



Campus-Based Response to Overseas Crises

Study Abroad Emergency Response Team

In the event of an emergency or crisis that calls into question the immediate safety of USC students on programs abroad, the following individuals or their designees will convene at the earliest possible time to coordinate the university's response. A Response Team meeting may be initiated by any one of these individuals/departments in response to a crisis that emerges. The Vice President for Global Initiatives or designee will determine who should be included on the initial Team, and who to enlist as the crisis response progresses.

Response Team:

- Vice President for Global Initiatives *
- AVP for Campus Support and Intervention (CSI)
- Vice President for Student Affairs (VPSA) or designee
- Study Abroad program coordinator(s) for the specific program(s) affected by the emergency (or on-campus representative if Program Coordinator is on-site)
- The President's Office designee

* Representative from the office of the Vice President for Global Initiatives will coordinate media referrals through USC Media Relations, as needed.

Certain situations may require the involvement of other members of the USC community. The Response Team listed above will discuss the nature of the crisis and this committee can grow to include:

- USC Student Health representative
- Safety and Risk Management Services representative
- Department of Public Safety representative
- Other Student Affairs or Academic offices as necessary
- Office of the General Counsel representative

Items for consideration by the Response Team

1. Immediate measures needed to ensure the health and safety of students, faculty, and staff abroad.
2. Appropriate actions to be taken abroad, including responding to initial student concerns and recommendations regarding appropriate student behavior.
3. Any necessary correspondence with students, host institutions in the affected country, program staff, parents, members of the USC administration, and any other appropriate constituencies.
4. If the Response Team considers it appropriate, an evacuation guideline will be developed. This guideline will be developed in cooperation with the U.S. State Department and the On-site staff contact (program provider, Resident Director, etc.) in the host country.
5. Guidelines to be utilized when speaking with the media or other individuals about the crisis in order to promote consistency and accuracy in responses.
6. Whether to suspend or cancel a program already in progress.
7. Whether to cancel or suspend a future program or to delay the starting date of a program.
8. Additional issues regarding health, safety, academics, financial issues, public relations, legal liability, and other issues as the situation dictates.



Among the organizations or individuals that may be able to provide assistance in coping with the crisis, or information helpful to the Response Team's decision-making, are the following:

- U.S. State Department
- U.S. Embassies in the affected countries
- Host country universities
- International SOS
- Travel Agents
- USC faculty/staff with direct experience in the host country
- USC International Offices
- Other USC contacts abroad (i.e. alumni in the host country)

Communication

In the case of a crisis, clear and effective communication with all involved parties is an essential component of the response guideline. Among the considerations to be determined as quickly as possible by the Response Team are the following:

- If students must be contacted while abroad, the Response Team will determine the best method for doing this, and will assign staff resources as necessary to carry out the required communication. Depending on the situation, e-mail, phone calls, written letters, or other means of communication may be employed. Whenever possible, communication with students should be carried out by the USC Program Coordinator for the affected program(s). The appropriate content for messages to students will be discussed by the Response Team.
- The USC Program Coordinator for the affected program(s) will be responsible for maintaining close and frequent communication with appropriate staff in the host country. Host country staff may include Resident Directors, USC faculty/staff accompanying the group, foreign university staff, and others. The Program Coordinator will keep the Response Team apprised of information received from the host country staff to aid in decision-making. (When the Program Coordinator is on-site with the program, another member of the Response Team will be assigned to contact and coordinate with on-site staff.)
- In cases where USC offers the study abroad program through a separate sponsoring U.S. institution or study abroad organization, the USC Program Coordinator for the affected program(s) will be responsible for maintaining close communication with the sponsoring institution/organization throughout the emergency response process. In most cases, it will be necessary to coordinate USC's emergency response actions with concurrent actions undertaken by the sponsoring organization. The Program Coordinator will keep the Response Team apprised of information received from the sponsoring organization to aid in decision-making.
- Depending on the nature of the crisis, the Response Team will determine which university administrators and staff need to be included in updates during and after the crisis response period and will designate members of the Response Team to conduct this communication.

Post-Crisis Follow-up

The Vice President for Global Initiatives or the designee will determine when the crisis response period has ended and the Response Team has completed its duties. They will determine any necessary follow-up measures and assign responsibility for these measures.