

INTERNATIONAL TRAVEL POLICIES FOR NORTH PARK UNIVERSITY PROGRAMS

At North Park University (NPU) we believe that engagement with people and ideas that are outside of one's comfort zone—especially on an international level—contributes to our intercultural identity and our vision of linking faith, learning, and service. International study and service opportunities also play a strong role in helping students envision a life of significance and service.

We further believe that we are charged with the overall well-being of our students, and we recognize that international travel involves risks which may be different and/or more substantial than those encountered on the home campus. NPU has, therefore, established a Travel Oversight Committee (TOC), whose responsibility it is to evaluate the benefits and risks of student, faculty, and staff travel experiences and make sound decisions on ensuring the safety of students and university personnel.

Members of the TOC include representatives of the following campus offices/units:

- Campus Safety, Director
- Center for World Christian Studies (NPTS), Director
- Dean of Students, AVP & Dean
- Finance and Administration, VP & Chief Financial Officer
- Global Partnerships, Director (or designee)
- Health Services, Director/University Nurse
- Human Resources, AVP
- International Affairs, Director (Committee Chair)
- International Affairs, Assistant Director
- Office of the Provost, Provost (or designee)
- Student Engagement, VP
- Title IX, Coordinator

If the above-named representative is unable to serve on the committee, they may nominate a replacement from their department and notify the Chair of the TOC. The TOC may also invite representatives from additional campus units as needed to provide guidance regarding specific travel experiences or areas of expertise.

The committee as a whole shares the dual goals of encouraging NPU students to have meaningful international engagement opportunities and ensuring, as much as possible, student safety while abroad.

The U.S. Department of State classifies countries around the world on a [four-point travel advisory scale](#):

- Level 1: Exercise Normal Precautions
- Level 2: Exercise Increased Caution
- Level 3: Reconsider Travel
- Level 4: Do Not Travel

In general, NPU incorporates the U.S. State Department information into its official Travel Policy in this way:

- Level 1: travel is permitted
- Level 2: travel is permitted
- Level 3: travel is generally not permitted, but students and employees may choose to petition the Travel Oversight Committee for approval to travel
- Level 4: travel is generally not permitted, but students and employees may choose to petition the Travel Oversight Committee for approval to travel

In addition to the State Department classification for permissible travel, the TOC has instituted the following international travel policies:

- I. North Park University does not operate, pay for, supervise, direct, award credit for, or otherwise support off-campus programs in countries where any of the following are in effect:
 - A. Individual contacts or partner organizations in the host country have indicated that visits would be unsafe, unproductive, or detrimental to the mission of the host organization at a particular time or by particular types of trip participants. Every consideration should be made that NPU engagement with our global network will be mutually beneficial to all parties involved.
 - B. The [U.S. Department of State](#) has issued a Travel Advisory Level 3 or 4.
 - C. The [U.S. Centers for Disease Control](#) has issued a Travel Health Notice Warning Level 3: Avoid all non-essential travel.
 - D. The [Department of the Treasury](#), Office of Foreign Assets Control has imposed Travel Restrictions.
- II. NPU faculty or staff member who would like to offer a University-sponsored program in a country or region where one or more of these warnings, alerts, advisories, or restrictions are in place may petition the Travel Oversight Committee for an exception to the travel policy by submitting the following information:

- A. A regular application for a short-term faculty-led program, Global Partnership Trip, or other off-campus travel. Please see the sponsoring campus office for application instructions.
- B. A [petition](#) that includes the following information:
 - 1. How many and what type (undergraduate, graduate, non-degree, alumni, guest, etc.) of participants do you expect to participate program?
 - 2. Is the opportunity intended as a one-time event or a continuing program?
 - 3. What are the compelling educational reasons for offering the experience in this specific location?
 - 4. What alternative sites were considered and why will they not meet educational needs?
 - 5. How does the structure of the program (including housing and transportation) mitigate the concerns of the travel warnings or health advisories?
 - 6. What other resources have you consulted as a means of establishing that student health and safety can be reasonably assured?
 - 7. Who from the host country will help facilitate your program (local missionaries, partner university, travel agency, etc.)? What perspective have these individuals provided about conditions in the host country?
- C. A Safety, Emergency, and Evacuation Plan (see petition link provided above) that addresses the following:
 - 1. How will NPU contact you and any on-site officials quickly in the event of an emergency?
 - 2. How will you ensure that students can contact you in the event of an emergency while in the host country?
 - 3. What is the contact information (address, 24 hour phone, and email) for the [U.S. embassy](#) nearest your program location?
 - 4. How will you transport students to the airport or another designated location away from the program site in the event of an emergency?
 - 5. If the students need to be evacuated to another location, where will this be, and what stand-by arrangements have been made so that the new site is prepared to accommodate the students?
 - 6. How will you arrange for the students to fly back to the U.S. if the program is canceled?
- D. A letter of support from the Academic Dean in the sponsoring department.

III. TOC Evaluation Process

- A. Petitions for an exception to the travel policy will be reviewed by NPU's Travel Oversight Committee (TOC). After the TOC has reviewed the information submitted in the petition form, the trip proposer may be invited to speak to the TOC in person. Exceptions to the policy are not guaranteed.
- B. Criteria for Evaluation:
 - 1. State Department Country Information & Travel Advisory Level
 - 2. Centers for Disease Control Country Information & Level
 - 3. U.S. Embassy operations in host country
 - 4. Host country's government guidelines & entry requirements
 - 5. Evangelical Covenant Church Program/Missionary Staff status, if present in proposed host-country
 - 6. Study Abroad Provider/Partner Program Status
 - 7. Confer with peer institutions (benchmarking)
- C. Policy Notes
 - 1. If an exception is granted, it will apply to a specific program only. An exception to the travel policy for one program does not apply to all programs in a given country or region.
 - 2. Any exceptions will be approved based on conditions at the time of approval. If a new travel warning or advisory is issued, or if conditions in the host country change, the proposal must be reconsidered. If the program is ongoing and the country remains under a travel warning or advisory, the program must be reapproved each time an individual or group of students plans to participate.
 - 3. All participants in programs that have been granted a travel exception will be required to sign a special program waiver, underscoring their understanding of the unique risks inherent in traveling against the advice of a governmental agency. A supplemental insurance plan, the cost of which will be built into program expenses, may also be required at the discretion of the TOC.
 - 4. No student will be required to participate in a program in a location subject to a travel warning or advisory.

IV. COVID-19 Addendum, updated September 2022.

- A. NPU-sponsored, credit-bearing international and domestic travel under the purview of the Office of International Affairs, will no longer require review by the Travel Oversight Committee for COVID-19 risks, *unless* except in cases of health and safety risks are heightened or create complex travel scenarios. Such cases will be identified by the Office of International Affairs and brought to the TOC for review.
- B. Entry Requirements: Traveler must be able to meet the criteria for entering the destination country. This may include but is not limited to obtaining a visa, proof of vaccination, proof of negative COVID test before and/or upon arrival, completing a quarantine period, etc.
- C. Required Forms: Traveler must sign the Liability Waiver, Immunization Waiver, enroll in the STEP program, and complete any other pre-departure paperwork required by NPU and their study abroad program.
- D. COVID-19 Vaccination Policy for International Travel: COVID-19 vaccines are strongly recommended but not required for all university-sponsored study abroad programs, unless required by country of destination. All participants will sign the immunization waiver.
- E. Change in Status: Decisions made by the TOC will stand, unless there is significant cause for concern for the health and safety of the traveler(s) due to conditions in the host country or region. If the State Department or CDC Levels change for the destination country, the TOC may ask traveler to present a petition or may deny program participation.
- F. Due to the ongoing and changing nature of the pandemic, the TOC reserves the right to cancel or deny travel to any traveler/program destination for additional rationale that may not be expressly listed here.

All policies contained in this document will be reviewed every three years at minimum, but may be reviewed or revised more frequently as circumstances dictate.

Updated: September 2022