



## Global Travel Policy

### No. 1070

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**Affected Parties:**  
Undergraduate  
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Other

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### 1.0 Purpose

Virginia Tech is committed to fostering a community that values all cultures, languages, lands, and people. We seek to enrich our global competence and to enhance the quality of life throughout the world with scholarly engagement in education, research, and outreach. Our faculty, students, staff, and alumni have a responsibility for engagement with the Commonwealth, the nation, and the world. That engagement is reflected in who we are, who we aspire to be, and our impact on the global community.

The university's commitment to responsible global engagement informs its Global Travel Policy (GTP), which is designed to promote the health, safety and security of members of the university community (employees and students) traveling outside of the United States of America for university-supported purposes, including but not limited to: study, research, internships, service, conferences, presentations, teaching, performances, competitions, field work, recruiting, etc. This policy applies to any university-supported travel (see Section 4. Definitions) and to students, employees, and other approved participants (hereafter referred to as "group members"). In addition, a portion of Section 3.3 applies to visitors. The university's schools, colleges, or business units may have additional policies and procedures that support this overall policy.

### 2.0 Policy

The Global Travel Policy comprises the following university resources and requirements:

1. The Global Travel Registry;
2. Global Travel Emergency Medical and Assistance Services Insurance;
3. Global Travel Elevated Advisories, Notices and Restrictions; and
4. Additional Requirements for Student Global Travel.

Violation of this university policy may result in disciplinary proceedings in accordance with the Faculty Handbook, ([http://www.provost.vt.edu/faculty\\_affairs/faculty\\_handbook.html](http://www.provost.vt.edu/faculty_affairs/faculty_handbook.html)), Staff Handbook (<https://www.hr.vt.edu/resources/current-employees/policies-handbooks.html>), or University Policies for Student Life (<https://www.hokiehandbook.vt.edu/policies/student-life.html>).

Further, international travel is also subject to applicable sections of Policy 13045: Export and Sanctions Compliance Policy, (<http://www.policies.vt.edu/13045.pdf>).



## 3.0 Procedures

### 3.1 Global Travel Registry

The Global Travel Registry is restricted-access spreadsheet/database for maintaining key travel information for employees, and students traveling outside the United States of America for university-supported purposes. The Global Travel Registry is the official and authoritative source of traveler information that forms the basis for the university's emergency response protocols and communication strategy (e.g., elevated advisories, alerts, warnings, evacuation notices) when responding to an emergency or critical incident abroad. The Global Travel Registry is managed by the Global Education Office (GEO). The Global Education Office reports directly to the Associate Vice President for International Affairs.

All employees and students traveling outside the United States of America for university-supported purposes must follow GEO procedures to register their travel in the Global Travel Registry before their expected departure date and should provide updates as additional information becomes available or changes occur during the trip, including cancellations and travel to additional countries.

### 3.2 Global Travel Emergency Medical and Assistance Services Insurance

All group members participating in university-supported global education experiences (for credit or not for credit) are required to carry international emergency medical and assistance services insurance administered through the Office of Risk Management and Insurance. To meet this requirement, the university has contracted with an insurance provider to provide emergency medical and assistance services insurance that covers claims for health/accident, emergency security evacuation, repatriation of remains, among others. The university insurance policy does not cover personal travel; individuals are strongly encouraged to purchase insurance against trip cancellation, trip interruption, and loss of personal property.

All members of university-supported student groups are required to purchase the designated international emergency medical and assistance services insurance policy from the university-approved vendor regardless of any alternative coverage they might have. This allows the university to respond to the needs of an entire group uniformly in the event of an evacuation or other crisis.

Students traveling on any other type of university-supported (for credit or not for credit) or non-university-supported (for credit) global education activity are also required to purchase the designated international emergency medical and assistance services insurance policy from the university-approved vendor, or obtain a waiver through the GEO by declining the Virginia Tech policy and accepting their host's policy.

Registered Student Organizations (RSOs) or student groups with a special interest are not university-supported and therefore are not eligible for the coverage mentioned above. RSOs are strongly encouraged to obtain coverage independently for all participants on each trip.

University group members traveling internationally on university-supported business not related to global education are required to purchase international emergency medical and assistance services insurance through the university-approved vendor. Participants and leaders of alumni trips should refer to guidelines established by the Alumni Relations office.



## 3.3 Global Travel Elevated Advisories, Notices and Restrictions

### 3.3.1 Global Travel Oversight Committee (GTOC)

The Global Travel Oversight Committee (GTOC) is a committee of faculty and administrative personnel from key units across the university, appointed by the Vice President for Outreach and International Affairs, which meets as necessary to consider proposals for travel to countries with an elevated, persistent or transient health, safety, or security concern. The GTOC membership includes representatives from OIA, GEO, Insurance and Risk Management, Office of Emergency Management, Legal Counsel, University Police, Student Affairs, the Provost's office, VT Engage, the Office of Export and Secure Research Compliance, and academic departments. In cases of global emergency or crisis, the GTOC is responsible for making recommendations to the President, who will make the final decision on the university's course of action; however, the President retains the authority to act prior to receiving a recommendation from the GTOC. GTOC, in coordination with the GEO, is responsible for coordinating global emergency and crisis responses using the information available in the Global Travel Registry.

### 3.3.2 U.S. Department of State Elevated Travel Advisories

Owing to concerns for the safety, security and well-being of our group members, Virginia Tech does not support student participation in university-supported global education activities in locations where an U.S. Department of State Travel Advisory Level 4 (Do not travel) has been issued, or to any region within a country with an elevated, persistent or transient health, safety, or security issue (U.S. Department of State Travel Advisory Level 4 or 3 (Reconsider travel), or other unique safety concerns to Virginia Tech). Students will not receive university sponsorship — including credit for academic programs, financial aid and scholarships, funding for research, or endorsement of co-curricular and extracurricular activities — if traveling to these countries without approval. All travel advisories are updated regularly and can be accessed at the U.S. Department of State website (<https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/traveladvisories/traveladvisories.html>).

Exceptions to the restrictions in this section will be considered by petition to the GTOC. A GTOC review will occur when student travel is proposed to (1) any country with a Travel Advisory Level 4; or (2) at the discretion of the GEO, any country with an elevated, persistent or transient health, safety, security issue that is present in the region where travel will occur. Approval by GTOC will only be granted following a full review of the proposed international program, a detailed assessment of student/faculty risk based on the program proposal and destination country, and a finding of compelling reasons to permit the proposed program to operate. A GTOC review may be requested by the GEO, the sponsoring department/organization, or an individual traveler participating in the program. Additional lead time will be necessary to facilitate the GTOC review and approval process. Information on the petition process is available through the GEO.

The university reserves the right to withdraw its approval at any time, should the conditions presented in an application for approval change materially. The GTOC is also responsible for recommending whether to suspend an ongoing or previously approved program if significant health, safety, or security concerns are raised at any time.

All students interested in pursuing university-supported global education activities in a restricted location as defined above are required to contact a GEO staff member prior to beginning the petition process.



### **3.3.3 Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Travel Notices**

Group members on university-supported activities are prohibited from traveling to or from countries where the CDC has issued a Warning Level 3 travel notice. This applies across the board to all aspects of university programming whether it be educational, research, or outreach. Under extraordinary circumstances, exceptions for essential travel may be considered by the GTOC.

Further, university departments that anticipate receiving anyone (students, guests, or visiting scholars) from a country for which the CDC has issued a Warning Level 3 travel notice must inform the Office of the Vice President for Outreach and International Affairs in writing no less than 30 days prior to arrival.

For further guidance regarding this policy provision, contact the Office of the Vice President for Outreach and International Affairs.

### **3.4 Additional Requirements for Student Global Travel**

Virginia Tech students may engage in a variety of educational experiences abroad, either for credit or not for credit. Such experiences include but are not limited to: classroom study, research, cultural exchange, intern- or externships and service learning, as well as participation in less formal activities, such as international conferences, symposia, competitions, and the like. These experiences may or may not be supported by the university, a distinction which determines their level of university coverage and involvement.

#### **A. University-Supported:**

University-supported international programs for Virginia Tech students include programs abroad designed for student groups and programs designed for individual students (which might include faculty-directed programs, such as summer graduate and undergraduate research experiences or internships, and programs governed by a student exchange agreement or a contract between Virginia Tech and a foreign university or third-party provider; these may or may not be undertaken for credit). In addition, all credit-bearing university-supported global education programming must have final approval by the Global Education Approval Committee (GEAC), an approval body appointed by the Vice President for International Affairs (or designee), which shall comprise at least 5 faculty members representing multiple colleges, the Director and/or Associate Director of Global Education, and the Associate Vice President for International Affairs; the committee will consult with other appropriate administrative entities as needed; representatives of the University Controller's Office, the Office of the University Bursar, the Office of University Scholarships and Financial Aid, and the Registrar's Office, may also be included on the committee. The GEAC will review proposed and existing programs with the purpose of ensuring that Virginia Tech delivers study abroad opportunities that meet the legitimate academic needs of its students, faculty and staff, and that all programming abroad maintains standards of quality in the delivery of instruction, support services, and administration consistent with university standards in these areas and compliant with university policy and state and federal law.

Students who participate in education abroad programs (who plan to transfer academic credit back to Virginia Tech) are responsible for complying with the current application procedures established by the GEO. Students who fail to comply may face the following: (1) have a hold placed on their student records, (2) exclusion from the program and loss of non-refundable deposits and payments, and (3) loss of access to Virginia Tech financial aid for the semester or term abroad.



## Student Group Travel—Responsibilities of Program Organizers and Participants

Organizers of and participants in university-supported global travel (for credit or not for credit) designed for student group participation (with group defined as more than one student) are subject to the following requirements:

1. Virginia Tech employees organizing or leading individual students or groups of students overseas on non-credit and credit-bearing university-supported global educational experiences must have their program proposal reviewed and approved in advance by the dean or designated administrator of the academic or business unit in which the program is based. Credit-bearing programs will also be reviewed by the GEAC, according to the established procedures. Established programs will be renewed annually. Programs must be submitted for approval by the following deadlines:
  - a. Summer and fall programs: October 15 prior to the program start date
  - b. Winter and spring programs: March 15 prior to the program start date

Exceptions to these deadlines may be considered on a case-by-case basis; requests for exceptions should be submitted to the GEAC no later than two weeks prior to deadline.

2. Program reviews should be completed periodically according to GEAC guidelines.
3. Program organizers are responsible for following this Global Travel Policy, which incorporates pertinent university policies and guidance for global travel, and for following GEO procedures for gathering and submitting pertinent information.
4. Program organizers are responsible for ensuring that all group members have obtained international emergency medical and assistance services insurance through the university's authorized vendor.
5. Additionally, group members must adhere to university guidelines for managing health, safety, and security abroad as outlined by the GEO.
6. Student participants are responsible for paying the appropriate tuition and all relative fees, as appropriate (e.g., VT fees, program fee, GEO administrative fees, etc.)
7. Program organizers may not allow any individuals other than approved group members to accompany the program.
8. For groups of 15 or fewer students, faculty leaders must have an established plan to respond to situations preventing a student from continuing on the program's planned itinerary with the rest of the group (for reasons of injury, hospitalization, lost passport, etc.) while at the same time providing for supervision of the rest of the group as they proceed with the program. These students must be accompanied by the faculty leader or his/her pre-approved designee until able to rejoin the group or return home. For groups of more than 15 students, a second designated individual must be available at all times to assist on such circumstances; this individual can also be assigned additional duties to support the faculty leader and may be drawn from faculty, staff, on-site personnel, graduate students, or spouses serving on a paid or volunteer basis. For groups of more than 30 students, a third designated individual is required, more than 45 requires a fourth, and so on in increments of 15. Individuals



serving the program must do so by contractual agreement and be approved by department leadership and the GEO. Their duties must be clearly defined and they must be appropriately trained.

9. Group leadership is required to have a working means of communication (e.g., cell phones) through which they can be contacted at all times in case of an emergency. International cell phone service for each member of a group is not mandatory, but highly recommended. Faculty leaders will have an established communications plan that explains the protocol and expectations of all group members during individual free time and in the case of an emergency. Faculty leaders must establish respective responsibilities for emergency response for all group members and communicate these clearly. It is important that faculty leaders be aware of and regularly monitor the primary means by which the GEO will maintain contact with them (currently email).
10. While the group is abroad, should an emergency or incident (e.g., terrorist activity, a natural disaster, a public health alert, etc.) occur that could potentially jeopardize the continued safe conduct of the program or well-being of the group members, or both, all travelers are responsible for contacting their program directors and their listed emergency contacts to confirm their safety.
11. In order to be eligible to lead student programs abroad, individuals must attend the GEO Faculty Leader Training once every two years, at a minimum.
12. Program organizers must provide a comprehensive pre-departure orientation to all group members before departing the US and another, more targeted, orientation within two days of arriving on site. All group members must attend.

### **Individual Student Travel—Responsibilities of Participants**

Students participating individually (i.e., not as a member of a VT group) on any program abroad affiliated with the university (i.e., governed by a student exchange agreement, MOU, or contract provider) or participating in any non-university-supported program with the intent to transfer credit back to their Virginia Tech degree must:

1. Follow the established procedures to have their program reviewed and approved in advance by the GEO by the following deadlines:
  - a. Summer and fall programs: March 31 before the program start date
  - b. Winter and spring programs: October 15 before the program start date
2. Purchase international emergency medical and assistance services insurance through the university's authorized vendor, or obtain a waiver by declining the Virginia Tech policy and accepting their host's policy. This waiver may be granted in two instances:
  - a. for students returning to their home country, as determined by nationality or permanent residency, and who already have established insurance within their home country;
  - b. for students who are obligated to purchase similar insurance for participation on a third-party program and who complete the required GEO waiver form.



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3. Follow this Global Travel Policy, which incorporates applicable university policies and guidance for global travel, and the procedures communicated by the GEO.
4. Comply with university guidelines for managing health, safety and security abroad as outlined/directed by the GEO.
5. For credit-bearing programs, pay the appropriate tuition and comprehensive fees (if relevant), program fee and GEO administrative fees.
6. Attend the required pre-departure orientation offered by the GEO.

Note that credit-bearing global education programs supported by the university must be graded courses (A-F or P/F). All such programs must be taken for credit. Students enrolled in degree programs at other universities may participate in any of Virginia Tech's global education programs, as long as they gain admission to Virginia Tech as non-degree-seeking students and meet all the criteria for admission to the program. Non-students who wish to participate in global education programs designed for student participation must do the same.

### **B. Non-University-Supported Student Global Travel**

Virginia Tech students or groups of students with special interests or needs (including Registered Student Organizations, which have no direct relationship with the university) can opt to participate in a non-university-supported global education program, either through another university or a third-party provider; however, the university can guarantee neither these programs' quality nor their safety.

Virginia Tech students, or groups of students, participating in a global education program that is neither university-supported nor credit-bearing may do so independently. During their absence, students will not receive any university support or coverage. Virginia Tech encourages independent travelers to obtain international emergency medical and assistance services insurance as well as trip cancellation and personal property insurance. U.S. citizens are advised to register their trip with the U.S. Department of State prior to departure.

Virginia Tech students participating in a non-university-supported global education program who intend to transfer academic credit back to Virginia Tech must declare that intention and seek approval of transfer credit prior to the program. As such, they are considered to be on a university-supported program and are subject to the same requirements pertaining to that status (see above). Such students must meet all of the host institution's normal admissions requirements, including language proficiency, if relevant; are responsible for all aspects of their academic and residential life, just as they are here at Virginia Tech; and pay tuition and all fees directly to the host university. They are responsible for paying Virginia Tech the appropriate GEO administrative fees. Students must take particular care to ensure that credits will transfer properly, so they are encouraged to work closely with their academic advisor, the department or college transfer credit advisor (if there is one), and the Registrar during their application and course selection process.



## 4.0 Definitions

**University-supported:** international activities supported by the university must adhere to the Global Travel Policy. Such activities include, but are not limited to:

- travel with an approved program through the GEO,
- travel created, managed, organized, and/or supported through a Virginia Tech college or department (academic or other), including programs that involve an application process and participant selection,
- travel that expends university funds, to include grants, Foundation funds, scholarships, informal financial awards and/or financial aid,
- travel as a representative of Virginia Tech in any capacity (credit or non-credit),
- travel that is necessary to achieve a degree requirement,
- travel that fulfills Virginia Tech contractual agreements,
- travel for academic credit (direct or to be transferred),
- travel for research, practica, internships/externships, field work, or conferences that contribute to an individual's Virginia Tech degree or his/her professional activities
- travel for service learning organized by Virginia Tech,
- travel under the aegis of Virginia Tech for performances, humanitarian efforts, competitions (athletic, arts, etc.), teaching and instruction,
- travel to a Virginia Tech center abroad,
- travel by University Chartered Student Organizations (UCSO) and University Student Life Programs (USLP),
- travel for research leave abroad. Faculty (and dependents) on research leave abroad not related to Virginia Tech (NOT using Virginia Tech funds, NOT representing Virginia Tech, etc.) have the option to enroll in the international emergency medical and assistance services insurance.

The following activities are **NOT** university-supported:

- RSO travel,
- personal travel,
- travel funded by an outside entity, during which the traveler will not be representing Virginia Tech in any capacity,
- student travel to destinations with an elevated U.S. Department of State Travel Advisory as defined in Paragraph 3.3 (unless permission granted by the GTOC),
- employee or student travel to destinations with a Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Warning Level 3 (unless waived),
- group travel with undergraduate students that has not been vetted by the home college/department, and approved by the GTOC, if required,
- following the issuance of an evacuation order by the university, travel by a university employee or student to or in the pertinent geographic area, against the university's instructions.

**Group Member:** enrolled or registered participant, program employee (paid and unpaid faculty, staff or documented/approved volunteer), and authorized guest and dependent. Faculty leaders are responsible for monitoring appropriate group constitution; group membership may be subject to review by the GTOC.





**Global Travel Oversight Committee (GTOC):** a committee of university faculty and administrators tasked to evaluate and approve proposals for travel to countries with elevated medical and security concerns, or proposals containing activities that cause concern. The GTOC membership includes representatives from OIA, GEO, Insurance and Risk Management, Office of Emergency Management, Legal Counsel, University Police, Student Affairs, the Provost's office, VT Engage, the Office of Export and Secure Research Compliance, and academic departments.

**Global Education Approval Committee (GEAC):**

The GEAC is an approval body appointed by the Vice President of Outreach and International Affairs (or designee), which shall comprise at least 5 faculty members representing multiple colleges, the Director and/or Associate Director of Global Education, and the Associate Vice President for International Affairs; the committee will consult with appropriate other administrative entities as needed; representatives of the University Controller's Office, the Office of the University Bursar, the Office of University Scholarships and Financial Aid, and the Registrar's Office, may also be included on the committee. The GEAC will review proposed and existing programs with the purpose of ensuring that Virginia Tech delivers study abroad opportunities that meet the legitimate academic needs of its students, faculty and staff and that all programming abroad maintains standards of quality in the delivery of instruction, support services, and administration consistent with university standards in these areas and compliant with university policy and state and federal law. To that end, the GEAC will assess a broad range of questions relative to VT programs abroad, bilateral exchange agreements, and third-party affiliations, including: academic alignment with the VT curriculum; added value of program site; health, safety, and security; recruitment, participant selection, admission, orientation, participation, and re-entry programming; financial management; responsibilities of faculty and staff; institutional responsibilities; geographic representation; institutional liability; and host country considerations.

**Global Travel:** travel outside the 50 United States.

**Student:** undergraduate, graduate and professional student enrolled at Virginia Tech.

**University Student Life Program (USLP):** an organization composed primarily or exclusively of students whose activities, operations, and decision-making processes are directly governed by academic or administrative departments and for which the university is ultimately responsible.

**University Chartered Student Organization (UCSO):** an organization composed primarily of students but which, by constitutional design, has a specifically established direct relationship to the university. This relationship includes, but is not limited to, policy review, special programs, governance, and paid faculty/staff advisors/coaches.

**Registered Student Organization (RSO):** a voluntary association of Virginia Tech students that has NO direct relationship to the university but upon completion of registration documents is entitled to certain privileges to include operating, meeting, advertising, and participating in activities on the Virginia Tech campus.

## 5.0 References

University Policy 13045: Export and Sanctions Compliance Policy  
<http://www.policies.vt.edu/13045.pdf>



## 6.0 Approval and Revisions

Approved by the University Safety & Security Policy Committee, September 18,

2014. Approved September 18, 2014 by University President, Timothy D. Sands.

- Revision 1

Revised November 4, 2014, to incorporate into Section 3.3.2 the provisions of Presidential Policy Memorandum No. 288 regarding travel to countries for which the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has issued travel warnings.

Approved November 4, 2014 by University President, Timothy D. Sands.

- Revision 2

Added language in Section 3.3.1 to clarify the respective roles of the Global Travel Oversight Committee (GTOC) and the President of the university in cases of global emergency or crisis.

Approved by the University Safety & Security Policy Committee, April 13,

2016. Approved April 13, 2016 by University President, Timothy D. Sands.

- Revision 3

Identifies the roles of two new committees: Global Travel Oversight Committee (GTOC) and Global Education Approval Committee (GEAC).

Establishes requirement that all students, faculty, and staff must enroll in a single-vendor sourced insurance program to provide medical/security coverage while abroad on university-supported business/programs.

Establishes deadlines for program

submission/review. Clarifies definitions.

Removes reference to specific programs (i.e. CISI & Studio Abroad).

Addresses position on support of RSOs, maintaining distance from programs and activities which cannot vouchsafed.

Requires Faculty Leader to train for university-supported faculty-led student group programs (once every 2 years), as well as to provide a pre-departure and an on-site orientation, in keeping with best practices.



Requires Faculty Leader to

- have developed emergency response plans
- have a strategy in place to ensure that no student is ever left behind
- ensure that groups with >15 students must have second leader to assist at all times
- have working means of communication
- have the ability to contact students during free time & emergencies

Approved by the University Safety & Security Policy Committee, May 24,

2016. Approved May 24, 2016 by University President, Timothy D. Sands.

- Revision 4

Removes references to U.S. Department of State Travel Warning/Alerts, replaces with their new Travel Advisory Levels 4-1 terminology; defines what travel requests require the approval of GTOC.

Changes some paragraph titles to reflect changes made within the U.S. Department of State and to reflect the CDC travel notice terminology.

Removes references to BOV resolutions and Presidential Policy Memorandum as the policy interprets and explains these documents.

Replaces references to (1) faculty, staff, students, guests, volunteers, etc. on university-supported trips abroad with the term “group members,” as defined in the policy

Replaces term “global travel and emergency assistance insurance” with “international emergency medical and assistance services insurance.”

Identifies the number of additional responsible adults required for groups larger than 30 students (one additional for every additional 15 students).

Adds research leave as NOT university-supported travel abroad.

Adds definition of “students” as including undergraduate, graduate and professional students.

Deletes all the website links in 5. References, with the exception of the reference to Policy 13045.

Approved by the University Safety & Security Policy Committee, March 13, 2018.

Approved March 13, 2018 by University President, Timothy D. Sands.