

International Travel Policy

Subject:	Academic Affairs, Student Success, Personnel
Policy:	Montana State University Affiliated Campuses International Travel Policy
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Review Date:	October 2025
Responsible Parties:	
MSU Billings:	Executive Director of the Office of International Studies and Outreach
MSU at Bozeman:	Vice Provost and Dean for International Programs
Great Falls College MSU:	Controller
MSU-Northern:	Director of Field and Clinical Experiences

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Scope

This policy applies to the following MSU campuses:

- MSU Billings
- MSU at Bozeman
- Great Falls College MSU
- MSU-Northern

100.00 Introduction and Purpose

Montana State University recognizes and supports the international expertise of its faculty, the essential importance of conducting research abroad, and the importance of providing its graduates with global and multicultural understanding. The University must balance the educational value of participation in international activities with the potential risks of those activities to its students, faculty, and staff. This policy is intended to address the risks of international travel in a comprehensive and consistent manner. It seeks to provide resources to assist students, faculty, and staff in preparing for safe and successful international travel and is intended to promote the health, safety, and security of all members of the University community while traveling abroad. The University respects the academic freedom of faculty to pursue their scholarly endeavors through international travel. This policy is designed to support the international engagement of its students, faculty, and staff in a responsible manner.

200.00 Definitions

Affiliated Campuses include all campuses, agencies, departments, centers, or other entities within the Montana State University system.

Campus International Safety Review Committee is a group of University faculty and staff committed to the safety and risk management mitigation for the University. Each campus shall determine the membership of its Committee established to undertake this review, but each committee shall include the (1) Affiliated Campus Responsible Official and (2) the Bozeman campus Vice Provost for International Programs.

Faculty and Staff are all full and part-time members of the faculty, contract professional, and classified staff employed by the University.

Group International Travel is an organized group of two or more International Travelers led by a Group Leader/Co-Leader for the purpose of taking part in an educational activity or program abroad, regardless of whether receiving academic credit or not. These activities and/or programs primarily consist of registered students led by a University vetted Group Leader, usually a faculty or staff member.

Group Leader is a member of the faculty, staff, or other vetted person(s) who has been approved in accordance with this policy to lead a student group traveling abroad. There must be

a written agreement in place to document the relationship with any non-employee who is approved to be a Group Leader.

International Travelers are all MSU students, faculty, staff, or other participants (e.g., MSU alumni, students from other universities, supplemental chaperone(s), high school students, or other non-student participants) undertaking international travel through a University-sponsored program, whether funded in part or in whole by the University, and regardless of full or part-time status of participant.

Responsible Official is the individual or group designated by each campus responsible for oversight, review, and implementation of this policy.

Standards of Practice are rules, procedures, or guidelines developed by campus Responsible Officials to permit, restrict, or require actions within the parameters of this policy.

Student is defined as any undergraduate or graduate student who is enrolled in the Montana State University system, regardless of status (e.g., full or part-time, degree or non-degree seeking/auditor).

Travel Advisory Country is a country subject to a current Travel Advisory, Level 3 and/or 4, issued by the U.S. Department of State (USDOS) or the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

University represents each of the MSU campuses outlined in this policy.

University Contact Person is a University employee designated by the sponsoring unit of a group program abroad who remains on campus but acts as a point of contact for the group leader, faculty, or students who are traveling.

University International Travel is defined as travel outside the United States organized, sponsored or supported, in part or in whole, by the University or a unit thereof, regardless of whether offered for credit or not. Travel by International Travelers (as defined above) includes but is not limited to:

- Research, teaching, sabbaticals, conferences, study abroad, internships, recruitment, practica, student teaching, community or university outreach, Group International Travel and travel conducted by a registered University Unit, regardless of program duration.

NOTE: Travel supported, in part or in whole, by sponsored research grants, contracts, F&A funds, or other university administered funds will be considered travel supported by the University.

University Unit indicates a department, center, office, school, or college of the University, including registered student organizations, club sports or MSU athletic teams.

300.00 Policy

301.00 University Approval

International Travelers must comply with all University requirements and approvals as specified herein. Approval requirements vary based on the traveler, the nature of the program, and the destination.

With the assistance of the sponsoring University Units, the Responsible Official designated by each Campus is responsible for implementing, administering, and overseeing compliance with this policy.

302.00 Travel to Countries Subject to USDOS and CDC Travel Advisories

Any University international travel proposed by a University Traveler to or through any country for which a U.S. Department of State Travel Advisory (Level 3 or 4) or a Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Warning Level 3 or 4 is in effect, must be reviewed and approved in advance of travel by the Campus International Travel Safety Review Committee.

Current information about U.S. Department of State or Centers for Disease Control and Prevention advisories and alerts can be obtained at the Office of International Programs' [MSU International Travel Compliance](#) webpage. Other sources of travel advisories may be considered as appropriate, but USDOS and CDC are primary.

302.10 In evaluating requests relating to USDOS and CDC Travel Advisory Countries, the University will consider several factors, including, but not limited to the:

- Reason for the travel advisory
- Academic need and appropriateness of the proposed travel
- Individual academic standing and conduct history
- Adequate plan to avoid potential threats to health, safety, and security identified in the warning outlined in a [Personal Emergency Communication Plan](#) as part of the program application approval process
- Timely registration in the [MSU International Travel Registry](#)

302.20 The University shall not authorize international travel to any country for which the U.S. Department of State has issued a mandatory USDOS evacuation order.

302.30 The University reserves the right to prohibit or suspend University International Travel to any destination by International Travelers at any time if it determines: (1) health, safety, or security concerns pose unacceptable risks; (2) travelers have violated laws, regulation, or University policy (including faculty, staff, and student conduct codes); or (3) other good cause, including non-registration of international travel. If the USDOS issues a Travel Advisory

for a given country, the University may require International Travelers to depart that country. Award of academic credit or any refund for program costs is not guaranteed. It will be determined on a case-by-case basis and may be subject to third party agreements.

302.40 Even in the absence of an elevated USDOS or CDC Travel Advisory, the Responsible Official may require any University Traveler or Group to seek approval from the Campus International Travel Safety Review Committee if there appears to be substantial potential risk (e.g., programs involving potentially dangerous physical activities or programs which do not appear to have made adequate preparations to ensure the health and safety of participants, or the country is outside insurance coverage areas).

302.50. The University recognizes that the external environment may change at any time. To fulfill the intent of the MSU Travel Policy and ensure safety and security of MSU International Travelers, the University reserves the right to take a more holistic approach to risk assessment and expand on the type of type of available resources and tools it uses to assess global safety and security risks when approving or denying international travel requests.

303.00 International Travel Registry

No less than 30 days before departing, all International Travelers, whether individual or group travel, must register their travel plans in the [MSU International Travel Registry](#). Information entered into the MSU Travel Registry will be available to University officials in the event of a crisis or emergency. The information entered shall include, at a minimum, destination(s), names of travelers, contact information abroad and emergency contact information domestically, passport numbers, travel itinerary, and information concerning required insurance coverage. The Travel Registry is an important tool to locate and communicate with travelers in the event of a crisis or emergency. Failure to register will impede the University's ability to assist or arrange evacuation for International Travelers. The Travel Registry is accessed through the Office of International Programs' [MSU International Travel Compliance](#) webpage.

303.10 Registration in the MSU International Travel Registry facilitates the ability to locate and communicate with University International Travelers in the event of an international emergency. As part of this policy, MSU might contract services with an international risk management company to provide comprehensive safety and risk management oversight. The risk management company will act as the first responder in such emergency management situations, a direct point of contact to MSU.

304.00 International Traveler Requirements

304.10 All International Travelers must be approved to participate in and/or lead individual and/or Group International Travel sponsored in part, or in whole, by the University. Students must be in good academic standing (i.e., must not be on academic suspension) and must not be on conduct probation for a Student Conduct Code violation to be eligible for University International Travel. MSU faculty, staff, or other participants leading approved University-sponsored programs will be vetted through relevant University administrative offices prior to program approval.

304.20 Students will travel with a faculty/staff member who will act as a group leader. Exceptions will be granted by the Office of International Programs only on a limited basis and with an emergency communication and safety plan in place.

304.30 International Travelers embarking on University International Travel must attend an orientation before travel. The Responsible Official will establish a process to ensure pre-trip orientation for students, faculty, staff, and other participants is available. The type and content of the orientation required will depend on the program, the frequency of travel, and the destination as determined by the Responsible Official in collaboration with campus health services, local health departments and other appropriate resources. Online, or other means of distance communication are acceptable for meeting the orientation requirement in the event remote participation is necessary.

304.40 Students engaged in University International Travel are subject to the campus student conduct code, rules of conduct established for the trip, and any other University policies as applicable. Students who fail to comply with conduct rules may be subject to discipline, including dismissal from the trip and a requirement to return to the University or the student's home. A conduct dismissal may, on a case-by-case basis, impact course credit and cost refunds. Faculty, staff, and other participants are subject to the [MSU Personnel Policies and Procedures Manual](#) and the [Faculty Handbook](#)

304.50 Students may not participate in any education abroad experience in destinations subject to a USDOS Travel Advisory (Level 3 or 4) or CDC Travel Advisory (Level 3 or higher) unless the destination and the travel safety plan have been approved by the Campus International Travel Safety Review Committee (CITSRC).

304.60 Disability Accommodations. MSU Campus policies provide for reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities embarking on international travel. Students with disabilities requiring accommodations should contact the Affiliated Campus Responsible Officer with specific requests.

305.00 International Traveler Orientation Requirements

The Responsible Official shall ensure that orientation sessions for Group Leaders required in Section 308.50 are available, with the participation of the student health services, the local health department, campus risk management office, and other relevant resources are included as necessary.

In addition to Group Travel Leader orientation sessions, the Responsible Official, in cooperation with the student health services or local health department and other relevant resources, will periodically offer a range of orientation sessions (whether in-person, on-line, or other media) on health and safety in international travel for International Travelers. Information about orientation sessions and schedules is found on the [International Travel Resource page](#). Orientation sessions will be designed to satisfy the requirements of Section 304.30. As part of these orientations, information concerning immunizations and medications will be provided either directly or through referrals to local health departments or other health agencies for country-specific requirements and recommendations. Travelers who have physical or mental

health concerns or special needs are encouraged to consult with their medical providers and seek appropriate care in preparation for their travels. Travelers going to high-risk destinations are encouraged to consider a pre-travel consult with a medical provider.

305.10 All students, faculty, and staff must comply with applicable U.S. federal laws relating to export controls and sanctions, including transportation into foreign jurisdictions of tangible goods (such as laptops and other equipment) as well as the transportation and communication of certain technical data and information to non-U.S. persons. For more information, please refer to the [Export Control website](#) and other relevant guidelines as recommended by the OIP. Failure to comply with applicable U.S. export controls may result in individual civil and/or criminal liability.

305.20 All research conducted in foreign countries must be conducted in a manner consistent with local laws. Research and scientific activity, including collection of specimens, may be conducted only after campus approvals and appropriate governmental permits and approvals have been obtained from the applicable legal authority and agencies.

305.30 Travel must also conform to University Policies including business, travel, and financial policies (e.g., Travel section in the MSU Bozeman [Business Procedures Manual](#)). For University financial policies, refer to the Financial Affairs Policies on the website. Funding for University International Travel must be processed through university accounts in a manner consistent with university policies.

306.00 International Travel Health Insurance

To protect against financial loss due to an unanticipated illness or hospitalization, International Travelers on University related travel are required to have international insurance coverage from Montana University System's authorized insurance vendor except if the program requires them to enroll in a specific comparable insurance policy, subject to approval by a designated Safety and Risk Management officer.

306.10 Student International Health Insurance

Enrollment in Montana University System's authorized International Health Insurance is *mandatory* for all students traveling internationally on University approved programs unless a comparable policy has been approved by a designated Safety and Risk Management officer.

306.20 Faculty/Staff International Health Insurance

In addition to the international insurance coverage from Montana University System's authorized vendor, faculty and staff covered by the MUS Group Life insurance plan are automatically enrolled for pre-trip assistance, medical assistance, emergency transportation, travel assistance and security services for international travel.

306.30 Unaffiliated Travelers

Enrollment in Montana University System's authorized International Health Insurance is *mandatory* for all unaffiliated travelers traveling on University approved programs.

307.00 Registration with Smart Traveler Enrollment Program (STEP)

The University recommends that all travelers who are U.S. citizens register information about their planned travel with the USDOS Smart Traveler Enrollment Program (“STEP”). STEP is a free service provided by the U.S. Government to U.S. citizens who are traveling outside of the United States. STEP registration allows the USDOS to better assist U.S. citizens in the event of an emergency. The University recommends that non-U.S. citizens contact the appropriate agencies in their home countries to inquire about available registration and support. The University recommends all International Travelers to review and monitor safety and security information and travel advisories issued by the federal government, including the U.S. Department of State, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, and the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

308.00 Group International Travel Approvals and Requirements

308.10 Group International Travel

All University Group International Travel must have a University affiliated and approved Group Leader, Co-Leader and/or an alternate Group Leader, who will act as Group Leader if the primary Group Leader is unable to lead the group for any reason. Students with the appropriate knowledge and experience may be approved to act as Group Co-Leaders and/or alternate Group Leaders, however the principal Group Leader shall be an MSU faculty or staff member or appropriately contracted individual.

308.20 Group International Travel Approval and Process

Proposed Group Travel, including Group Leaders, Co-Leaders, and alternate Group Leaders, must be approved by the unit supervisor (if applicable), Dean or Director, and Responsible Official in OIP. Any campus administrator proposing group travel shall receive approval from the next level of supervision and the Responsible Official in OIP. Registered Student Organization Group Travel must also be approved by the Office of Activities and Engagement (or equivalent offices on the respective campus). Proposed Group Leaders must complete a [Request to Lead Group](#) Travel form (accessible on the [OIP’s Program Development](#) webpage) no later than 60 days (or longer periods established by the particular campus) prior to departure or before non-refundable travel arrangements are made. A proposed Group Leader, Co-leader and/or alternate Group Leader must be designated on the form and an Emergency Communication Plan detailed, as provided in 308.40. All submissions for Group Travel reimbursements, including submission of P-Card statements, must include a copy of the Group Travel approval.

308.30 MSU International Travel Registry, Group International Travel

As per 303.00, thirty (30) days prior to departure, Group Leaders are responsible for ensuring that all group International Travelers have entered all required information about the proposed trip in the Travel Registry, including: (1) the full legal names of all group participants ; (2) a copy of the identification page from each participant's passport; (3) a detailed itinerary of the group's travel plans, including all contractors, hotels, travel agencies, etc.; and (4) contact information (including contact abroad and emergency contact) as detailed in the instructions. Any revisions to the travel plans that occur while on the trip must be updated in the Travel Registry. The Travel Registry is accessed through the Office of International Programs' [MSU International Travel Compliance](#) webpage.

308.40 Emergency Communication Plan

The Request to Lead an International Travel Group must include an [Emergency Communication Plan](#) that outlines a plan to maintain communication with the University throughout the program, including designating a University Contact Person, in the event of an emergency while abroad. Contact numbers for locations visited must be included within the MSU International Travel Registry and submitted to the designated University Contact Person at least 30 days prior to departure. For travel in remote locations, the travelers will consult with the Responsible Official to determine appropriate communication plans (e.g., satellite phone) if cell phone services will not be available.

308.50 Group Travel Leader Orientation

All Group Leaders, Co-Leaders, and alternate Group Leaders must attend an orientation session for training on the health, risk, safety, and security aspects of traveling as a Group Leader responsible for the group participants as provided in Section 304.30.

The Responsible Official may waive attendance at orientations by a Group Leader or alternate Group Leader upon a determination that: (1) the Group Leader has extensive recent experience in travel to that location and has attended previous orientations; (2) the duration of the trip is short (e.g., a two-day conference) and the destination is low risk; or (3) the destination is low risk and the travel has been unavoidably scheduled without sufficient time for attendance.

309.00 Individual Student International Travel Approvals

All students embarking on University International Travel must obtain approval from the Head of the University Unit sponsoring the travel. Individual students traveling under the auspices of a Registered Student Organization must also receive approval from the Office of Activities and Engagement (or equivalent office on the relevant campus). Approvals are obtained using the appropriate Form found on the Office of International Programs' [MSU International Travel Compliance](#) webpage.

Students must comply with all applicable requirements of this policy and the requirements of the specific travel program, including academic requirements (e.g., study abroad travel whether it is with an MSU sponsored program or not). Information about the individual student international travel approval process for MSU Bozeman can be found on the Office of International Programs' [MSU International Travel Compliance](#) webpage. Additional information regarding the

MSU Bozeman study abroad approval process can be found on the [MSU Study Abroad webpage](#).

310.00 Individual Faculty/Staff University International Travel Approvals

Faculty/staff embarking upon individual University International Travel (e.g., research, teaching, conferences, sabbatical) must comply with all applicable requirements of this Policy and the requirements of other University policies pertaining to the specific travel, including, University and departmental travel policies, sabbatical policies, etc.).

A Travel Authorization and/or Travel Advanced Request is required for all University International Travel per the Travel section of the MSU Business Procedures Manual.

International Travelers are required to purchase international health insurance through the Montana University System statewide contract provider as described in section 306.00.

NOTE: All submissions for reimbursement for University International Travel, including P-Card statements, must be accompanied by a copy of the travel approval, as well as MSU International Travel Registry verification. *Failure to meet these requirements may delay or prevent reimbursement funding for international travel.*

311.00 Other Requirements.

MSU employees engaging in activities governed by this policy are obligated to follow any applicable MSU Human Resources policies and procedures. The requirements set forth in this policy are distinct from, and in addition to, other required financial and academic approvals relating to domestic and international travel set forth in other Affiliated Campus policies.

312.00 Waiver of Notice Requirements

Under circumstances, Notice Requirements found in this Policy, such as for MSU International Travel Registry entries in 303.00, 304.20 and 304.30, may be reduced or waived by the Responsible Official upon a showing of good cause.

313.00 Approvals for Minors and Unaffiliated Travelers

Any minor (student or non-student) proposed to participate in University International Travel must be approved by the Responsible Official to ensure safety and compliance with various visa requirements of minors. Minors must also receive informed parental/guardian written consent and non-student minors may only participate as part of an approved Group International Travel program.

Unaffiliated Travelers not officially participating in a University-sponsored program (i.e., family, spouses, guests, etc.) must complete an Unaffiliated Traveler Form and receive an advanced

approval from the Provost (or comparable campus official) and the Responsible Official in OIP before participating in University International Travel.

314.00 Failure to Comply with MSU International Travel Policy Requirements

Failure to submit required international travel information and obtain applicable reviews, approvals, permits, and licenses in advance of the trip may result in having the trip designated as non-MSU authorized, which may result in disciplinary action, non-reimbursement of travel expenses, ineligibility for State/MSU insurance during the trip, denial of approval for the travel, and limitation for future travel.

400.00 Procedures

Individual campuses will maintain campus-specific standards of practice and implementation procedures. Campus-specific standards and procedures are currently under development; when published, the links to those pages will be published here. Constituents are required to comply with any standards and procedures developed for their campus.

- MSU Billings
- MSU Bozeman*
- Great Falls College MSU
- MSU-Northern

*MSU agencies, extension, Montana Agricultural Experiment Stations, etc. follow MSU Bozeman campus standards of practice.

500.00 Resources

Please refer to the [MSU International Travel Compliance](#) webpage for an outline of MSU International Travel Procedures and additional information.

[Policy 325 of the Board of Regents Policy and Procedure Manual](#) also applies to all MSU campuses.

600.00 References

Current, comprehensive information about international travel, including links to U.S. Department of State or Centers for Disease Control and Prevention advisories and alerts, can be obtained on the Office of International Programs' [MSU International Travel Compliance](#) webpage.

700.00 Revision History

Date	Revisions
MM/DD/YYYY	Revisions

Faculty-Led Study Abroad Programs Policy superseded by International Travel Policy, adopted January 14, 2015