

Ohio University  
**Study Away Risk Assessment Committee**  
Process for reviewing risk associated study away student travel  
*Policy Adopted by SARAC 11/19/2020*

1) Overview

- a) The Study Away Risk Assessment Committee (SARAC) monitors and reviews health, safety, and security with the potential for impacting Ohio University student travel where:
  - i) The University sponsors international and domestic study away programs
  - ii) University students conduct independent, University-sponsored or -related international travel.
- b) The Office of Global Opportunities (OGO) risk management team works closely with SARAC to collect and prepare risk assessment reports and recommendations.
- c) Appropriate information resources include:
  - i) International SOS (ISOS)
  - ii) U.S. Department of State (USDOS)
  - iii) Overseas Security Advisory Council (OSAC)
  - iv) Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)
  - v) World Health Organization (WHO)
  - vi) Local and on-site partners and resources

2) Risk Review Thresholds

- a) A health, safety, and security risk review of an international study abroad program is required under the following circumstances:
  - i) USDOS Travel Advisory of Level 3 or 4 for country or locality
  - ii) ISOS travel risk rating of HIGH or EXTREME
  - iii) CDC Warning Level 3
- b) A health, safety, and security risk review may additionally be required in case of:
  - i) Adverse changes in U.S. Department of State Travel Advisories
  - ii) Adverse sociopolitical changes in the host country
  - iii) Adverse physical changes in the country (e.g., seismic activity, flooding)
  - iv) Decisions made by other sending entities (e.g., peer institutions, study abroad providers, Peace Corps)
  - v) Recommendation by the Study Away Committee (SAC) or University International Council (UIC)

- c) A pandemic will prompt the following restrictions or risk review requirements for international programs, domestic programs, and student independent international travel:
  - i) USDOS Travel Advisory Level 1, CDC Warning Levels 0 or 1, CDC COVID-19 Travel Health Notice Level 1, and/or ISOS risk rating LOW:
    - No risk review or travel restrictions.
  - ii) USDOS Travel Advisory Levels 2 and 3, CDC Warning Level 2, CDC COVID-19 Travel Health Notice level 2 and 3, and/or ISOS risk rating MEDIUM:
    - SARAC risk review required.
  - iii) USDOS Travel Advisory Level 4, CDC Warning Level 3, CDC COVID-19 Travel Health Notice level 4, and/or ISOS risk rating HIGH:
    - Student travel suspended.
    - Upon request from the Office of The Vice President of Research and Creative Activity, SARAC will review travel approval appeals related to student international research.
  
- d) In the event of updates to the USDOS, CDC or ISOS risk rating or alert systems, until this Policy can be updated OGO will propose to SARAC a reasonable adaptation of the triggers listed above.

### 3) Risk Assessment Report Requirements

- a) A Risk Assessment Report evaluating potential risks and benefits of travel is compiled and presented to SARAC. As appropriate, the Risk Assessment Report is comprised of input and information from:
  - i) The student traveler
  - ii) The program director
  - iii) OGO's Risk Management Team
  
- b) In addition to resources listed in Section 1.c, additional resources may include:
  - i) State and local governments
  - ii) Physician
  - iii) NAFSA: Association of International Educators
  - iv) Local U.S. Embassy or Consulate
  - v) OHIO Faculty or staff experts and/or host-country nationals
  - vi) Colleagues at institutions in the region with active programs
  
- c) Information submitted by the program director or student traveler should include:
  - i) Academic rank of travelers (e.g., undergraduate, graduate, medical)
  - ii) Logistical information e.g., excursion sites, transportation, housing, and emergency planning
  - iii) Academic purpose of travel, including whether the educational goals of travel can be achieved elsewhere
  - iv) Pre-departure and on-site risk mitigation plans

- d) Study away program directors should additionally include:
  - i) Feedback from on-site contacts
  - ii) Program history and on-the-ground infrastructure
  - iii) Value to collaborative partners and communities
  
- e) OGO will provide background information and summary analysis:
  - i) Evaluating potential risks and benefits of proposed travel
  - ii) Presenting data regarding current risks associated with travel to the host location
  - iii) Proposing potential risk mitigation alternatives and program modifications, as needed

#### 4) Risk Review Process and Timeline

- a) As required according to sections 2, SARAC reviews of:
  - i) Study away programs will take place annually on a case-by-case basis.
  - ii) Independent student travel will take place upon request from the student traveler.
  
- b) The risk review process will normally take 1-2 months from the time of submission to OGO. Timely response to SARAC requests for feedback is expected. Urgent requests may be necessitated by change in risk ratings. OGO will monitor the health, safety, and security environment in locations of approved, upcoming and on-site study away programs and independent student international travel. If a risk rating change in a location occurs, OGO will work with SARAC to determine appropriate steps up to and including a recommendation for suspension, cancellation, or recall of student travel.
  
- c) SARAC votes on whether or not to recommend that petition to travel be:
  - i) Approved without modifications
  - ii) Approved with added risk mitigations requirements or adjustments
  - iii) Rejected
  
- d) The recommendation, along with possible suggested modifications, is sent to the designated representative of Office of the Executive Vice President & Provost for review and final decision.