



Center for Global Education

College Policy for Participation on International Program(s) to a Country/Region under U.S. State Department Travel Advisories of Level 3 or 4 and/or Center for Disease Control Travel Warnings

Introduction

As part of its educational mission, Providence College (PC) aims to provide transformative international academic and cultural learning experiences to help students develop and acquire the knowledge, attitudes, and skills that will prepare them to:

- have a diverse and knowledgeable worldview
- comprehend the international dimensions of their major field of study
- develop cross-cultural sensitivity and adaptability, and
- utilize global competencies throughout their professional and personal lives

At the same time, PC is committed to providing safe international program experiences for our students, faculty and staff. All decisions regarding program operations are made with reference to information from a number of sources here and abroad, including the Consular Information sheets and Travel Advisories issued by the U.S. Department of State (www.travel.state.gov) and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) (www.cdc.gov/travel).

U.S. State Department: Travel Advisories

The U.S. State Department issues a Travel Advisory for each country of the world. Travel Advisories follow a consistent format and use plain language to help U.S. citizens find and use important security information. Travel Advisories apply up to four standard levels of advice, give a description of the risks, and provide clear actions U.S. citizens should take to help ensure their safety. To see a complete list of Travel Advisories for every country in the world, see travel.state.gov/traveladvisories. The Travel Advisory appears at the top of each country page, with a color corresponding to each level:

- Level 1 - Exercise Normal Precautions: This is the lowest advisory level for safety and security risk. There is some risk in any international travel. Conditions in other countries may differ from those in the United States and may change at any time.
- Level 2 - Exercise Increased Caution: Be aware of heightened risks to safety and security. The Department of State provides additional advice for travelers in these areas in the Travel Advisory. Conditions in any country may change at any time.
- Level 3 - Reconsider Travel: Avoid travel due to serious risks to safety and security. The Department of State provides additional advice for travelers in these areas in the Travel Advisory. Conditions in any country may change at any time.
- Level 4 – Do Not Travel: This is the highest advisory level due to greater likelihood of life-threatening risks. During an emergency, the U.S. government may have very limited ability to provide assistance. The Department of State advises that U.S. citizens not travel to the country or to leave as soon as it is safe to do so. The Department of State provides additional advice for travelers in these areas in the Travel Advisory. Conditions in any country may change at any time.

Varying Levels within a Country

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The US State Department issues an overall Travel Advisory level for a country, but levels of advice may vary for specific locations or areas within a country. For instance, in Mexico, the US State Department may advise U.S. citizens to “Exercise Increased Caution” (Level 2) in the country as a whole, but to “Reconsider Travel” (Level 3) or “Do Not Travel (Level 4) to particular areas within the country.

Providence College requires a program or students travelling to a country or region with a risk level of three to submit a “Petition for Exception” (see section C for more details).

Under no conditions will Providence College approve travel to countries or regions with a risk level of four.

CDC: Health Precautions and Travel Health Warnings

- A **Travel Health Precaution** is a notification by the CDC that a disease outbreak is occurring in a widespread geographic area. The purpose of a travel health precaution is to provide accurate information to travelers and Americans living abroad about the status of the outbreak (i.e., the magnitude, scope, and rapidity of spread), specific precautions to reduce their risk for infection, and what to do if they become ill while in the area.
- A **Travel Health Warning** is a notification by the CDC that a widespread, serious outbreak of a disease of public health concern is expanding outside a more limited area or populations than were initially affected. The **CDC recommends against nonessential travel to the area** because the risk for the traveler is considered to be high (i.e., the risk is increased because of evidence of transmission outside defined settings and/or inadequate containment).

A. Policy for Providence College Sponsored and Faculty-led International Programs

- Providence College observes U.S. State Department Travel Advisories and CDC Travel Health Warnings with respect to all PC short-term study abroad or service programs, and other international programs sponsored by the College.
- Providence College programs for locations currently under a Level 3 or 4 Travel Advisory or Travel Health Warning will be suspended for the duration of the Advisory/Warning, with the following distinctions noted below.
- Before Program Departure: With that suspension, no Providence College student is permitted to depart on a program in the affected locale, region, or country, nor are any short-term faculty or staff-led programs permitted to depart for the start of the program, as long as the Travel or Health Warning is in effect.
- Program in Session: If such an Advisory/Warning is issued while a PC program is already underway, the College may continue the program, or it may suspend or terminate the program, as the situation and circumstances warrant. Events and circumstances will be carefully monitored by the Dean of International Studies, the PC Director of Emergency Management and, if necessary, the College’s Safety & Emergency Management Committee in determining whether:
 - 1) the PC program(s) should be allowed to continue, or
 - 2) the program(s) should relocate temporarily to a safe site in order to allow the program to continue, or
 - 3) the program(s) should temporarily suspend operations, or
 - 4) the program(s) should be closed and the participants return to the U.S.

B. Policy for Study Abroad on Recognized Non-Providence College Programs

- PC will not approve students going on College-sponsored programs that take place in countries for which a U.S. State Department level 3 or 4 Travel Advisory or CDC Travel Health Warning has been issued.
- In the instance of a Level 3 or 4 Travel Advisory or Health Warning issued while a Providence College student is participating on a PC-recognized program already in progress, the Dean of International Studies will evaluate the situation on a case-by-case basis, in consultation with the PC Director of Emergency Management and the program provider or host institution. If the U.S. State Department issues an evacuation or departure order, Providence College approval for any student studying in the affected area will be withdrawn and the student will be expected to depart, as directed.

C. Petition for an Exception

Requests for an exception to these policies will be reviewed by the Dean of International Studies, in consultation with College senior administrators, who may, in certain instances, grant a waiver. The decision of the Dean of International Studies is final. If participation on the program is approved, the participants will be required to sign a Special Release and Hold Harmless Agreement. In the case of students, both they and their parents or guardians will have to sign.

(Previous policy approved by the International Programs' Advisory Committee, October 2011)