

Developing a Short-term International Group Travel Program

****Additional Considerations during 2022-23****

This resource is meant for University of Michigan (U-M) Group Leaders (faculty, staff, student organizations) who are considering taking students abroad on short-term **Group Travel (international)**. Please review the entire document before initiating program implementation.

Group Travel refers to a cohort of [University of Michigan Related Travel \(UMRT\)](#) student participants with similar program experience dates, itinerary, related activities at the destination and identical or related accommodations, for whom an organizer or leader is assuming some responsibility. There is significant interdependence of participants within the cohort.

Group Travel abroad may be for study, research, joint project work, athletic or other competitions, musical performances or similar university activities. See the [SPG 601.31 for International Travel](#).

1. EARLY STAGES (6 - 12 MONTHS PRIOR TO ANTICIPATED ARRIVAL/START DATE)

Become Familiarized with U-M Requirements for International Group Travel

Determine Unit-Level Processes and Requirements

- Have you connected with your Unit's international or education abroad office/staff to learn about additional unit-level support and guidance? Please refer to the [Education Abroad Office Contact list](#) to determine contact information.

Review the U-M International Travel Policy and determine the U-M Travel Designation

- Check the [U-M Travel Designation for the country](#) on Global Michigan.
- Undergraduate students are prohibited to travel to **U-M Travel Health High Risk** and **U-M Travel Restriction** destinations. They may travel to **U-M Travel Health Risk Low - exercise normal precautions, U-M Travel Health Risk Medium** or **U-M Travel Warning** destinations if they meet the entry and other [U-M requirements](#).
- Graduate students may travel to a **U-M Travel Health Risk Low - exercise normal precautions, U-M Travel Health Risk Medium, U-M Travel Health Risk High, U-M Travel Warning**, or **U-M Travel Restriction** destinations if they meet the entry and other [U-M requirements](#).
- All participants are required to enroll in [U-M Travel Abroad Health Insurance](#). Group leaders may enroll the entire group and remit payment to the vendor (GeoBlue) OR require each participant to self-enroll.
 - The primary group leader must submit a [Group Safety Plan for International Travel](#) for **U-M Travel Health Risk Medium, U-M Travel Health Risk High, U-M Travel Warning**, or **U-M Travel Restriction** destination/s in M-Compass at least 4 weeks prior to making any non-refundable purchases towards the trip.

Onsite Logistics and Managing Emergencies

- Will you be working with a local partner/third-party or program provider that will be assisting with organizing and managing in-country logistics (housing, transportation, day-to-day activities, etc.) and managing emergencies? If so, please refer to their resources and/or appropriate contact on managing travel during a travel health crisis. To learn more about U-M affiliated Program Providers, please refer to the unit's education abroad office/staff or contact global.engagement@umich.edu.
- If you are not working with a local partner/third-party or program provider, are you prepared to handle all travel health risk-related and other emergencies on your own? Considerations include:
 - How should participants report illness/symptoms and who should they contact?
 - How will the participant be transported to get tested?
 - Where will they be isolated while waiting for their test results?
 - How will you communicate with the group, local partners/local health department, GeoBlue (the vendor for U-M Travel Abroad Health Insurance) and the U-M?
 - In the event of serious illness or injuries, or political and safety-related emergencies, how will the group's activities be sustained?

Financial Planning and Budgeting - The following resources provide guidance for U-M faculty, staff, and students traveling outside the United States for University-related purposes. Schools, colleges and individual business units may have additional policies and procedures in place to support international travel. It is important to follow U-M financial policies and business processes while abroad on university-related travel. Some common topics and U-M resources related to international finances are listed below.

- [Procurement Travel and Policies](#)
- [U-M Bank Accounts in Foreign Countries](#)
- [Rules about Accepting or Giving Gifts](#)
- [Travel and Business Hosting Expense Policies and Procedures for Concur Users](#)
- [Travel to U.S. Sanctioned Countries](#)

Understand that Disruptions or Cancellations can Occur Due to Public Health Risks

- Due to the nature of public health risks, have you considered alternative program plans should originally planned activities get impacted as a result of shutdowns and cancellations?



1. EARLY STAGES (continued)

Become Familiarized with Host Country Requirements & Conditions

- Public Health Related Entry Requirements** - Have you reviewed the entry requirements for each country travelers will be plan to enter determine any associated costs and requirements? Entry requirements for countries may change regularly, including details about:
 - Entry Permissions.** During times of increased travel health risks, who is permitted to enter the country, including requirements for travelers arriving from different countries, or requirements based on traveler's nationality?
 - Tests, Health Documents, and Online Registration.** What health documents, pre- and post-travel tests, or other vaccination requirements need to be completed before departing? Some countries require registration and proof of vaccine and/or negative test prior to boarding the flight.
 - Quarantining & Health Regulations upon Arrival.** Note some countries may require visitors to quarantine in their own residence, hospitals, or in specific hotels for a period of time at the cost of the traveler and require the traveler to follow specific health procedures, such as testing, downloading public health apps, etc.
- Visa & Immigration Forms** - What are requirements for nationals of US? Nationals of other countries? Visit the [US State Department Country Information](#) for more information.
- In-Country Health and Medical Facilities** - Have you researched health and medical facilities of the host destination/s in event yourself and/or other participants fall ill? Please refer to [GeoBlue's Destination Dashboard](#) for additional information.
- Housing** - What will housing arrangements look like for the group? Will participants be in one location or will they be staying at different locations? What are contingency plans for unintended accommodation disruptions? It is recommended that you select housing that minimizes exposure to travel health risks and time on public transportation (if applicable) by selecting housing as close as possible to the work or study site. Research and consider costs associated with quarantine requirements upon arrival in the host country, quarantine requirements during the program due to illness or exposure, or staying in-country longer than expected because of border closures or being unable to meet exit requirements. If working with local partner/third-party or program provider, please reach out to the appropriate contacts in making arrangements.
- Transportation** - What modes of transportation will the group employ? Please note that host country may close and limit certain forms of public transportation and travelers should be prepared with contingency plans.
- Day-to-Day Activities** - What are local public health regulations or guidelines (e.g. vaccine requirements to enter certain spaces, social distancing, capacity limits for enclosed or open spaces, facial coverings, using public health apps similar to U-M's ResponsiBlue app, etc.? Please note that host country may close and limit types of daily activities such as visitations to sites and companies; the group should be prepared with contingency plans.
- Other Financial Considerations** - What is the group's financial contingency plans – if any, such as having access to funds, in the event of unanticipated travel disruptions which include but are not limited to:
 - Pre-departure flight cancellations.
 - Early departure from the destination country.
 - Living costs, such as accommodations and meals, associated with being in-country longer than intended
 - Non-refundable costs associated with organizing the experience, such as paying on-site vendors, transportation, reservations for classroom or work space, etc.



2. PRE-DEPARTURE - 4 - 6 WEEKS PRIOR TO ANTICIPATED ARRIVAL DATE

- ❑ **Submit a Group Safety Plan in M-Compass at least 4 weeks prior to making any non-refundable purchases towards the trip.**
 - ❑ The group leader will need to submit a Group Safety Plan for **U-M Travel Health Risk Medium, U-M Travel Health Risk High, U-M Travel Warning, or U-M Travel Restriction** destination/s. A Group Safety Plan is **not** needed for **U-M Travel Health Risk Low - exercise normal precautions** destinations. The International Travel Oversight Committee (ITOC) will review the [Group Safety Plan](#) and will follow up if additional information is needed.
- ❑ **Ensure the Group is Registered in the U-M Travel Registry & Enrolled in U-M Travel Abroad Health Insurance**
 - ❑ For groups where students applied for the experience through M-Compass, the program application acts as a U-M travel registration (no need for the primary Group Leader to submit the request form).
 - ❑ For groups where students did not apply through M-Compass, the primary Group Leader must complete the [Student Group Travel Request Form](#) to register the travel with U-M. Please submit this form in advance to avoid delays in group enrollment.
 - ❑ If insurance will be a group purchase, contact UHS-mancare-stuins@med.umich.edu for assistance. Students purchasing insurance on their own will receive instructions in their M-Compass travel registration. Communicate in advance so student do not double-enroll with GeoBlue.
 - ❑ Encourage participants to download the [GeoBlue mobile app](#), which provides health-related information about the destination, including how to locate a medical professional or hospitals in the area, medical translation tools, as well as how to find local drug equivalencies
- ❑ **Become Familiarized with U-M General Emergency Protocols for International Travelers**
 - ❑ Before departure, ensure that you are equipped with vital emergency information by downloading the complete [General Emergency Protocols for U-M International Travelers](#). Additionally, visit the [Emergency Contacts](#) page and program important numbers into your phone prior to departure.
- ❑ **Prepare Participants for Travel**
 - ❑ Organize a pre-departure orientation to prepare students for travel. If you are working with local partner/third-party or program provider, contact them to learn about their tools and pre-departure programs, if any.
 - ❑ Send arrival instructions to students so that they know what is needed to enter the country and how to meet up with the group after arrival. Consider providing information for contingency plans in the event of flight delays/cancellations.
 - ❑ Check out U-M's shared tool for group leaders, [Preparing Students to go Abroad. Resources for Faculty & Staff](#). This is a collection of resources curated across disciplines/units and is designed to help educators prepare students for overseas travel.
 - ❑ Encourage students to review [Resilient Travel – Managing Stress and Enhancing your Experience Abroad](#) as well as U-M [Safety Abroad Orientation Certification](#) programs. These are self-paced web programs that helps travelers think proactively about personal challenges and build skills to successfully cope with difficult situations.

3. ABROAD

- ❑ **Be Prepared for Arrival and Communicate to the Group**
 - ❑ Whether the group is arriving together on the same flight or arriving independently at different times, ensure the group is prepared to meet all entry requirements (<https://www.iata.org/en/youandiata/travelers/health/>) and has the ability to communicate with you and/or each other.
 - ❑ Organize an on-site orientation or meeting to go over goals, logistics, emergency protocols, and other need-to-know items.
- ❑ **Be Prepared to Respond to Disruptions or Cancellations Due to Public Health Risks**
 - ❑ Due to the nature of public health risks, be prepared to adjust plans as needed; remain flexible with plans (travel and financial). The group should have developed financial contingency plans, in the event of unanticipated health and travel disruptions or extended stays. The GeoBlue Travel Abroad Health Insurance provides certain [benefits for travel disruptions](#) in specific circumstances.
- ❑ **Be Prepared to Respond to Other Incidents and Emergencies**
 - ❑ Utilize the [General Emergency Protocols for U-M International Travelers](#) and contact the University in case of emergency.
 - ❑ If applicable, work with your local partner/third party or program provider to respond to other incidents and cases of emergencies.
 - ❑ Encourage students to review [CDC Travelers' Health](#) page resources learn ways to maintain health while abroad.

4. RETURN

- ❑ **Become familiarized with resources for returning to the US and/or Campus**
 - ❑ [CDC Testing and International Air Travel](#)
 - ❑ [U.S. Department of State Entry & Exit Requirements by Country](#)

Critical Considerations - Summarized by Phase

1. Early Planning

- ❑ Become familiarized with [U-M Requirements for International Group Travel](#)
- ❑ Become familiarized with [Host Country Requirements & Conditions](#)
- ❑ Understand and plan for disruptions or cancellations which can occur due to travel health risk emergencies.

2. Pre-Departure

- ❑ Submit a [Group Safety Plan](#) for U-M Travel Health Risk Medium, U-M Travel Health Risk High, U-M Travel Warning, or U-M Travel Restriction destination/s in M-Compass at least 4 weeks prior to making any non-refundable purchases towards the trip.
- ❑ Ensure the group is registered in the [U-M Travel Registry](#) & enrolled in [U-M Travel Abroad Health Insurance](#)
- ❑ Review [U-M General Emergency Protocols for International Travelers](#)
- ❑ Prepare participants by hosting a pre-departure orientation and provide country arrival information as well as contingency plans.

3. Abroad

- ❑ Host an in-country orientation to familiarize participants on program and country conditions
- ❑ Remain flexible and be prepared to respond to disruptions or cancellations due to a travel health emergency; utilize local partners and U-M resources
- ❑ Be prepared to respond to other travel-related incidents and emergencies

4. Return

- ❑ Become familiarized with requirements and resources for returning to the US and/or U-M campus

Resources, simplified

❑ U-M Requirements

- ❑ [Checklist for U-M Requirements for UMRT Group Travel Abroad](#)
- ❑ [General FAQs on Global Michigan](#)
- ❑ [U-M Health Response](#)

❑ Country Requirements & Conditions

- ❑ [US State Department's Entry and Exit Requirements](#)
- ❑ [International Air Transport Association \(IATA\) Travel Regulations Map](#)
- ❑ [Our World in Data - Cases, Country Profiles, and Testing](#)