



USC University of
Southern California

FACULTY & STAFF HANDBOOK

FOR USC STUDENT
TRAVEL ABROAD



The purpose of this document is to provide staff and faculty who administer study abroad programs and/or travel with USC students on study abroad programs with information on the following:

- University requirements for Student Travel Abroad
- Preparing students prior to departure
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- Emergency & Crisis Response Protocol
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UNIVERSITY PROCESSES AND FORMS FOR PLANNING TRAVEL



Risk Assessment and Contingency Plans

The Office of Global Initiatives will send Travel Guidelines for the upcoming semester to all Directors and Coordinators of international programs (as well as undergraduate and graduate Deans). Coordinators of study abroad will provide a Risk Assessment and Contingency Plan (RACP) to Global Initiatives at least two months prior to the date of travel. When preparing RACPs, departments should consider multiple risk factors affecting health, safety, security, and academic continuity. RACPs may be updated at any time until the date of travel to account for any meaningful change in the conditions at the destination or affecting travel in general by re-submitting the form and selecting “Updated Resubmission.”

USC Student Travel Abroad Portal

In order to comply with [USC policy](#), all students who are traveling abroad in a school-facilitated program must be enrolled in the USC Student Travel Abroad Portal. The following items are distributed or collected in the portal:

- USC travel health insurance packet
- International SOS (I-SOS) learning modules
- Travel abroad resources
- Emergency contact and evacuation information
- Passport Information
- Flight Itinerary
- Travel Release and Medical Treatment Authorization forms

In order to enroll students in the Student Travel Abroad portal, the support staff or program administrator must email a roster of student information (including first and last name, USC ID number, and date of birth) to the Student Travel Abroad administrator at stabroad@usc.edu. The Student Travel Abroad administrator will upload the students listed on the roster to the Student Travel Abroad Portal. Departments should expect a confirmation that students have been added to the portal within 1-3 days. Students will then receive an email with instructions to log in, officially “commit” to their program, and complete the required forms prior to travel.

USC-Sponsored Travel Health Insurance and International SOS Coverage

USC-Sponsored Travel Health Insurance coverage is mandatory for all students traveling abroad for any reason, except personal travel. Students will be enrolled in the Travel Health Insurance plan once they have committed to their program within the Student Travel Abroad Portal. Students will receive an email from the USC Student Health Insurance Office with their Travel Certification letters which show dates of coverage. Insurance packets will be distributed through the portal. The Travel Health Insurance plan does not provide coverage for routine/preventative services or the management of chronic medical/mental health disorders.

Cost of Insurance Coverage for Students Traveling Abroad

If students are already enrolled in the regular USC Student Health Insurance Plan (SHIP), they will not incur any additional costs for USC-Sponsored Travel Health Insurance coverage. If a student has waived out of SHIP, they will be charged a supplemental fee for this required coverage, based on the length of their program. For current rates, please contact the Program Administrator for Student Travel Abroad at stabroad@usc.edu. The USC Student Health Insurance Office processes these charges that are automatically applied to the student's fee bill.

Any questions regarding coverage can be directed to Nytosha Coleman in the Student Health Insurance Office at Nytosha.Coleman@med.usc.edu.



International SOS Coverage

All students officially committed to their program in the Student Travel Abroad Portal are automatically enrolled in [International-SOS](#) (I-SOS), USC's partner service for medical and travel security while abroad. All students and staff should actively utilize I-SOS while abroad for medical emergencies, finding a nearby medical provider, or inquiring about travel safety. We recommend that support staff download the [International SOS Assistance app](#) on their mobile phone and save the I-SOS phone number and USC master membership number in their phone and records:

International SOS Phone: +1 215-942-8226

USC Membership Number: 11BSGC000010

I-SOS is not health insurance. They are a travel assistance provider and can only pay for medical services that they arrange. It is important to contact I-SOS first in case of an emergency while abroad.



Secure Support

It is essential to have the appropriate number of support staff accompany the group and assist the faculty and students with regular program operations and any issues that may arise. The proper support structure will be critical in an emergency or crisis situation. The program setup and arrangements made with vendors to provide different services and levels of on-the-ground support should be taken into consideration when defining the necessary support structure. The recommendation and practice across USC schools is to have at least one faculty and one support staff member for groups of up to 15 students. Larger groups will require more support staff.

Emergency Funds

The industry best practice is that some provision exists that can be used in an emergency while students are abroad. When there is a significant problem that requires immediate disbursement, students are not always prepared and generally expect the department to upfront certain payments, even if those are later reimbursed to the department. We strongly encourage you discuss this recommendation with your dean and consider the possibility that you might have to cover some costs in the event of an emergency.

Engaging Providers for Study Abroad Services

In the event that a program engages a third-party vendor to provide services - often bundled - for in-country support/facilitation of the program (ex. orientations, classroom space, homestay/accommodations, tours/cultural excursions, ground transportation, internship placements, etc...), the engagement should be documented in a Contract or Services Agreement and sent to sgireview@usc.edu for review and approval, prior to submitting to Procurement/Travel Management to facilitate payment.

PREPARING FOR TRAVEL



Student Travel Information

Program faculty and staff members should keep a protected folder of all student information (i.e. passport information, emergency contact information, and evacuation information) on hand in case of emergency. This information is collected through the USC Student Travel Abroad portal, and your department administrator should provide these spreadsheets to you prior to travel. You must comply with [USC Data Privacy Policy](#) at all times when handling sensitive and personally identifiable information (PII).

Smart Traveler Enrollment Program (S.T.E.P.)

The U.S. Department of State [S.T.E.P. program](#) notifies its members of security updates from the nearest U.S. embassy or consulate. It is free to sign up and members receive the latest safety and security information for their destination country. Additionally, the embassy or consulate will be able to contact members in case of emergency. USC strongly recommends and expects that all U.S. nationals traveling on university-facilitated travel sign up for the S.T.E.P. program.

Please note that only U.S. nationals are eligible to enroll in S.T.E.P. Non-U.S. Nationals should register with the equivalent of the country of passport issuance (if available).



Mental Health Prior to Travel

For students:

If you become aware of a student with a history of conditions related to mental health, such as depression, bipolar disorder, attention deficit disorder, anxiety/panic attacks, sleep disorders, etc., it is very important that the student discusses study abroad plans with a mental health professional to develop strategies for managing such conditions should they continue, worsen, or appear unexpectedly while overseas. Work with your department support team to ensure they make necessary arrangements prior to travel.

For faculty and staff:

The [USC WorkWell Center](#) is a one-stop destination dedicated to helping you maintain a balance between your personal and professional lives.

USC Duty of Care for Faculty and Staff

To address its responsibility for the well-being of its employees, USC provides duty of care during authorized university travel. Through its partnership with Crisis24, USC provides alerts and assistance for employees in the event of an emergency. Crisis24 proactively tracks registered travel and will reach out to employees in the event of an emergency. Registering for duty of care is required for international travel and is highly recommended for domestic travel. You can learn more at: [USC Duty of Care](#).

Business Travel Insurance

Faculty and Staff traveling on University business are automatically covered by the [USC Business Travel Accident Policy](#) through the Office of Risk Management and Insurance. In the event of a travel-related incident, all faculty and staff traveling on USC business are covered by a Chubb ACE American Insurance Company policy (ADD No4985801) and would receive assistance services through AXA Assistance USA Inc.

A summary of benefits, ID card, and Self Service Visa Letter are available on the [USC Business Travel website](#).

For more information regarding coverage, contact the Office of Risk Management and Insurance at uscrisk@usc.edu.

DOS Travel Advisories & Entry/Exit Requirements

The U.S. Department of State (DOS) provides [country-specific travel advisories](#). Travel advisories rate countries' safety on a level 1 - 4 basis.

- Travel advisories, in addition to providing an advisory level, also provide information on:
- alerts and other important country-specific details,
- entry and exit requirements *
 - **if participants do not hold a U.S. passport, then they will need to consult the requirements for the country of passport issuance*
- local laws and customs,
- travel health information, and
- the address and phone number of the nearest U.S. embassy or consulate.

You may share the information, including entry and exit requirements, with your students.

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)

CDC is a U.S. government program that protects citizens from health threats by providing health information to fight diseases. On the [CDC Traveler's Health webpage](#), you can search by country to find information on health issues in that nation, including information on:

- vaccines and medications,
- how to stay healthy there,
- healthy travel packing lists,
- travel health notices, and
- health tips for when you return to the U.S.

You will want to check which vaccinations are required to enter the country you will be traveling to so that you can obtain them and inform your students. You may also want to share with students other information provided on the CDC webpage of your program's country.

Students and staff can also receive the most common travel vaccinations, as well as travel advice, at [USC Pharmacies](#).

International SOS

Students, faculty, and staff can get various information from [International SOS](#) prior to travel. If you or your students have any pre-trip questions regarding your destination, please contact the Assistance Centre. For example, you can use [I-SOS](#) to find out whether a medication you are prescribed in the U.S. is legally allowed to enter the program's destination country. Their [website](#) also provides comprehensive country guides for both medical and general travel advice.

INTERNATIONAL SOS ASSISTANCE CENTERS

- **USC Member ID:** 11BSGC000010 (CALL COLLECT)
- **In USA:** Philadelphia, PA (215) 942 8226
- **If abroad,** contact the appropriate Assistance Center and provide the USC Member ID.

Visit the [International SOS website](#) or download their app for local contact information: www.internationalsos.com

Program-Specific Emergency Contact Information

Prior to departure, provide each student participant with important emergency information for their program location. This information should be provided to an on-campus contact person in your department and an on-site contact person (if applicable).

Please include the following:

- Department, Program Location
- USC Department of Public Safety (DPS) contact information
- Name and 24-hour contact information for on-site program staff, or USC faculty and staff who will be traveling with students (if applicable)
- Nearest medical facility to program site (contact I-SOS for this information)
- Emergency phone number for country/city of program site (local equivalent of “911” emergency number)
- Local police phone number
- Any special considerations for the program site (i.e. weather conditions, common natural disasters, transportation limitations, etc.) The nature of potential problems and specific preparedness measures in place by program staff to alleviate concerns.



WHILE ABROAD



Upon Arrival

Please take the following actions upon arrival at the program site abroad:

- Make contact with the Consular Office and Regional Security Officer (RSO)
- Establish an evacuation guideline to be implemented should it become necessary to leave the program site due to immediate safety concerns.
- Students who travel overnight away from the program site should be encouraged to leave contact information with the program coordinator. They may also register their travel in the I-SOS assistance app.

General Issues

Traveling internationally or domestically with a group of students can come with a different set of responsibilities and situations that are not typically encountered in an on-campus student services capacity. To help prepare for some of the interpersonal issues that may arise, please read through the following scenarios and give careful thought to how you would approach and resolve the situation.

SCENARIOS:

Personal Safety & Responsibility:

- Maddie had way too much to drink last night and has spent the last hour throwing up in the bathroom. It is clear that Maddie is in bad shape, but she insists that her roommate Dana help her get ready for the day's visit. Another student tells you this 15 minutes before the group is set to depart from the hotel.
- Six students go out to a club. They end up drinking and decide to take a cab together to the hotel. None of them can find John, who was with everyone at the club.
- Three students go to Starbucks in between excursions. Nick, who put his backpack down on the floor next to his chair, notices that his backpack is gone and starts to panic.

Leadership:

- Erica has spent the last three nights partying in the room she shares with Beatrice until 3am. Beatrice didn't mind the partying much the first two nights, but now she feels exhausted and needs a good night's sleep since the group is leaving the hotel for a visit at 9am the next day.
- It is 7pm, and the entire group is ready for dinner. David wants to go to the restaurant that his parents had recommended for the best food in all of the city, but when he tells the group that a meal usually costs 50 euros (about \$56), four other students say out loud that they can't afford it.

Compassion & Empathy:

- Olivia, who is Morgan's roommate, is very homesick. Morgan tells you privately that Olivia has cried the last three nights in a row while Facetiming with her mom.
- Once a curricular excursion ends, four students tell the group that they want to go to visit a tourist location. Misty, a student who has irritated you and the students alike wants to go with them. They really need a break from her and don't want her to join them.

ADVICE FOR GENERAL ISSUES:**Do not intervene right away.**

- When a student comes to you with an interpersonal issue, ask if the student has tried resolving it on their own.
- They may want you to take care of everything; avoid falling into that pattern.
- Otherwise, you will set up unmanageable expectations for yourself



Mental Health

Students studying abroad experience emotional ups and downs and can sometimes feel lonely, homesick, and overwhelmed. These feelings are normal, and some degree of culture shock is an inevitable part of being abroad. Sometimes homesickness and culture shock can lead to depression.

Many program providers have mental health resources available for students. In addition, we encourage students to contact International SOS for emotional support and access to mental health professionals, counseling sessions, and advice. Departments can also contact Campus Support & Intervention (CSI).

Title IX Reporting

If the student is a victim of any incident that is gender-related and reportable under Title IX, report this to the [Office for Equity, Equal Opportunity, and Title IX \(EEO-TIX\)](#). The student should also be referred to the [Relationship and Sexual Violence Prevention and Services \(RSVP\)](#) Office.

Victims of Crime

If the student is mugged or the victim of a similar crime, program coordinators should first check in with the student. Next, the program coordinator can either notify the [Campus Support & Intervention \(CSI\)](#) Office or advise the student to contact CSI on their own, depending on the situation.

Student Code of Conduct Violations

If the department learns of a student breaking conduct rules via the program provider or staff/faculty onsite, the incident should be reported to [Office of Community Expectations](#) and/or [Office of Academic Integrity](#), whichever is applicable to the situation.

EMERGENCY RESPONSE GUIDELINES



The safety and security of all participants in USC programs abroad are of utmost concern to the University. First, it must be recognized that no program can ensure the absolute safety of each participant at every moment during a program abroad. Program participants must understand the risks inherent in any university program, both on campus and abroad, and act responsibly to enhance the safety of themselves and fellow participants. At the same time, these guidelines can assist program abroad coordinators and other USC representatives in preparing for, and responding to, emergencies or crises that may occur.

Medical Emergency & Crisis Management

The first point of contact in a medical emergency is International SOS, USC's contracted health and safety service provider for overseas programs: +1 215-942-8226, or Nytosha.Coleman@med.usc.edu. Additional USC emergency contacts are listed in the USC Emergency Contact List & Protocols below. It is essential to maintain regular contact with your department support team on campus, especially in an emergency in which they should be a part of all communications.

INDIVIDUAL MEDICAL ISSUES SCENARIOS:

Low-Level Medical Issues:

- What is the problem?
- Do you want to see a doctor or call International SOS for medical advice?
- If assisting a student prevents you/the student from leaving on time for a group visit departure, notify other faculty/staff members ASAP.
- Refrain from diagnosing students yourself unless it's obvious (e.g., general fatigue, headache, diarrhea, etc.).
- Keep track of the nearest pharmacies to the hotel.
- Offer to accompany the students to doctor's appointments.

Mid-Level Medical Issues:

- An acute medical condition that necessitates a hospital visit/doctor's appointment → Notify members of your support team, faculty, or staff, ASAP.
- An International SOS case must be opened for these → Always have a piece of paper and pen handy or a phone notes app to jot down notes and I-SOS case number.
- Accompany the students to the hospital or doctor's appointments.
- Forego public transportation and take taxis.
- Provide your department a summary of events at the end of the day with updates as needed.

High-Level Medical Issues:

- Call local emergency services
- An International SOS case must be opened for these → Always have a piece of paper and pen handy or phone notes app to jot down notes and I-SOS case number.
- Major medical crises will necessitate a staff member to stay with the student.
- Provide updates to the department and have the department notify Campus Support and Intervention (CSI) and SGI.

ADVICE FOR HIGH-LEVEL MEDICAL ISSUES:

- The others in your travel group will know the gist of what's wrong with the affected student.
- They will be curious and want to know more about what's going on → It's okay to give general updates but do not share details.
- Make time for yourself to decompress and relax, if possible.



Major Group Emergency & Crisis Management

In the event of a major emergency affecting the entire group, please adhere to the following protocol:

1. Contact all USC students and faculty to ensure they are accounted for, including current location;
2. Ensure any injuries have received medical attention (if program provider indicates medical assistance is needed, contact International SOS);
 - a) If possible, contact the U.S. Embassy or Consulate for advice and assistance.
3. Contact USC Department of Public Safety (DPS) to be connected with the appropriate resource. During business hours, you may contact a USC representative from the Emergency Contact List below. Explain where you are, what has happened, and tell them that you need to be in touch with Campus Support and Intervention (CSI). The USC operator and DPS (both available 24 hours a day) know who to call in CSI for emergencies.

USC Emergency Contact List and Protocol

For after-hours emergencies, contact USC Department of Public Safety at (213) 740-4321

During regular business hours, in addition to DPS, you may contact any of the following people:

Michele Morgan, <i>Director, Campus Support and Intervention</i>	(213) 740-5231
Lynette S. Merriman, <i>Associate Vice Provost for Campus Support and Intervention</i>	(213) 740-0411
Nylosa Coleman, <i>Program Manager, Engemann Student Health Center</i>	(213) 821-4393
Christine Jamoralin, <i>Program Administrator for Student Travel Abroad</i>	(213) 740-9635
Paulo Rodrigues, <i>Sr. Associate Vice Provost for Global Engagement</i>	(213) 740-6324
Anthony Bailey, <i>Vice President for Global and Online Initiatives</i>	(213) 740-2852

1. Provide full details about the nature of the crisis and actions taken thus far. Be prepared to give the following information:
 - a) Your name;
 - b) Which program you are with;
 - c) Where you are (location);
 - d) Nature of emergency;
 - e) Telephone number where you may be contacted; and
 - f) When you will call back if you have not been called.
2. Begin compiling a chronological log of all actions and correspondence.
 - a) what happened;
 - b) what steps were taken;
 - c) when they were taken;
 - e) with whom staff members talked; and
 - f) what follow-up actions were necessary.
3. Save all emails, notes, and other documentation.

In the event of a serious localized emergency, gather all program participants and move to a safer location. Once established, notify USC and I-SOS of new location and contact information. I-SOS can also aid in relocation efforts.

For questions about the overseas health and safety protocol or crisis intervention for students abroad, contact stabroad@usc.edu.



ADDITIONAL RESOURCES



USC Duty of Care for Faculty and Staff:

<https://sites.usc.edu/procurement/travel-expense/travel-safety/duty-of-care/>

USC Pharmacies for Travel Immunizations:

<https://pharmacies.usc.edu/services/international%20-travel-clinic/>

International SOS:

<https://global.usc.edu/student-travel-abroad/international-sos/>

USC Travel Emergency Guidelines:

<https://sites.usc.edu/procurement/travel-expense/travel-safety/travel-emergencies/>





FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS



What information do I need to collect from students prior to travel?

After providing a list of student names, USC IDs, and dates of birth to Global Initiatives, faculty and staff do not need to collect information from students directly because this will be collected through the Student Travel Abroad portal. Please check in with your program administrator to ensure all students have completed their requirements before travel. You will be expected to maintain a protected folder with student information during the trip.

What is USC's current vaccination policy for students traveling abroad? How can I confirm a student's vaccination status?

All students participating in international University-related travel, whether in a group or individually, are strongly advised to be up to date with COVID-19 vaccines, including boosters. Students are responsible for following all vaccine requirements and local regulations of their destination country and reentry into the United States. Certain programs, countries, host institutions, and airlines may have specific testing and vaccination requirements for participation, entry, or travel.

I am a faculty/staff member at USC and will be traveling abroad for a USC program. How do I sign up for Overseas Health insurance coverage?

Faculty and staff are automatically covered while traveling abroad for University-related business through the [USC Business Travel Accident Policy](#). In the event of a travel-related incident, all faculty and staff traveling on USC business are covered by a Chubb ACE American Insurance Company policy (ADD No4985801) and would receive assistance services through AXA Assistance USA Inc.

For more information on faculty and staff insurance coverage- please contact the Office of Risk Management and Insurance at uscrisk@usc.edu.

Who decides when a student should go home?

Depending on the circumstance: Medical expert or doctor, USC leadership including faculty lead, program directors, USC Counseling, and/or USC Crisis Support and Intervention will determine if the student should end the trip and return home. If it is concluded that a student should go home, a staff or faculty member should accompany the student to the airport.