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## HIGH RISK TRAVEL TO RESTRICTED REGIONS

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**Scope:** Louisiana State University

**Effective:** July 14, 2011

**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 Warnings 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 Warnings to be reviewed and approved by the university's International Travel Oversight Committee (ITOC). The Vice Provost for Academic Affairs leads the committee which includes representatives from across campus, including 2 faculty members recommended by the Faculty Senate President, 2 staff members recommended by Staff Senate President, and administrators who are specialists in international travel and risk management recommended by the Vice Chancellor for Finance and Administrative Services & CFO.

### 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 as faculty or staff members, 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

The University International Travel Oversight Committee (ITOC) will maintain a Restricted Regions list indicating locations worldwide where ITOC approval is required for student, faculty and staff travel. **No student, faculty or staff can be required to travel to a location on the Restricted Regions list.** This list will include, but is not limited to, all countries with a current Travel Warnings issued by the U.S. Department of State. According to the U.S. Department of State, Travel Warnings describe long-term, protracted conditions that make a country dangerous or unstable. Travel Warnings also are issued when the US Government's ability to assist American citizens is constrained due to the closure of an embassy or consulate or because of a drawdown of its staff.

The Restricted Regions list is determined by the ITOC. The list will be monitored routinely and updated by the ITOC whenever specific conditions warrant. The Restricted Regions list will be reviewed in its entirety by the ITOC twice per semester during the academic year.

Restricted Regions will be evaluated for risk and assigned to one of the following categories:

1. Travel Warnings:

- a. Travel to these areas is limited due to the acute risks associated with health, safety, and security.
- b. In rare cases travel may be granted at the recommendation of the ITOC and with the approval of the Vice Provost for Academic Affairs.
- c. In cases where no reasonable alternative is available, faculty, staff, and graduate students may request to travel for critical missions only. Travel may be granted with the recommendation of the ITOC and a letter of approval from the Vice Provost for Academic Affairs. Undergraduate travel and established LSU programs, such as Study Abroad or LSU programs at international campuses, are not allowed.

2. Travel Alert:

- a. Travel to these areas may be limited due to possible acute risks associated with health, safety, and security.
- b. In cases where risk can be reasonably mitigated, faculty, staff, and students (including those participating in established LSU programs) may travel at the recommendation of the ITOC and with the approval of the Vice Provost for Academic Affairs.

C. Approval Process to Travel to Restricted Regions

The following documentation is required by the individual or program to travel to a Restricted Region:

1. Approved AS292 "Request for Authorization to Travel".
2. AS295 "Request to Travel to Restricted Region for Individual Travelers" or AS296 "Request to Travel to Restricted Regions for Student Study Trips".

**Note:** The request form must be completed in its entirety and submitted 30 days in advance of the proposed travel or as soon as the trip is known. The request form must be signed by the Dean, Director and Department Head/Chair.

3. AS297 "Faculty/Staff Emergency Contact Form".
4. AS298 "High Risk Travel Release and Waiver" should be signed by each traveler, including the members of a student study group. The form should be notarized with two witnesses to acknowledge the release.
5. Proof of travel registry with the appropriate US Embassy/Consulate. To register with the US Embassy, travelers should go to <https://step.state.gov/step/>.

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

D. Faculty Regional Experts

A separate approval process is in place for faculty who are experts in a geographic region that is on the Restricted Regions list 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, 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 US.

#### E. Faculty Field Experts

A separate approval process is in place for faculty whose research specialty requires them to travel to high-risk locations on the Restricted Regions list. 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 specified 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).
3. A detailed emergency response plan. The ITOC will review all documentation and, 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 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 within a 12-24 hour period prior to departure to the high risk region if the level of risk increases and the US Department of State strongly discourages travel to that particular region.

#### G. Travel Advisory Issued During Travel Status

If a traveler(s) is on approved international travel in a high risk region and a travel advisory is raised while in travel status, the traveler(s) may be asked to return to the US immediately.