



Faculty-Led Study Abroad

Safety, Emergency, and Disciplinary Guidelines

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Arkansas State University

Safety and Security Issues

Safety is a prime concern of all who are involved in Study Abroad ventures – participants, their families, advisers, A-State, the host institutions, Faculty Leaders, Study Abroad Office staff and any other A-State personnel associated with our programs. It is generally considered that study in a foreign country is no more dangerous than study in the United States. On the other hand, there are risks that are unique to settings abroad and, when incidents occur, the impact on participants and their families is often more profound because of the unfamiliarity of the context and the distance that separates participants from their primary sources of consolation and support.

The provisions of the Family Rights and Privacy Act (Buckley Amendment) often come into conflict with (a) the Study Abroad Office and leaders' needs to have full information about the participants we serve, and (b) the desire of parents and the Study Abroad Office, A-State to be briefed fully when something goes wrong. This conflict is not unique to Study Abroad – the issue is faced continually on campus – but it does pose a more delicate challenge in Study Abroad situations because of the heightened sensitivities and the distance involved.

If students or parents should inquire about how A-State deals with safety and security issues abroad, the following information should be provided:

- The Study Abroad Office regularly and responsibly monitors safety issues in each of our program locations. A review of all Study Abroad programs is conducted in which safety, security, and overall quality are measured.
- All participants are required to attend one pre-departure orientation sessions that stress safety issues and understanding cultural differences.
- Emergency procedures are in place, including medical and general emergency evacuation procedures. In any emergency, the Study Abroad Office will be in contact with faculty and students abroad as necessary.
- Arkansas State University provides an international health insurance and travel assistance plan to all students participating on Arkansas State University Study Abroad Programs.

Country-specific information where programs will visit is addressed by the Faculty Leader at the program pre-departure orientation. Additionally, the Study Abroad Office enrolls all program participants in the U.S. State Department Smart Traveler Enrollment Program (STEP) for the respective host country prior to departure. It is the Faculty Leader's responsibility to be familiar with the [U.S. State Department website](#) regarding health, safety and security updates pertaining to the program destination. The Study Abroad Office will notify of any updates occurring while programs are abroad.

Students should be advised to avoid travel to or through any location where tensions exist and travel may be dangerous. Students traveling to any region or country where the U.S. State Department has issued a warning will be required to sign a waiver as a component of the online application.

On-site safety. The Faculty Leader is responsible for communicating applicable codes of conduct and the consequences of noncompliance to participants. In the event there are U.S. State Department public announcements, worldwide cautions, travel alerts or warnings, the Study Abroad Office will communicate with Faculty Leaders abroad, program participants, and emergency contacts (if appropriate). Faculty Leaders should relay any applicable information to group participants and the on-site provider.

In the event of a local, regional, or global crisis, Faculty Leaders should maintain contact with the local U.S. Embassy or Consulate for updated security information. If a crisis should occur, they must review precautions with participants so they can better secure their safety. Also, in emergency situations the Faculty Leaders must contact the Study Abroad Office as soon as possible to confirm the whereabouts and well-being of the group and discuss appropriate actions as needed.

Faculty Leaders must also brief students on safe behavior, depending on the local situation and culture. This may include advising students to maintain a low profile, avoid crowds and protest groups, restaurants, and locations where Americans are known to frequent.

Students should keep up with local news through online media outlets, radio, and television and, in the event of disturbances or protests, NOT get involved. Students should be asked to use common sense and caution when divulging information to strangers about themselves, the program, and their fellow students.

In cases of serious health problems, injury, or other significant health and safety circumstances, Faculty Leaders must follow the emergency procedures as indicated in this handbook. To review A-State's student conduct policies including the Drug and Alcohol Policy, the Policy on Sexual Harassment, and the Statement on Sexual Assault, go to the [Student Conduct website](#).

- Under the University's Policy, Faculty Leaders have an obligation to process all sexual harassment complaints.
- If a crime should occur, Faculty Leaders must complete an A-State Study Abroad Incident Report form.

Transportation and vehicle safety. Use of automobiles driven by faculty and students should be avoided. All risks associated with travel in the U.S. are present, as well as difficulties involving cars, roads, laws and traffic, all of which will, to varying extents, be governed by customs and rules different from those found in the United States. While these risks may be managed with experience, obtaining valid and effective insurance in the countries being visited may be problematic.

When traveling on program-related activities, participants should be transported via public or chartered transportation.

Emergencies Abroad

The safety and well-being of students and faculty participating in an Arkansas State University study abroad program is of utmost concern. Faculty Leaders of a short-term program abroad may find themselves facing an emergency involving one or more of the students who are in their care, or an emergency of their own. Participants can and do become ill, suffer accidents, are the victims of muggings, thefts, and assaults, find themselves caught up in potentially violent political situations, or fail to return on time to programs after a weekend away. While it is impossible to plan for all contingencies, the Study Abroad Office needs to follow procedures that will allow for reaction in a responsible and calm way when emergencies do arise. We need to provide, in a consistent and predictable way, for the safety and well-being of our students. We also need to take reasonable and prudent measures to limit the University's legal liabilities.

The Study Abroad Office is responsible for coordinating the University's management of emergencies affecting participants in Arkansas State University Study Abroad Programs. It is the responsibility of Faculty Leaders of an Arkansas State University program to follow the procedures outlined below and to be sure to inform students about these procedures upon arrival on-site.

What is an emergency? For Study Abroad purposes, a crisis/emergency is any circumstance that poses a genuine risk to, or that has already disturbed, the safety and well-being of one, several or all program participants. Crisis/emergencies include, though are not limited to, the following:

- Robbery
- Physical assault
- Sexual Discrimination, Harassment, Exploitation
- Non-Consensual Contact, Non-consensual Intercourse
- Disappearance or missing person
- Death of a student or staff
- Serious illness, physical or emotional
- Medical illness, injury, health
- Mental health
- Significant accident and/or injury
- Hospitalization for any reason
- Terrorist threat or attack
- Local political crisis that could affect the students' safety and well-being
- Natural disasters
- Epidemic
- Arrests, detention, deportation
- Any legal action involving a student
- Crime related to alcohol or substance use

Anyone who experiences, observes, or hears about an incident of sexual harassment or sex discrimination must report it to the Office of Affirmative Action and Title IX through the online [Study Abroad Reporting System](#).

The Office of Student Conduct (OSC) at Arkansas State University administers the Non-Academic Standards of Student Conduct, which identifies behavioral expectations for all students on- and off-campus. Any violation of these Standards should be reported to the Office of Student Conduct through the online study abroad reporting system.

How to prepare for emergencies. The Study Abroad Office registers all participants on an A-State Study Abroad program in the U.S. State Department Smart Traveler Enrollment Program (STEP).

Health and medical care are important topics to be discussed with students and should be incorporated into the orientations and discussed at other points throughout the program. Students should be reminded to notify the Faculty Leader immediately about any health problems that may arise. The need for hospitalization can often be prevented by prompt treatment. The program's location is a major factor in health risks and available medical care. Faculty Leaders are responsible for doing appropriate research to compile a list of reputable local medical clinics or hospitals, in consultation with local program coordinators.

If the students are to be housed with local families, the families should be informed that they are required to notify the Faculty Leader immediately of any emergency involving the student(s) in their care. If the students are housed in a residence system or other rented facility, the local housing supervisor must be similarly informed. If the Faculty Leader is not being housed with the students, the students must be given the address and phone number of where they are staying. They should carry this with them at all times.

On-site briefing for students. Faculty Leaders should explain to the students that they are required to inform them about any emergency, and they will in turn contact the Study Abroad Office as soon as possible in order to report the emergency. Faculty Leaders should assure students that this information will be treated with the strictest confidentiality, and that it will be shared only on a "need-to-know" basis. Participants should also be informed that if a crisis involving a student is serious enough to jeopardize his or her safety or well-being, the emergency contact given on the affected student's application will be informed.

Faculty Leaders should discuss preventable accidents with participants, such as traffic patterns, pub and drinking culture, drug laws, unsafe swimming, and the type of things that can happen when walking down a street alone at night in a foreign city. It is helpful to get very specific about safe and unsafe behavior, such as certain types of sexual behavior and how to dress and behave to avoid unwanted attention.

Participants should be instructed where to go in case of a terrorist attack. Unless movement will jeopardize their safety, it is suggested that all students meet at their place of residence to be accounted for and to receive further instructions.

Participants and Faculty Leaders, in conjunction with local program coordinators, are provided with the Study Abroad Emergency “KeynectUp card” prior to departure. The card contains a list of names and contacts for:

1. Faculty Leader/Assistant.
2. 24-hour Study Abroad Emergency Hotline.
3. Study Abroad Office number.
4. A-State Campus Police contact.
5. Nearest U.S. Embassy.

The Faculty Leader should provide participants with contact name, phone and address for:

1. Local law enforcement/police department.
2. Nearest hospital/emergency facility and English-speaking doctors and/or health care providers.

Responding to emergencies. Emergencies range from the irritating but benign (a lost or stolen passport) to the imminently dangerous (motor vehicle accidents and political coups). Each situation must be assessed in its own context. In all cases, Faculty Leaders must complete an A-State Study Abroad Incident Report Form for each occurrence. Faculty Leaders must maintain daily contact with the Study Abroad Office and with host country informants. Members of the host culture may be best able to assess the seriousness of any given situation and provide excellent advice.

In an emergency, the Faculty Leader’s first responsibility is to safeguard the safety and well-being of the program participants. They should do whatever is necessary to ensure this, whether this means obtaining prompt and appropriate medical attention, U.S. Embassy intervention, or police protection. All expenses relating to the management of a reported emergency will be covered or reimbursed.

When all has been done to reasonably ensure the students’ well-being, the Study Abroad Office should be notified as soon as possible to be fully informed about the situation (an e-mail is sufficient if no further action is needed). **Faculty Leaders can reach a Study Abroad Office staff member through the University Police 24-hours a day, 7 days a week at 870-680-2535.** University Police have contact information for the Study Abroad Director and the Executive Director of Global Initiatives and other appropriate individuals on campus. During an ongoing crisis, Faculty Leaders must keep the Study Abroad Office informed on a regular basis through telephone, text, or e-mail until the crisis has passed.

Faculty Leaders should notify the local U.S. Embassy or Consulate about the crisis, and follow whatever procedures they may require. If there is a continuing risk to the students (during a terrorist threat, for example), they should ask the appropriate Embassy or Consulate official to advise on a regular basis about the evolution of the crisis, and about how the Faculty Leader and the students should respond.

In any other sort of emergency, the Faculty Leader should notify the local police about the situation, if they and the Embassy feel it is appropriate; then follow the procedures the police may require of them and/or the student.

During a political crisis or some other emergency during which foreigners in general or U.S. citizens in particular may be at risk, students should be told to keep a low profile. They should avoid demonstrations, avoid behavior that could call attention to themselves, avoid places where Americans are known to congregate, and avoid using luggage tags and wearing clothing which identifies them as Americans.

It is highly unlikely that participants will need to be evacuated from a site abroad. In many situations, it is much safer to keep a low profile rather than to draw attention to the group through an evacuation process. The Study Abroad Office will, however, bring students and Faculty Leaders home if a situation deteriorates to the point where the degree of potential risk to participants is deemed unacceptable. If this unlikely event were to happen, the Study Abroad Office Director, in consultation with the insurance company, Faculty Leader, the U.S. Embassy and State Department, and the **A-State Study Abroad Crisis Management Team**, would develop an evacuation plan in as much detail as possible. The plan would be transmitted to the Faculty Leader in confidence, and officials on the home campus would work closely with the Faculty Leader throughout the evacuation process.

In general, Faculty Leaders must follow these guidelines when communicating with the students during an emergency situation:

- **Share information:** Give students as much, and as accurate, information as possible. Document the situation and communicate with the Study Abroad Office on an ongoing basis.
- **Assess the situation:** How long will it last? Is it an inconvenience or a threat?
- **Keep calm, and keep others calm:** Do not panic. Discourage students from gossiping and thus escalating the situation.
- **Give participants choices:** In an emergency, allow students when possible to make their own informed decisions about whether to leave the program or to stay. Remember that this option is only ethical when students have enough information to make a reasonable choice. In a serious emergency, the A-State Study Abroad Crisis Management Team will determine whether the program will continue and possible evacuation procedures.

If the host country emergency services are not readily available and participants feel there is a threat to their personal safety, they should follow these procedures:

1. Dial the A-State Study Abroad Emergency Hotline at 001-870-680-2535 or the A-State Police at 001-870-972-2093.
2. Identify themselves as an A-State Study Abroad student and give the country where they are currently located.
3. State their name.
4. Tell the person what is wrong.

5. Tell the person how to contact them.
6. Respond to questions and listen carefully to any instructions.

Medical emergencies. In case of a medical emergency, if the Faculty Leader is not available, participants should be instructed to call the CISI Travel Assistance Services Center, as soon as (or even prior to) a student seeks medical treatment. In addition to assisting with treatment, they may be able to arrange direct payment.

Emergency Assistance: AXA Travel Assistance Services Center

CISI Emergency Assistance: AXA Travel Assistance Services Center

Assist America is open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Contact information Inside the U.S: 1 (800) 872-1414 (Toll Free)

Outside the U.S: 1 (609) 986-1234 (Collect Calls Accepted)

Email: medservices@assistamerica.com

Email: medassist-usa@axa-assistance.us

The following services are included in the program: referral to the nearest, most appropriate medical facility and/or provider; medical monitoring by board-certified emergency doctors in the home country; urgent message relay between family, friends, personal doctor, school, and insured; guarantee of payment to provider and assistance in coordinating insurance benefits; arranging and coordinating emergency medical evacuations, emergency reunions and repatriation of remains; emergency travel arrangements for disrupted travel as the consequence of a medical emergency; referral to legal assistance; assistance in locating lost or stolen items including lost ticket application processing.

Disciplinary Problems

If the Faculty Leader experiences disciplinary or behavior problems with a student, it should be dealt with immediately. If allowed to continue, they may adversely affect the atmosphere and morale of the entire group. Depending on the circumstances, the Faculty Leader may wish to discuss the problem individually with the student concerned, or discuss it openly during a general non-academic meeting with the group. If the behavior persists after discussion, put into writing the expected change and the consequences if the behavior does not change. Have the student sign this, and email or fax a copy to the Study Abroad Office. Should the inappropriate behavior persist, the Study Abroad Office will fully support a decision to dismiss the student(s) from the program.

The Study Abroad Office should be notified immediately about any serious disciplinary problems with any student on the program, whether or not arrest is involved. In less serious cases, mediation by the Study Abroad Office may be required. In serious cases, the student may be dismissed from the program and sent home with no credit awarded and no refund. The student is responsible for any additional costs due to travel changes, etc. Damage control may be necessary at the host site and within the local community. The Faculty Leader should make amends for inappropriate behavior in a culturally appropriate way.

In cases of arrest, Arkansas State University assumes no financial responsibility for legal aid to students. However, it is appropriate for the Faculty Leader, with the Study Abroad Office, to assist students in contacting their families and appropriate government offices.

Students using or selling illegal substances will be immediately dismissed from the program, with no credit awarded and no refund.

Alcohol use. Laws concerning alcoholic beverages vary greatly from country to country and in many countries it is legal for university students to purchase and consume alcohol. In general, it is wise to follow these guidelines:

- Students should be educated about legally and culturally appropriate behavior regarding alcohol, as well as the consequences of inappropriate behavior.
- Be aware that alcohol abuse is not tolerated anywhere in the world and will not be tolerated on Arkansas State University Study Abroad programs. Violation of local laws and/or A-State policy may result in immediate dismissal from the program. Responsible use of alcohol is required on the part of the Faculty Leader as well as each program participant.

Responsible use of alcohol includes the following:

- Abiding by the laws of the country visited.
- Not missing scheduled events because of the effects of alcohol consumption.
- Not becoming ill due to the effects of alcohol consumption.
- Being respectful of others sharing the same housing, and avoid congregating in loud groups for social purposes.
- Not engaging in inappropriate behavior towards others as a result of alcohol consumption.
- Not engaging in behavior that is destructive of property as a result of alcohol consumption.
- Not engaging in behavior that causes embarrassment to the other members of the group and the in-country hosts as a result of alcohol consumption.
- Not facilitating, encouraging, or ignoring a fellow participant who is abusing alcohol.
- Not transporting quantities of alcohol to program sites with the intent of sharing it with the other members of the group.

Sending students home. Severely problematic students (threatening the safety of themselves or other participants, or causing general disruption to the group) may need to return to the U.S. early. Faculty Leaders may decide to send individual students home in response to:

- Criminal activity on the part of the individual: arrest, drug use, physical or sexual assault, etc.
- Inappropriate behavior on the part of the individual: a continuing pattern of culturally inappropriate behavior which does not improve with advising and which endangers the program's relationship with the host institution and/or community; or behavior which is insensitive to other group members and/or damaging to the program group's morale.
- An emotional crisis which greatly affects the individual: death of a program participant, or death or serious illness in the family.
- Serious illness, either physical or psychological.

The Faculty Leader, in consultation with the Study Abroad Office and the A-State Study Abroad Crisis Management Team, may decide to cancel the program in response to:

- A natural disaster.
- A political or civil emergency.
- A terrorist attack or significant threat.
- Death of a program participant.
- Kidnapping of a program participant.
- An outbreak of highly infectious disease at the host site.

The decision to send students home, even when made for the best reasons, may result in negative responses, including lawsuits instigated by the students or their families and difficulty in re-establishing the program in future. It is therefore essential when contemplating an expulsion or an evacuation to consult immediately with the Study Abroad Office who will, in turn, consult with other appropriate offices on the A-State campus.

In the case of serious illness, injury, or other emergency incurred by the Faculty Leader, a designated alternate Faculty Leader may be called upon to take their place. This will be determined in discussion with the Study Abroad Office, the alternate Faculty Leader, and, if possible, the original Faculty Leader.

FERPA/Buckley Amendment. FERPA (the Buckley Amendment) regarding the privacy of student records may conflict with the desire of parents and others to be fully briefed on both student progress and on-site emergencies. Students participating in Arkansas State Study Abroad programs are given the opportunity to sign a release form which recognizes that program staff will disclose information to their families in the case of a medical emergency. If the Faculty Leader believes that certain information must be disclosed for a participant's well-being without his/her consent, they should first contact the Study Abroad Director who will seek the advice of University Legal Counsel. In rare cases when that is not possible – in cases of a serious and urgent medical emergency, for example – the best guideline is to act in the way which will be of most benefit to the student. Remember to document all emergencies thoroughly on the Study Abroad Incident Report form and to communicate with the Study Abroad Office about the situation as soon as possible.

Due to FERPA, it is inappropriate to communicate with parents about a particular student's grades, personal relationships, or cultural adaptation without prior permission from the student.

This handbook has been created from materials adapted from Towson University.