to continue with the planned activity despite that warning, and releasing the University from liability for injuries suffered by the student while participating in the activity. If a student is under age 18, his/her parent or guardian must also sign this release. If an undergraduate student is under age 21, his/her parent or guardian must sign the document merely to indicate that the parent or guardian is aware of the situation and has read the release. For undergraduate students over age 21 or graduate/professional students, no parent or guardian consent is requested. Students who are married do not need to seek parental consent.

B. Travel Warnings Forbidding, Restricting or Urging Deferral of Travel: Students

When the U.S. Department of State issues a travel warning that forbids, restricts, or otherwise urges U.S. citizens to defer travel to a certain country, the following rules apply:

(1) University study abroad programs in that country shall be suspended.

(2) No student shall be allowed to travel to that country under University auspices.

(3) No student shall be given University funding for any activity in that country. If the student has already received such funding prior to the imposition of the travel warning, the funding shall be returned to the University. Where a portion of the funds have already been expended in furtherance of the activity before the travel warning was imposed, the Associate Provost for UNC Global, after consultation with the relevant department, shall decide the amount to be returned to the University.

(4) If the student is already in the country for which the travel warning has been issued, the Associate Provost for UNC Global shall decide, in consultation with others having knowledge of the situation, whether the student shall be required to return to the U.S. Where the student is required to return to the U.S. or where the student desires to return to the U.S. under these circumstances, the University will, at the student's request, endeavor to help the student make arrangements for his/her return.

(5) Where the student has pre-paid the costs of a University-sponsored study abroad program the student may be eligible for a refund of all or a portion of the payment, but the availability of a refund is not guaranteed and will depend on the circumstances of each case.

(6) If a student elects to travel and participate in the activity despite the subsection B Travel Warning and the University rules set out above, section 3 above pertaining to use of University funds applies. In addition, if the student participates in research or other educational activity in a country while that country is under the subsection B Travel Warning, the student will never receive any academic credit from the University for that research or educational activity.

C. Employee Travel to Countries under Travel Warning

The University recognizes that, in times of international crisis, its employees may possess valuable expertise that is needed to assist with the resolution of the crisis. Consequently the University does not prevent its employees from traveling to countries for which the State Department has issued a Travel Warning described in subsection A and B above. However, the following rules and conditions apply to such travel:

(1) No employee shall be required to travel to a country for which a Travel Warning has been issued.

(2) Employees who wish to travel to such a country are urged to review the Consular Information Sheet and Travel Warning at <http://www.state.gov> and other available material about the conditions in the country in question and to consider carefully whether the value of the travel to them outweighs the risks they will face if they choose to travel.

(3) The Employee shall take precautions with respect to his or her personal safety. He or she must recognize that the University, and even the U.S. Department of State, may be unable to help in the event he or she encounters difficulties abroad.

II. CENTERS FOR DISEASE CONTROL (CDC) TRAVEL NOTICES

There are three categories of CDC Travel Notices that are relevant for purposes of this policy: (1) Outbreak Notice—issued when there is an outbreak of a contagious disease in a limited geographic area; (2) Travel Health Precaution—issued when a disease outbreak of a greater scope is occurring in a more widespread geographic area; and (3) Travel Health Warning—issued when there is a widespread, serious outbreak of a disease of public health concern. (At this warning level, the CDC recommends against non-essential travel to the area.)

A. CDC Outbreak Notice or Travel Health Precaution—Students

No student shall be required to participate in an educational activity under University auspices in a country for which the CDC has issued any of the Travel Health Notices set out above. A student who wishes to travel, under University auspices, to a country for which the CDC has issued an Outbreak Notice or a Travel Health Precaution may do so, under the following conditions:

(1) The student must review the Outbreak Notice or Travel Health Precaution, as well as the Travel Notice Definitions, Criteria, and Rationale for such notices and warnings. These documents can be accessed on the web at <http://www.cdc.gov/travel/default.aspx> .

(2) The student must consider carefully the risks described in the Outbreak Notice or Travel Health precaution, and weighing those risks against the value of the educational opportunity to the student, make his or her own determination about whether to continue with the planned research or study activity. The student should also take into consideration the possibility that, if he or she encounters difficulties abroad, the University and even the U.S. Department of State may be unable to assist, and that the student may be obliged to “shelter in place” in the event that commercial airlines drastically curtail or even cease operations, and/or travel restrictions prevent people from returning to the United States or leaving the affected country. “Shelter-in-Place” information can be found at the U.S. government’s pandemic influenza website: www.pandemicflu.gov , the World Health Organization website www.who.int/en , and the Centers for Disease Control website www.cdc.gov .

(3) In balancing these factors, the student should take into consideration the possibility that the existing Outbreak Notice or Travel Health Precaution may be changed to a Travel Health Warning, triggering Section II.B. of this policy and possibly affecting the student’s ability to receive a refund of monies already expended for the research or study activity.

(4) The student must sign a release, acknowledging the existence of the Outbreak Notice or Travel Health Precaution and his/her decision to continue with the planned activity despite that warning, and releasing the University from liability for injuries suffered by the student while participating in the activity. If a student is under age 18, his/her parent or guardian must also sign this release. If an undergraduate student is under age 21, his/her parent or guardian must sign the document merely to indicate that the parent or guardian is aware of the situation and has read the release. For undergraduate students over age 21 or graduate/professional students, no parent or guardian consent is requested. Students who are married do not need to seek parental consent.

(5) Students who travel to a country for which the CDC has issued an Outbreak Notice or Travel Health Precaution may be requested to monitor their health upon return, or be subject to screening at the port of entry, a process that may include voluntary or involuntary isolation or quarantine of the traveler.

B. CDC Travel Health Warnings—Students

When the CDC issues a Travel Health Warning that recommends postponing nonessential travel to the area, the following rules apply:

(1) University study abroad programs in that country shall be suspended.

(2) No student shall be allowed to travel to that country under University auspices.

(3) No student shall be given University funding for any activity in that country. If the student has already received such funding prior to the imposition of the travel warning, the funding shall be returned to the University. Where a portion of the funds have already been expended in furtherance of the activity before the Travel Health Warning was imposed, the

Associate Provost for UNC Global, after consultation with the relevant department, shall decide the amount to be returned to the University.

(4) If the student is already in the country for which the CDC Travel Health Warning has been issued, the Associate Provost for UNC Global shall decide, in consultation with others having knowledge of the situation, whether the student shall be required to return to the U.S. Where the student is required to return to the U.S. or where the student desires to return to the U.S. under these circumstances, the University will, at the student's request, endeavor to help the student make arrangements for his/her return. However, students should be aware that the University, and even the U.S. Department of State, may be unable to assist, and that they may be obliged to "shelter in place" in the event that commercial airlines drastically curtail or even cease operations, and/or travel restrictions prevent people from returning to the U.S. or leaving the affected country. "Shelter-in-Place" information can be found at the U.S. government's pandemic influenza website: www.pandemicflu.gov, the World Health Organization website www.who.int/en, and the Centers for Disease Control website www.cdc.gov.

(5) Where the student has pre-paid the costs of a University-sponsored study abroad program the student may be eligible for a refund of all or a portion of the payment, but the availability of a refund is not guaranteed and will depend on the circumstances of each case.

(6) If a student elects to travel and participate in research or other educational activity in a country while that country is under a CDC Travel Health Warning, the student will never receive any academic credit from the University for that research or educational activity. The student will be subject to screening at the port of entry, a process that may include voluntary or involuntary isolation or quarantine of the traveler. Further, the student will not be permitted to return to campus until he or she has completed appropriate health monitoring and/or screening to determine that he or she is not infected with the disease in question. The monitoring and screening required will be decided on a case by case basis by the Associate Provost for UNC Global in consultation with appropriate Public Health officials.

C. Travel to Countries under CDC Travel Notices: Employees

The University recognizes that, in times of international health crisis, its employees may possess valuable expertise that is needed to assist with the resolution of the crisis. Consequently, the University does not prevent its employees from traveling to countries for which the CDC has issued an Outbreak Notice, Travel Health Precaution or Travel Health Warning. However, the following rules and conditions apply to such travel:

(1) No employee shall be required to travel to a country for which any of the CDC Travel Notices listed above has been issued.

(2) Employees who wish to travel to such a country are urged to review the Travel Notice and the CDC Travel Health Warning, Definitions, Criteria and Rationale at <http://wwwn.cdc.gov/travel/default.aspx>, as well as other available material about the conditions in the country in question, and to consider carefully whether the value of the travel to them outweighs the risks they will face if they choose to travel.

(3) Employees who travel to a country for which there is an Outbreak Notice, a Travel Health Precaution, or a Travel Health Warning are urged to prepare to “Shelter-in-Place” in the event that commercial airlines drastically curtail or even cease operations, and/or travel restrictions impede people from returning to the United States or leaving the affected country. “Shelter-in-Place” information can be found at www.pandemicflu.gov; www.who.int/en, and www.cdc.gov.

(4) Employees shall take precautions with respect to their personal safety, recognizing that the University and even the U.S. Department of State may be unable to help in the event employees encounter difficulty abroad.

(5) Employees who travel to a country for which the CDC has issued an Outbreak Notice or a Travel Health Precaution may, and in cases where the CDC has issued a Travel Health Warning, will, be requested to monitor their health upon return, or be subject to screening at the port of entry, a process that may include voluntary or involuntary isolation or quarantine of the traveler. Further, an employee will not be permitted to return to campus until he or she has completed appropriate health monitoring and/or screening to determine that he or she is not infected with the disease in question. The monitoring and screening required will be decided on a case by case basis by the Associate Provost for UNC Global in consultation with appropriate Public Health officials.

IV. AUTHORITY OF THE ASSOCIATE PROVOST FOR UNC GLOBAL

Where it is not clear from its wording whether a Department of State Travel Warning falls into category (1) or (2) as set out above, the Associate Provost for UNC Global shall have the discretion to decide the issue, after appropriate consultation.

In any situation involving a Travel Warning or a CDC Travel Notice, the special conditions that caused the warning or notice to be issued may result in further rules and responses by the University. The Associate Provost for UNC Global shall have the authority to establish such rules and responses in consultation with such other people as the Associate Provost deems appropriate under the circumstances.

For areas designated in a CDC Travel Health Warning, the rules and procedures issued by the Associate Provost for UNC Global may differ for employees traveling to the area on business not connected with the disease outbreak, and employees traveling to the area to assist and/or study the disease outbreak.

Warnings similar in effect to Travel Warnings may be issued by other organizations such as the World Health Organization. In such situations the University as a whole may impose additional or different rules and procedures affecting international travel and study. In these cases the Associate Provost for UNC Global will collaborate with other University officials in developing such rules and procedures.