As a part of its mission, Luther College is committed to providing opportunities for students, faculty, and staff to engage in international study, research, and travel. Individuals who travel abroad are encouraged to plan well in advance so that sufficient time is available to research the destination, prepare for any risk and security issues in country, acquire appropriate visas and other travel documents, and obtain recommended immunizations. Travel anywhere in the world involves some level of risk; appropriate advanced planning is an important component in helping to manage this risk.

Scope

This policy establishes the requirements students, faculty, and staff must meet before and during any college-related international travel. The college first established a written international travel policy in October 2015. The policy was revised in February 2019 to correspond to changes made by the U.S. State Department to their system of travel advisories. This policy applies to travel anywhere outside the United States and pays particular attention to travel to Level 3 and Level 4 risk rated countries under the U.S. State Department’s rating system (see below). This policy does not apply to personal travel undertaken by students, faculty, and staff outside the United States.

Definitions

Faculty and Staff mean all full- and part-time employees of Luther, including individuals on short-term contracts and appointments.

Student means any person who is officially enrolled at Luther sometime during the calendar year in which the period of college-related travel occurs, whether or not credit is being awarded for the specific international experience. Student also refers to an individual who has been admitted for studies to Luther and participates in Luther-sponsored international travel immediately prior to enrollment. It also applies to a recent graduate engaging in Luther-sponsored international travel immediately after graduation from Luther.

International Travel means travel organized and/or supported by Luther for a variety of purposes, including but not limited to study, research, teaching, scholarship, internship, service, conference attendance, administrative enrichment, student group travel, or any other purpose, irrespective of duration and/or whether or not academic credit is being awarded.

U.S. State Department Travel Advisories refer to guidance and risk ratings assigned by the U.S. State Department. The U.S. State Department issues travel advisories for all countries, along with a corresponding risk rating. For many countries, the U.S. State Department also designates higher or lower risk regions or locations within the overall country rating. Each advisory specifies the types of risk that contributed to the rating: crime, terrorism, health, civil unrest, natural disasters, and/or a time-limited event (such as a major sporting event or gathering.) In addition, the U.S. State Department provides and publishes within the travel advisories advice to its own employees regarding specific travel destinations, routes, and restrictions. Luther uses the advisories as one important piece of information in making decisions about the locations of our off-campus courses; in determining appropriate locations for faculty, staff, and student travel; and as a means of assessing changing conditions.

U.S. State Department Risk Rating Levels 1-4

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.
Luther College International Travel Procedures

Travel to a Level 1 or Level 2 Country

1. Students, faculty, or staff traveling to a Level 1 or Level 2 country simply need to receive approval through the appropriate department or office and register their international travel through Luther’s online International Travel Registration system, https://studyaway.luther.edu/ (and select Travel Registry from the list of options). International Travel Registration provides Luther with the necessary information to locate travelers in the event of a crisis or emergency. Approval is granted by the following departments/offices:
   • Students: Center for Global Learning;
   • Faculty: Dean’s Office;
   • Staff: V.P. responsible for department or office.

2. As part of the International Travel Registration process identified in number 1 above, students must complete Luther’s "Student Agreement and Liability Waiver for Off-Campus Programs." Students who are under 18 years of age must obtain a parent/guardian signature.

3. In addition, students traveling to a Level 1 or Level 2 destination will need to complete and submit the relevant forms and documents as instructed by the Center for Global Learning for the specific program. This includes obtaining international health insurance as directed by the Center for Global Learning.

4. Travelers should pay particular attention not only to the overall country risk rating, but also to the rating assigned to any given region or location within the country. If a particular region or location within a Level 2 country is assigned a risk rating of Level 3 or Level 4, travel may not be approved to that region or location due to safety concerns.

Travel to a Level 3 or Level 4 Country

1. Students, faculty, or staff requesting approval to travel to a Level 3 or Level 4 destination must receive advanced approval from the International Studies Board (serving as the college's international travel review committee) and the Director of the Center for Global Learning (in consultation with the Vice President and Dean of the College, insurance personnel, and others).

2. Individuals seeking approval for travel to a Level 3 or Level 4 destination must set up a meeting with the Director of the Center for Global Learning who will outline the approval process. This may include having to submit a written description for review by the International Studies Board that includes: a) goals, objectives, and justifications for the proposed travel; b) alternatives considered to the proposed destination and why these alternatives will not meet the goals and objectives; c) personal experience that demonstrates the level of maturity and judgment needed to travel to a potentially dangerous location; and d) the potential steps to be followed in order to minimize risk, acknowledging the specific threats for the destination. Because travel to such countries may require time for approval, individuals should normally allow 15 to 25 business days to process the approval.
   • For students, Luther will not approve, award credit, provide funding, offer support, or otherwise sponsor any international travel to a country or area within a country for which the U.S. State Department has issued a Level 4 – Do Not Travel advisory.
   • For faculty and staff, Luther may grant approval, in special circumstances, for travel to a Level 4 – Do not Travel advisory country if appropriate justification is demonstrated.
   • For students, faculty, and staff, Luther may grant approval for travel to a Level 3 – Reconsider Travel country pending a review of the nature of the travel and steps taken to minimize risk. This also includes travel to a Level 3 region or location within a Level 2 country. If approved, individuals will need to adhere to the travel directives within the advisory that the U.S. State Department provides to government employees who travel in that region or location.

3. If travel is approved, individuals will need to complete the “Assumption of Risk and Waiver of Liability” form that is designed for international travel to a country rated as Level 3 or Level 4 by the U.S. State Department.

4. Should a Level 4 – Do Not Travel advisory be issued/revised while an individual is already in the affected country, the International Studies Board, the Director of the Center for Global Learning, and the Vice President and Dean of the College will convene to assess the situation and make a recommendation to the President regarding the appropriate response based on the safety and security of participants. The response may include immediate departure from the country and may affect the number of credits earned.
LUTHER CENTER FOR GLOBAL LEARNING
Assumption of Risk and Waiver of Liability
(For international travel to a country rated as Level 3 or Level 4 by the U.S. State Department)

Note: This is a release of legal rights—please read and consider carefully before signing.

Traveler's Information

Traveler's Name (please print): _____________________________________________________________

Program Name, Project Description, or Reason for Travel:

_____________________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________

Country Name(s): _______________________________________________________________________

Dates of Travel in Country: __________________________________________________________________

Area/Locations Rated as Level 3 or Level 4: _________________________________________________

Additional Details (please initial next to each applicable item):

_____ For students: I am at least 18 years old.

_____ For students: I have discussed this document and my participation in this international experience with my parents/guardians.

_____ For everyone: I have read and understand the U.S. Department of State Travel advisory for the country(ies) to which I propose traveling, http://travel.state.gov/.

_____ For everyone: I have discussed the travel warning and proposed travel to the country(ies) listed above with the Director of the Center for Global Learning.

_____ For everyone: I understand that it is my responsibility to review the health risks associated with my travel destination and I have consulted the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention travel health resources, available at www.cdc.gov/travel/.

_____ For everyone: I understand that the U.S. Government and/or Luther College may not be able to provide any legal, medical or emergency assistance while I am in the country(ies) listed above.

_____ For everyone: I realize that conditions within a particular destination may change frequently and I agree to monitor conditions daily while in country. I also agree to register my travel with the U.S. State Department’s Smart Traveler Enrollment Program (STEP), https://step.state.gov/step/ as one means of staying informed of changing conditions. (Please note: STEP registration is only available for U.S. citizens. International students should register their travel with their home country's Embassy/Consulate in the destination country.)

Please complete and sign the reverse of this form.
As a condition of participation in the above mentioned international experience, I hereby acknowledge and agree as follows:

Assumption of Risks

I acknowledge that the decision to participate in this international experience is entirely my own choice, voluntary, and not a condition of my status as a student or employee at Luther College. I understand that all international travel involves a certain level of risk and that my participation in this particular travel experience to (insert Level 3 or Level 4 country name(s)) may involve risks not normally associated with general international travel.

I understand that Luther College cannot guarantee my safety or security while abroad. I understand that a variety of in-country circumstances, such as political or civil unrest, terrorism-related concerns, factional disputes, religious tensions, economic instability, etc. may adversely affect transportation, medical care, the suitability of accommodations, the quality of food/water, the prevalence of infectious diseases, and/or my overall perceptions of safety and security. These risks may range from rather minor to serious, including the risk of serious injury or loss of life. I agree that it is my responsibility to investigate for myself the appropriateness of my participation in this experience. By my participation, I accept these risks.

I agree to maintain a high level of vigilance while in country and will take appropriate steps to increase my security awareness, including consulting with the U.S. State Department guidelines for security in country. I agree to conduct myself in a safe and prudent manner at all times.

Waiver of Liability

Mindful of the risks described above, I, on behalf of myself, my family, heirs, and representatives fully accept these risks and hereby release, discharge, and agree to hold harmless Luther College, its Board of Regents, officers, employees, faculty, instructors, agents and assigns (hereinafter referred to as “Releasees”) from any liability; claims; demands; rights; causes of action for personal illness, injuries or death; or any damage to or loss of personal property which may occur en route to, during, from, or as a result of my participation in this international experience caused by or contributed to in whole or in any part by any action or failure to act, negligence, breach of contract, or other misconduct occurring during the course of my participation in this international experience. In the event any such claims are asserted against Luther College or the other Releasees, I (or my parent/guardian if I am under age 18) agree to defend and indemnify the Releasees against any and all such claims, demands or causes of action.

I have carefully read and considered this Assumption of Risk and Waiver of Liability document before signing it. I understand that if I am a Luther student, this Assumption of Risk and Waiver of Liability is an agreement that is intended to be in addition to the Student Agreement and Liability Waiver for Off-Campus Programs previously signed by me which is incorporated herein by reference. No representations, statements, or inducements—oral or written—apart from the foregoing written statement, have been made.

Participant Signature: ____________________________________________ Date: ______________________

Parent/Guardian Signature (if under 18): ____________________________ Date: ______________________

Please return the completed form to the Luther Center for Global Learning.