
Memorandum

DATE: June 2013
TO: USC Community
FROM: Office of the Vice Provost for Student Affairs
RE: Guidelines for Student-Led International Travel

As a global university, USC encourages students to gain international experience through a variety of programs, including study abroad, internships overseas, and international service trips.

While most of these programs are initiated by academic and administrative departments at the university, student organizations also occasionally express interest in sponsoring trips abroad. The following set of policies and guidelines has been developed, with the approval of the Provost, to clarify university expectations for student clubs considering planning international trips.

This information also provides a framework for organizations to take advantage of the many campus resources that can assist with promoting a safe and healthy experience abroad.

If you have questions or if you need additional information, please contact the staff of Student Support and Advocacy, at (213) 740-2421 or visit the Student Affairs Overseas Resources webpage at: <http://studentaffairs.usc.edu/departments/ssa/ssa-overseas/>.

Guidelines for Student-Led International Travel

All USC sponsored or affiliated programs must follow the guidelines below, which include general trip requirements/recommendations and descriptions of the role and responsibilities of advisors and student coordinators.

USC sponsored or affiliated programs are defined as follows:

Sponsored Programs

Sponsored programs consist of student organizations or groups of students working under the specific direction of a University school or department. These students have regular and ongoing direction and involvement from a USC staff or faculty member and the program is listed among the school or department's schedule of programs.

Affiliated Programs

Affiliated programs consist of (A) recognized student organizations or (B) groups that choose to affiliate with the University and are willing to comply with the requirements set forth below. Any recognized student organization that receives University funds, uses the USC name, and/or receives support or guidance from a University school or department, or individual faculty or staff member, can be classified by the University as an affiliated program.

I. GENERAL REQUIREMENTS FOR SPONSORED AND AFFILIATED GROUPS

A. USC Health Insurance and International SOS Travel Insurance

All students on USC-sponsored or affiliated overseas programs (credit and non-credit programs) must be covered by either regular USC student health insurance, or the USC overseas health insurance plan, both of which include special health and emergency coverage by International SOS. To make sure students are enrolled in appropriate coverage, and to request copies of the health insurance information and International SOS emergency cards for all of your students, please contact Cathy DeFrancesco (defrance@usc.edu, 213-740-7726) or Valerie Hill (vhill@usc.edu, 213-821-1550) at least one month before your program's start date.

Representatives from the Student Health Insurance office may also be available to attend your orientation programs to explain the health insurance benefits to students.

B. Required Student Travel/Health and Safety Information/Forms

All required documents, forms, and database student roster spreadsheet template are available at: <http://studentaffairs.usc.edu/departments/ssa/ssa-overseas/>

◆ *Standard Release Form*

A standard release form must be used by all USC-sponsored and affiliated overseas programs. Coordinators must collect signed releases from all students participating in their program. These signed forms should be kept on file by the organization or

department that sponsors the overseas program. This release was prepared by USC's Office of the General Counsel.

◆ *Medical Treatment Authorization Form*

This form allows USC representatives (such as faculty/staff advisors) to authorize medical treatment for a student who is incapacitated and unable to make such decisions on his/her own. Student coordinators must collect signed medical treatment forms from all students participating in their program. These signed forms should be kept on file by the organization or department that sponsors the overseas program.

◆ *Central Overseas Database:*

All organizations or departments sending students overseas are required to submit student data to Student Affairs (Student Support and Advocacy) no later than 7 days prior to departure. This information may be submitted by the student coordinator or faculty/staff advisor. If you have questions, contact Student Affairs at (213) 740-2421.

◆ *USC Overseas Emergency Response Plan*

Student coordinators and faculty/staff advisors are required to read and keep in their possession the USC Overseas Emergency Response Plan. This document outlines a general plan for response to various types of overseas emergencies. The first point of contact in an emergency is International SOS, USC's contracted health and safety emergency service provider for overseas programs. There is also a 24-hour USC phone number (Travel Emergency Call Center) for urgent situations in which it is necessary to reach a staff member in Student Affairs.

◆ *USC Overseas Sexual Assault Protocol – For Coordinators*

This document describes the measures to be taken by student coordinators and faculty/staff advisors to prepare students with information about sexual assault, including advice for reducing risk of sexual assault while abroad. It also contains instructions on the critical steps to take if a sexual assault is reported by a participant in one of your programs.

◆ *Health And Safety Information For USC Study Abroad Programs*

This document, to be distributed to all student participants, covers essential information about health and safety abroad.

C. Pre-trip Orientations and Preparation

All groups must host at least one pre-trip orientation session that covers the following:

- Travel details, living arrangements, and trip itinerary
- Emergency procedures, health insurance, International SOS
- Health and safety precautions
- Expectations for appropriate behavior and participation
- Country-specific information

II. GENERAL RECOMMENDATIONS FOR SPONSORED AND AFFILIATED GROUPS

A. Student Coordinator Role Definition

Student Coordinator Role Definition

Pre-trip:

- ◆ Thoroughly explain mission and purpose of the trip to all prospective/selected participants.
- ◆ Make final determination on eligibility for participation (this often entails a selection process with the possible involvement of a faculty/staff advisor).
- ◆ Inform participants that they will be required to have USC travel insurance.
- ◆ Coordinate the collection/submission of student information to University Student Health Insurance Coordinator within stated time frame.
- ◆ Collect and submit required participant data to Student Affairs (Student Support and Advocacy) no later than 7 days prior to departure.
- ◆ Collect and submit to Departmental Representative and Advisor vital participant information:
 - University Release
 - Medical Authorization
 - Emergency Contact Form
- ◆ Make Travel Clinic information available to all participants
 - Schedule group appointment
 - Contact Travel Nurse to review immunization requirements

During the trip:

- ◆ Provide general leadership while on the trip. Act as primary decision-maker and group representative in all matters affecting the day-to-day experience of the trip.
- ◆ Maintain contact with community partners and facilitate regular conversations between all parties to troubleshoot problems and determine solutions.
- ◆ Assist with emergency response as needed.
- ◆ In cooperation with faculty/staff advisor (if present), respond to student concerns and problems as they arise.

B. Advisor

Each USC sponsored overseas student trip is strongly encouraged to include a faculty/staff advisor for the duration of the trip. An advisor may be any of the following:

- ◆ An employee whose job requires them to go on the trip
- ◆ An exempt employee with at least a 50% staff or faculty appointment
- ◆ A non-exempt staff employee performing duties and taking personal vacation time:

All employees traveling with students as advisors, volunteers on domestic or international trips are covered under workers' compensation should they become injured or ill while on the trip, providing the injury is in the course and scope of the activities associated with the trip. In other words, if an employee takes a personal outing before or after the student trip he/she would not be covered by Workers Compensation. The type of trips for which the coverage is extended includes, but is not limited to:

Alternative Breaks; trips involving sport clubs; trips involving religious groups; academic trips, either for credit or not-for-credit; and both domestic and international trips.

These employees will also be covered under the university's general liability policy should they become involved in some legal action arising out of their involvement with the trips, unless the action is egregious or criminal or in some way is not otherwise covered under a general liability policy, or that the university cannot in good conscious defend.

Advisor Role Definition

Pre-trip:

- ◆ Meet several times with the student coordinator(s) before leaving USC to delineate the advisor role and allow for an open exchange of ideas and expectations between the advisors and student coordinators.
- ◆ Assure the collection of vital participant information:
 - University Release
 - Medical Authorization
 - Emergency Contact Form

During-the trip:

- ◆ Respond to coordinator/participant concerns and problems as needed.
- ◆ Possess a full set of student information forms and emergency procedures.
- ◆ Serve as the official University representative in the case of an emergency.
- ◆ Coordinate emergency response and all communications between University and others as needed.

C. Transportation while on trip

- ◆ Every effort must be made to secure transportation in the host country that is provided by licensed and insured vendors. USC's affiliated travel agencies are available to provide assistance with these arrangements:
<http://fbs.usc.edu/depts/travel/page/1283/contract-travel-suppliers/>

D. Accommodations while on the trip

- ◆ Every effort must be made to identify and assure access to adequate services
- ◆ Identify emergency medical facilities
- ◆ Inform all participants of their expected living conditions prior to their departure

E. Communications while on the trip

- ◆ Determine the extent of adequate communications – either email, cellular, or land line communications available
- ◆ Formulate a plan for communications and articulate the plan to all trip leaders prior to departure

III. RESTRICTIONS ON DESTINATIONS FOR INTERNATIONAL TRIPS

At the discretion of the Provost and/or the Vice Provost for Student Affairs, specific intended destinations for USC-affiliated or USC-sponsored international trips may be restricted due to State Department travel warnings, Centers for Disease Control (CDC) warnings, or other indicators that might suggest conditions that are unhealthful or particularly dangerous for travel. Student groups planning international trips are advised to consult State Department and CDC resources early in the planning process to avoid the risk of choosing a destination that is subsequently denied by the university. It should also be recognized that the health and safety factors of a particular location can change drastically without warning, and organizations are strongly urged to take necessary precautions (such as trip cancellation insurance through a travel agent) in case it becomes necessary to change plans or cancel a trip on short notice.

IV. POLICIES CONCERNING STANDARDS FOR STUDENT BEHAVIOR

As is the case with USC study abroad programs, all SCampus policies are in effect for sponsored and affiliated student-led trips abroad. Student coordinators, all trip participants, and faculty/staff advisors should familiarize themselves with the University Student Conduct Code and other University policies as outlined in [SCampus](#). It is the responsibility of student coordinators and faculty/staff advisors to inform prospective/selected participants that all SCampus policies apply to trips abroad.

V. CONTRACTUAL AGREEMENTS

No student or student organization may enter into direct contractual agreement in USC's name with outside vendors (travel agencies, tour operators, etc.). Check with the appropriate administrative unit (Vice Provost for Student Affairs or specific Dean's offices) for clarification of required procedures.

For more information and resources for student organizations, please visit the campus activities website: www.usc.edu/ca.