



HIGH RISK TRAVEL TO RESTRICTED REGIONS

Scope: Louisiana State University

Effective: July 14, 2011 revised November 1, 2021

Purpose: To identify and mitigate the risk associated with high risk travel to Restricted Regions

Louisiana State University supports and encourages international travel and collaborations and recognizes that a global perspective is essential to its academic mission. The University is equally committed to the safety and well-being of its students, faculty and staff when they participate in these activities and realizes that some areas of the world present heightened health, safety and security risks. In particular, countries/regions that have U.S. Department of State Travel Advisories have been identified as countries/regions that require special efforts to mitigate risk and, when necessary, call for the avoidance of travel altogether.

The University requires all travel to countries with U.S. Department of State Travel Advisories to be approved by the Executive Vice President and Provost or his/her designee at the recommendation of the International Travel Oversight Committee (ITOC).

Definitions:

- A. International Travel Oversight Committee (ITOC) – Committee led by the Senior Vice Provost for Academic Affairs that includes representatives from across campus, including two faculty members recommended by the Faculty Senate President, two staff members recommended by the Office of Academic Affairs, two staff members recommended by the Associate Vice President of Accounting Services, and one staff member specialized in international travel and risk management recommended by the Office of Risk Management.
- B. Department of State Travel Advisories – Advisory levels provided to inform travelers of country-specific safety information and risks of international travel. The Department of State Travel Advisories can be found at www.travel.state.gov. The Advisory levels are defined as follows:
 - 1. **Level 1 – Exercise Normal Precautions:** This is the lowest advisory level for safety and security risk. There is some risk in any international travel. Conditions in other countries may differ from those in the United States and may change at any time.
 - 2. **Level 2 – Exercise Increased Caution:** Be aware of heightened risks to safety and security. The Department of State provides additional advice for travelers in these areas in the Travel Advisory. Conditions in any country may change at any time.

3. **Level 3 – Reconsider Travel:** Avoid travel due to serious risks to safety and security. The Department of State provides additional advice for travelers in these areas in the Travel Advisory. Conditions in any country may change at any time.
4. **Level 4 – Do Not Travel:** This is the highest advisory level due to greater likelihood of life-threatening risks. During an emergency, the U.S. government may have very limited ability to provide assistance. The Department of State advises that U.S. citizens not travel to the country or to leave as soon as it is safe to do so. The Department of State provides additional advice for travelers in these areas in the Travel Advisory. Conditions in any country may change at any time.

Note: Some countries have more specific advisory information for regions within the country. Travelers are encouraged to read the country’s Advisory in its entirety when determining the travel risk.

- C. Restricted Regions – Includes countries or regions of a country with a Level 3 or Level 4 Travel Advisory issued by the Department of State (www.travel.state.gov).

Procedures:

- A. This policy applies to the following:

1. LSU faculty and staff traveling internationally with or without University funding to conduct University business within one’s capacity, such as participation in research, conferences, teaching endeavors or technical assistance activities.
2. LSU graduate and undergraduate students, traveling internationally as individuals or in groups, with or without University funding, for any LSU-sponsored, LSU-administered, or LSU-related activity/program (including, but not limited to activities such as taking part in official study abroad programs, participating in recognized student organization trips abroad, conducting research, attending conferences or technical assistance activities).

- B. International Travel to Restricted Regions

Travel to *Restricted Regions* will be limited by the University due to the acute risks associated with health, safety, and security. Travel requests to *Restricted Regions* must be approved by the Executive Vice President and Provost or his/her designee at the recommendation of the ITOC. Each traveler must complete the appropriate approval process listed in Section C and will be expected to:

- a. Document why no reasonable alternative travel location is available.
- b. Provide a compelling justification as to why the travel is required and how it fulfills the critical mission of the University.
- c. Address mitigation for major health, safety, and/or security concerns.
- d. Provide a detailed itinerary.

No student, faculty or staff can be required to travel to a Restricted Region.

C. Approval Process to Travel to Restricted Regions

Request for travel to *Restricted Regions* should be submitted **30 days in advance** of the proposed departure date or as soon as the trip is known. Late requests cannot be guaranteed a decision prior to the proposed departure date, and may result in a denied application and/or delayed start date for travel. The University reserves the right to withhold reimbursement and/or take other disciplinary actions for unauthorized travel.

1. The following documentation is required by the individual or program to travel to a Restricted Region for approval by the Executive Vice President and Provost or his/her designee at the recommendation of the ITOC.
 - a. AS295 “Request to Travel to Restricted Region for Individual Travelers” or AS296 “Request to Travel to Restricted Regions for Student Study Trips”.

Note: The form must be completed in its entirety and signed by the Dean/ Director or Department Head/Chair prior to submission for approval.
 - b. AS297 “Faculty/Staff Emergency Contact Form”.
 - c. AS298 “High Risk Travel Release and Waiver” is required in the event that the high risk travel request is not approved and the traveler chooses to proceed with the travel. The form must be signed by each traveler. The form should be notarized with two witnesses to acknowledge the release.
 - d. Upon approval approved by the Executive Vice President and Provost or his/her designee at the recommendation of the ITOC, the AS295 or AS296 will be returned to the traveler.
2. Upon approval for travel to a Restricted Region, the traveler must register in “myTrips” to be covered by the University’s international travel insurance and should register with the US Embassy/Consulate of the country of travel. If travel is booked through the University contracted travel agency, Christopherson Business Travel, the trip will be automatically registered with “My Trips”.
 - a. If travel is booked outside of Christopherson Business Travel, to register travel in “myTrips”, travelers should go to <http://www.lsu.edu/riskmgt/internationaltravelregistry.php>. The link and additional information can be found on the Office of Risk Management website.
 - b. Travelers should also register travel with the Smart Traveler Enrollment Program (STEP) which is a free service to allow U.S. citizens and nationals traveling and living abroad to enroll their trip with the nearest U.S. Embassy or Consulate. To register, travelers should go to <http://step.state.gov/step/>.

D. Faculty Regional Experts

A separate approval process is in place for faculty who are experts in a geographic region that is in a Restricted Region and must travel there to conduct research. The faculty member must submit the following information:

1. A signed letter of support from the Dean/Director and Department Head/Chair stating that the faculty is an expert in the specified geographic region and travel is necessary for him/her to carry out research.
2. A signed letter from the faculty member explaining that he/she has expert knowledge of the region, is aware of the risks, and is adequately prepared to mitigate them.

The ITOC will review both documents and make a recommendation to the Executive Vice President and Provost or his/her designee. If approved, the faculty member will be allowed to travel for one calendar year from the date of approval. For each individual trip to the Restricted Region, the faculty member will be required to complete all forms and submit documents as required in Section C of this policy. The University retains the right to withdraw this approval and/or require the faculty to return to the United States.

E. Faculty Field Experts

A separate approval process is in place for faculty whose research specialty requires them to travel to high-risk locations in Restricted Regions. The faculty may not necessarily be experts in the geographic region. The faculty member must submit the following information:

1. A signed letter of support from the Dean/Director and Department Head/Chair stating that the traveler is prepared to mitigate the risks involved with travel to the restricted region and frequent and/or last-minute travel is necessary for them to carry out their specific job functions.
2. A signed letter from the faculty member explaining the critical nature of their work in the region, that they are aware of the risks, and are adequately prepared to mitigate them (including evidence of expertise in the region of travel or risk training related to his/her activities in the region).

For each individual trip to a Restricted Region, the faculty member will be required to complete all forms and submit documents as required in Section C of this policy. The University retains the right to withdraw approval and/or require the faculty to return to the US.

F. Cancellation of Approval

The University reserves the right to cancel any approved travel prior to departure to the restricted region if the level of risk increases.

G. Travel Evacuation or Advisory Issued During Travel Status

If a traveler is in a *Restricted Region* and a security evacuation is issued, the traveler must accept evacuation assistance and return to the U.S. or move to a safe location immediately. If a travel advisory is issued, the traveler may be requested to return to the U.S. or move to a safe location.

H. Penalties for Violations

The University will not support or approve travel to *Restricted Regions* that takes place without adhering to the requirements of the University's travel policy.

The University reserves the right to withhold reimbursement and/or take other disciplinary actions for unauthorized travel to *Restricted Regions*.

I. Planning Resources

The Office of Risk Management can assist in planning international travel through the online resources available via the LSU Global Assistance Portal and services available through International SOS including:

- Custom over the phone security and medical briefings for each trip/location
- Custom lodging and transportation recommendations based on your itinerary
- Identification of recommend medical facilities
- Recommended vaccinations
- Discussion of other important cultural or travel considerations

These resources and services can be accessed by visiting www.internationalsos.com and logging in with member # 11BCAS658364 or calling 1-215-942-8478.