

Office of Global Engagement (OGE) Policy on International Travel to Countries/Areas under Travel Warnings

POINTS OF CONTACT

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The OGE Risk Management Advisory Committee reviews Travel Authorization requests by sponsoring academic units, individual students, faculty, and staff seeking to participate in educational activities in countries/areas under travel warnings in order to provide recommendations to the Office of Global Engagement. These travel warnings include, but are not limited to, a U.S. Department of State Travel Advisory Level 3 and 4, a CDC Warning Level 3, or a CDC COVID-19 Warning Level 3 or 4. For further details of the U.S. Department of State Travel Advisories and CDC Warning Levels, please see pp. 7-9 of this document.

International Travel by University Faculty and Staff

UGA travelers to international destinations are required to register their travel itineraries for risk management and export control purposes when submitting their Travel Authorization Requests. A Travel Authorization must be submitted, even if a UGA account is not paying for the trip.

In all cases where travel is permitted to a country/area under either a U.S. Department of State Travel Advisory Level 3 and 4 or a CDC Warning Level 3 or CDC COVID-19 Warning Level 3 or 4, **a Travel Authorization and Travel Registration must be submitted prior to travel.** To allow processing of an international Travel Authorization, travelers, or their UGA designees, need to complete the short registration process online: studyaway.uga.edu/international-travel-authority.

Those traveling to countries that are under a U.S. Department of State Travel Advisory Level 1 and 2, but contain Level 3 or Level 4 areas, are subject to the same requirements those traveling to countries of Reconsider Travel (Level 3) or Do Not Travel (Level 4), if they intend to travel to those areas of heightened risk.

When USG or UGA restricts international travel on university business to “essential” travel only, travel is allowed only if the unit head or directors deems the faculty/staff travel as “essential” when approving their Travel Authorization.

International Travel by Undergraduate Students on University of Georgia Programs

In general, travel to countries under a U.S. Department of State Travel Advisory Level 3 or 4 or a Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Level 3 by Undergraduate Students on University of Georgia Programs is not allowed. However, in certain circumstances, the Office of Global Engagement may review Programs and allow travel as follows:

Travel to Areas with COVID-19 Warnings Only

Travel may be allowed in special circumstances where the country/area is currently under a U.S. Department of State Travel Advisory Level 3 or 4 **due only to COVID-19** or where a country/area is under a CDC COVID-19 Warning Level 3 or 4. In order for travel to be approved in these circumstances, the following procedures must be followed:

Undergraduate student travel as part of any UGA recommended or facilitated activity may only be approved after a mandatory review process and with the approval of the Associate Provost for Global Engagement, in consultation with the college dean or designee. This mandatory review process may include, but is not limited to, submission of documentation describing the risk mitigation plan to the Office of Global Engagement, consultation with the University's Preventative Measures Advisory Board, and a meeting with the Risk Management Advisory Committee.

For additional information, please see Recommended COVID-19 Related Risk Mitigation Strategies for Study Away Programs at this [link](#).

Travel When a CDC or State Department Warning Level is Elevated to a Level 3 or 4

In the event that the travel warning for an existing program is elevated to State Department Level 3 or 4 or a CDC Warning Level 3, either before departure or during the program, established study abroad programs will be reviewed according to national trends at peer and aspirational institutions and evaluations or assessments published by discipline-specific professional organizations. On the basis of these considerations, the Risk Management Committee will make a recommendation to the Associate Provost as to whether the program should proceed (if the program has not departed) or continue (if the program has departed) as planned. If the Committee makes recommendations for further mitigating risk prior to departure or during the remainder of the program which are approved by the Associate Provost, the Program Director must demonstrate that all recommendations have been implemented in full.

In the event of a program cancellation, undergraduate students who are present in their country of origin may remain in country rather than return to the United States. Undergraduate students making this decision shall submit a request to OGE (studyaway@uga.edu) in writing, verifying their intent to stay in country and their understanding of the risks and costs involved in their decision. Students returning to the U.S. will need to abide by campus requirements, as applicable, such as social distancing, quarantine, testing, etc.

Proposals for New Programs

Proposals for new UGA study abroad programs will be accepted for destinations under a U.S. Department of State Level 3 or Level 4 Travel Advisory or a CDC Warning Level 3 or CDC COVID-19 Warning Level 3 or 4. However, additional justification and mitigation plans will be required for new proposals for areas under these advisory levels.

International Travel by Undergraduate Students on Third-Party Programs, including Bilateral Exchanges

Travel to a country/area that is currently under either a U.S. Department of State Travel Advisory Level 3 or 4 for COVID-19 only or CDC COVID-19 Warning Level 3 or 4 by undergraduate students on third-party programs, including Bilateral Exchanges, may only be approved after a completion of the mandatory review process described below.

Bilateral Exchanges

Outgoing bilateral exchange students wishing to proceed with their international study plans at a Level 3 or 4 destination will need to (a) consult with their host institution to determine if the program will continue and (b) petition OGE for a permission to travel. Such a petition must include a letter of support signed by both a UGA undergraduate coordinator or advisor in the student's major and the Head or Director of the sponsoring academic unit. The letter of support must include the following information: (1) Language specifying that the student's travel is deemed essential by the supporting department; (2) Specific information about the purpose of the travel, e.g., access to unique study materials, courses for graduation, experiential learning requirement, etc.; (3) Approval of the student's Risk Mitigation Plan; (4) Language that the department will assist the student with their academic planning if their study abroad experience is disrupted during the course of the UGA semester; and (5) A statement that evacuation is covered by student's insurance.

In addition to the letter of support, outgoing bilateral exchange students wishing to petition must review, complete, and sign the following documents in the StudyAway Portal: (1) Study Away UGA Exchange - COVID-19 International Travel Petition Questionnaire, (2) UGA Bilateral Exchange COVID-19 International Travel, Academic, and Financial Risk Acknowledgement, (3) UGA Bilateral Exchange COVID-19 Waiver, and (4) COVID-19 Information.

If a destination is elevated to Level 3 or 4 during the program, the student will need to consult with their program operator or host institution to determine if the program will continue.

In the event of a program cancellation, undergraduate students who are present in their country of origin may remain in country rather than return to the United States. Undergraduate students making this decision must contact OGE (studyaway@uga.edu) in writing, verifying their intent to stay in-country and their understanding of the risks and costs involved in their decision.

Third-Party Provider Programs

Students participating in a third-party provider program are required to sign a waiver in the StudyAway Portal acknowledging the risks of program participation and may participate if their provider is operating the program.

International Travel by Graduate Students

Graduate Student Travel to Countries/Areas Under a U.S. Department of State Travel Advisory Level 3 and 4 and/or a CDC Warning Level 3 or CDC COVID-19 Warning Level 3 or 4

Please check that the country/area to which you wish to travel is currently under a U.S. Department of State Travel Advisory Level 3 and 4 or a CDC Warning Level 3 or CDC COVID-19 Warning Level 3 or 4:

<https://travel.state.gov/traveladvisories>

<https://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/notices>

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/travelers/map-and-travel-notices.html>

In general, graduate students are discouraged from traveling to countries/areas that are currently under either a U.S. Department of State Travel Advisory Level 3 and 4, a CDC Warning Level 3, or CDC COVID-19 Warning Level 3 or 4. The risk of injury, detention, and death is significantly greater for many areas within these Travel Advisory Levels 3 and 4 countries/areas, and UGA is not in a position to fully assess those risks or provide services in the event of emergency.

OGE recognizes that there can be compelling reasons to conduct research sanctioned by a Department and School or College, even when there is an elevated threat of risk for that location. Therefore, if a graduate student wishes to travel, the academic activity must have the support of a major professor and the department head or program director in the graduate student's major or in the unit sponsoring the student's travel. The petition to travel must follow the procedure described below. The burden will be on the graduate student, in conjunction with the supporting faculty member and the unit Head or Director, to identify all relevant risks and demonstrate that they will be appropriately managed.

Graduate students who are traveling to countries/areas under a U.S. Department of State Travel Advisory Level 1 and 2, but contain areas of Reconsider Travel (Level 3) or Do Not Travel (Level 4), are subject to the same petition requirements as below if they intend to travel to those areas of heightened risk.

To secure OGE approval, the petition to travel must be submitted at **least 4 weeks prior to the date of travel**. The petition must be submitted as follows:

1. Submit a Travel Registration in the StudyAway Portal: <http://studyaway.uga.edu/student-travel-registration/grad.html>.
2. Submit a detailed Risk Mitigation Plan in the Portal, as approved by the unit Head or Director (a link will be provided upon submission of the initial Travel Registration). Each Risk Mitigation Plan must include a section detailing the Graduate Student's plan to return to the United States in the event that a global prohibition on travel or similar event occurs. Samples of previously approved Risk Mitigation Plans can be found at the following links:
 - o [Example1](#)
 - o [Example2](#)
3. Provide a letter of support signed by both the major professor and the Head or Director of the sponsoring academic unit. The letter of support must include the following information: (1) A

statement that the Department will be responsible for covering the cost of any evacuation or that this is covered by insurance; (2) Information about the student's familiarity with the area, e.g., proficiency in the language, previous visits to the affected area, traveling alone versus traveling as part of an organized group; (3) Specific information about the purpose of the travel, for example: access to unique study materials, e.g. to study a species or geological formation that only exists in one place; or access to specialized or unique research facilities, e.g., a specialized archive or research institute; (4) If applicable, a statement to the effect that the intended travel is not to the area affected by the Travel Advisory Level 3 and 4; (5) A statement that travel is essential, and (6) Approval of the student's Risk Mitigation Plan by the department/college.

4. Purchase USG/UGA insurance for the duration of the travel and upload proof of coverage in the Portal.
5. Attend a Travel Consultation at the UGA Health Center Travel Clinic or similar and upload proof of attendance in the Portal. See: <https://www.uhs.uga.edu/services/travel-clinic>.
6. Enroll into the Smart Traveler Enrollment Program (STEP) via the U.S. Department of State: <https://step.state.gov/>.

Receiving OGE approval is the first step in the approval process for graduate student travel to countries/areas under a U.S. Department of State Travel Advisory Level 3 and 4, CDC Warning Level 3, or CDC COVID-19 Warning Level 3 or 4. It is recommended that only after receiving OGE approval graduate students should apply for internal (e.g., Graduate School, LACSI, OVPR) or external (e.g., Boren) travel funds. In all cases, students must have OGE approval of international travel **before accepting funding for their travel. Note that *even if a UGA account is not paying for the trip, a Travel Authorization and a petition to travel must still be submitted.***

Previous approvals for travel will be rescinded in the event that conditions change prior to departure. In that event, a petition must be submitted and approved before travel may take place.

If conditions change during the travel period, the student must confer immediately with the Graduate School and the student's major professor to determine if travel may continue. Graduate students who are present in their country of origin may remain in-country rather than return to the United States. Graduate students making this decision shall submit a request to OGE and the Graduate School in writing, verifying their intent to stay in country and their understanding of the risks and costs involved in their decision.

For more information, please visit [Health & Safety section](#) of the StudyAway Portal: https://studyaway.uga.edu/index.cfm?FuseAction=Abroad.ViewLink&Parent_ID=0&Link_ID=91E33733-5056-BA1F-740E63BC0ABD9959.

CHECKLIST FOR GRADUATE STUDENTS

- Seek the support of a tenured or tenure-track UGA faculty member in your major (or a major professor and unit Head in the case of a graduate student) and discuss travel plans
- Submit Travel Registration
- Develop Risk Mitigation Plan and submit to faculty member & unit Head/Director
- Obtain letter of support

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After OGE conditional approval has been granted:

- Purchase and provide proof of insurance
- Attend Travel Clinic and provide proof of attendance
- Enroll in STEP

After OGE final approval has been granted:

- If applicable, apply for funding

CHECKLIST FOR FACULTY AND UNIT HEADS AND DIRECTORS

- Discuss graduate student's plans and project
- Review Risk Mitigation Plan
- Write letter of support

International Travel for Faculty, Postdocs, and Non-Graduate Student Staff

Faculty, postdocs, and non-graduate student staff will be prompted to read and acknowledge the following statement in the Travel Registry upon receipt of a Travel Authorization (TA) for countries/areas under a U.S. Department of State Travel Advisory Level 3 and 4, CDC Warning Level 3, or CDC COVID-19 Warning Level 3 or 4:

For Faculty, postdocs, and non-graduate student staff

Acknowledgment of Travel Risk

[Please click here](#) to check if your destination is currently under a U.S. Department of State Travel Advisory Level 3 and 4. [Please click here](#) to check if your destination is currently under a CDC Warning Level 3. [Please click here](#) to check if your destination is currently under a CDC COVID-19 Warning Level 3 or 4.

If your destination is under a Travel Advisory Level 3 and 4, there is a significant risk of travel to this country/area at this time. While OGE is not authorized to restrict or otherwise prohibit faculty travel, we recommend against travel to countries/areas under U.S. Department of State Travel Advisory Level 3 and 4s, CDC Warning Level 3, and CDC COVID-19 Warning Level 3 or 4. Travel to such countries/areas poses a significant risk to your safety and wellbeing. In the past, individuals traveling to countries/areas under U.S. Department of State Travel Advisory Level 3 and 4 have been injured, detained, and in some cases killed. Because of this risk, please be advised that any travel to such destinations must be at your own risk and volition, that the University in no way requires this travel, and that the University may not be in a position to assist you in the event of emergency.

Please check the box to acknowledge that you understand the risks associated with travel to countries/areas under a U.S. Department of State Travel Advisory Level 3 and 4 and that travel is not recommended.

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Please check the box to acknowledge that you understand the risks associated with travel to countries/areas under a CDC Warning Level 3 or a CDC COVID-19 Warning Level 3 or 4.

Although you may be a frequent traveler to this destination, we recommend you do the following:

- Leave your daily itinerary (location, hotel information, modes of transportation) with your office staff.
- [Register your trip](#) with the U.S. Department of State.
- Contact Daniel Runge, the UGA Export Compliance Officer, if the Travel Advisory Level 3 and 4 country also has a travel restriction: <https://research.uga.edu/export-control/>.

Personal Travel

OGE has no involvement in the registration, approval, or denial of personal travel to any international destination. Travel for personal reasons is exclusively at the discretion of the traveler.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF STATE TRAVEL ADVISORIES

The U.S. Department of State issues a Travel Advisory for each country of the world. Travel Advisories apply up to four levels, describe the risks associated with travel, and provide recommended actions that U.S. citizens should take to ensure their safety. Travel Advisory Levels are defined as follows:

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.

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.

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.

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.

Varying Levels Within Countries

The Department of State issues an overall Travel Advisory level for a country, but levels of advice may vary for specific locations or areas within a country. For instance, the Department of State may advise U.S. citizens to “Exercise Increased Caution” (Level 2)

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in a country, but to “Reconsider Travel” (Level 3) to a particular area within the country.

Risk Indicators

Travel Advisories at Levels 2-4 contain reasons for the level assigned, using established risk indicators and specific advice to U.S. citizens who choose to travel there. These are:

- **C – Crime:** Widespread violent or organized crime is present in areas of the country. Local law enforcement may have limited ability to respond to serious crimes.
- **T – Terrorism:** Terrorist attacks have occurred and/or specific threats against civilians, groups, or other targets may exist.
- **U – Civil Unrest:** Political, economic, religious, and/or ethnic instability exists and may cause violence, major disruptions, and/or safety risks.
- **H – Health:** Health risks, including current disease outbreaks or a crisis that disrupts a country’s medical infrastructure, are present. The issuance of a Centers for Disease Control Travel Notice may also be a factor.
- **N - Natural Disaster:** A natural disaster, or its aftermath, poses danger.
- **E - Time-limited Event:** Short-term event, such as elections, sporting events, or other incidents that may pose safety risks.
- **O – Other:** There are potential risks not covered by previous risk indicators. Read the country’s Travel Advisory for details.
- **K – Kidnapping or Hostage Taking:** Criminal or terrorist individuals or groups have threatened to and/or have seized or detained and threatened to kill, injure or continue to detain individuals in order to compel a third party (including a governmental organization) to do or abstain from doing something as a condition of release.

The State Department Travel also provides COVID-19 information for specific countries which may be viewed at the following link:

<https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/traveladvisories/COVID-19-Country-Specific-Information.html>

CENTERS FOR DISEASE CONTROL AND PREVENTION WARNING LEVELS

The CDC Warning Levels are defined as follows:

Warning Level 3 (Red): Avoid all non-essential travel to this destination. The outbreak is of high risk to travelers and no precautions are available to protect against the identified increased risk.

Alert Level 2 (Yellow): Practice enhanced precautions for this destination. The Travel Health Notice describes additional precautions added, or defines a specific at-risk population.

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Watch Level 1 (Green): Practice usual precautions for this destination, as described in the Travel Health Notice and/or on the [destination page](#). This includes being up-to-date on all recommended vaccines and practicing appropriate mosquito avoidance.

Current list of Warnings: <https://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/notices>

In addition to the standard travel notices, the CDC also provides travel notices specific to COVID-19 travel risks:

<https://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/noticescovid19>