

Austin College Travel Policy for Countries on the State Department Warning List

Austin College strongly encourages its students, faculty and staff who are contemplating travel abroad for educational or other purposes to plan well in advance and to take precautions to ensure a safe trip. All travelers should familiarize themselves with political, health, crime, and other safety-related conditions prevailing in any country and specific locations within the country (or countries) to be visited. A review of these conditions should be performed by viewing web-based information provided by the U.S. Department of State (<http://travel.state.gov/>) as well as information provided by various other cognizant agencies and governments.

The following provisions apply to all Austin College students who intend to study abroad or participate in any travel abroad sponsored or funded by the College, or in connection with a trip abroad by a recognized College organization or institution affiliated with the College:

All Austin College students have primary responsibility for their own safety when traveling internationally, whether or not their travel abroad is funded or sponsored by the College or is accorded credit by the College. Before departure, all students traveling abroad to participate in an internship, perform service, undertake research, study abroad, embark on a Global Outreach Fellowship, or participate in a recognized student organization or athletic trip abroad, as individuals or in groups, must provide the College with a "Release of Liability, Waiver of Rights, Assumption of Risks and Indemnity Agreement" in a form provided by the College, acknowledging their understanding of the risks of such travel, affirming that they have reviewed and understand the relevant safety-related materials, and stating that they are assuming the risks related to their international travel. Students under the age of 18 must obtain a parental/guardian signature on the form.

Countries, or areas within a country, placed on the U.S. State Department Travel Warning List fall into one of two levels of severity. Austin College will not grant or award credit, funding, support or otherwise sponsor any international academic or co-curricular project in any country, or area within a country, for which the U.S. State Department has issued the more severe warning.

These include locations for which the U.S. State Department has:

1. Issued a travel warning that orders departure of U.S. dependents and non-emergency personnel;
2. Recommended that U.S. citizens depart the country;
3. Advised U.S. citizens against all travel to the country; or
4. Recommended that U.S. citizens defer non-essential travel to the country.

Additionally, Austin College students are strongly advised to use caution when traveling to countries for which the U.S. State Department has issued lesser warning levels or alerts, to include situations in which the State Department has:

1. Warned U.S. citizens of the risks or danger (or potential risks or danger) of travel to the country;
2. Urged U.S. citizens to evaluate carefully their security and safety before traveling to the country;
3. Warned or cautioned U.S. citizens to consider the risks of travel to the country;
4. Cautioned U.S. citizens to take prudent security measures;
5. Urged or warned U.S. citizens to weigh the necessity of travel to the country; or
6. Urged U.S. citizens to exercise extreme caution.

In order to travel to a “less severe” travel-warning country, a student must first follow normal program application procedures defined by the Center for International Education, the Global Learning Committee, or other recognized College organization. Second, the student must complete the “AC Liability Release, provided by the Center for Global Learning. Because travel to such countries may require time for approval, students should submit this form and supporting documentation to the Center for Global Learning no later than 15 business days before any program deadlines, and at least 30 business days prior to departure.

The Global Learning Committee will review the student liability supplement and the travel warning appeal, and approve or deny the request for travel. Appeals will go to the Vice President for Academic Affairs for final approval.