



International Travel Risk Policy

I. Policy Statement

WPI students, faculty, and staff travel all over the world for their studies and research. All travel entails some degree of risk, with travel to some locations involving relatively higher levels of risk. WPI endeavors to manage and mitigate potential travel risks for its students, faculty and staff, and to provide resources to assist WPI community members in preparing for safe and successful international travel. This policy establishes a set of standards and expectations associated for WPI-Sponsored International Travel to reduce personal and institutional risk.

II. Scope

This policy applies to all WPI-Sponsored International Travel by students, faculty and staff.

III. Definitions

“Global Travel Review and Response Team (GTRRT)” refers to a WPI committee that is tasked with assessing travel-related risk, considering requests for exceptions to this policy, and responding to and offering support to individuals and groups abroad during emergencies in consultation with International SOS. The GTRRT is coordinated through the Global School, 508-831-5547 or globaltravel@wpi.edu.

“High-Risk Destinations” refers to countries, regions, or cities with the following designations: (a) U.S. Department of State [Travel Advisory Level 3 or Level 4](#); (b) Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) [Travel Health Warning Level 3: Avoid Nonessential Travel](#) and/or [COVID-19 Travel Health Notice Level 4: COVID-19 Very High](#); or (c) High or Extreme Travel Risk destinations, as defined by [International SOS Global Risk Ratings](#).

“Students” is broadly construed to mean undergraduate, graduate, professional, and any others who pursue educational programs at WPI.

“WPI-Sponsored International Travel” means all travel by WPI students, faculty, and staff that is part of academic, scholarly, or business work in which the traveler is representing WPI, that is funded, in whole or in part by WPI funds (regardless of purpose) or by a grant, foundation, company, or other university. Such travel may include, but is not limited to travel for: teaching, research, academic study, attendance at a conference, official global project programs, internships, volunteer or work programs and other experiential learning, field studies, performances, athletic contests, or trips abroad in connection with a WPI-recognized student organization, academic or administrative unit.

“WPI MyTrips Travel Registry” is a confidential and secure database for maintaining key travel information for all WPI students, faculty, and staff conducting WPI-Sponsored



International Travel. It is the official and authoritative source of traveler information that forms the basis for WPI's emergency response protocols and communications strategy (e.g., alerts, warnings, evacuation notices) when responding to an emergency or critical incident abroad.

IV. Policy

A. Requirements for All WPI-Sponsored International Travel

All students, faculty, and staff engaging in WPI-Sponsored International Travel are required to register their travel on the [WPI MyTrips Travel Registry](#) and update the registry if their travel plans change, as required by the [International Travel Registration Policy](#).

All WPI students participating in WPI-Sponsored International Travel are required to read and sign the [Participant Statement of Agreement \(PSA\)](#) from the Global Experience Office.

During WPI-Sponsored International Travel, all WPI students, faculty, and staff must be contactable by mobile phone or other communication devices for WPI to ensure traveler's safety and prompt incident response from International SOS.

B. WPI-Sponsored International Travel to High-Risk Destinations

All WPI students, faculty, and staff undertaking WPI-Sponsored International Travel are required to fully understand the risks of their travel, including any heightened security, medical, and/or natural disaster risks in travel to High-Risk Destinations. No one is required or will be coerced to travel to any location by anyone (e.g., by a faculty member, supervisor, or advisor).

WPI strongly discourages faculty and staff from traveling to High-Risk Destinations on WPI-Sponsored International Travel. Faculty and staff who wish to conduct such travel must obtain the approval of their Department Head/Division Head and sign the [Assumption of Risk and Travel Waiver](#) prior to traveling to a High-Risk Destination. The Department/Division Head must document that decision and submit the decision to the Global School (globaltravel@wpi.edu) for recordkeeping purposes.

WPI students, and faculty and staff traveling with students, are not permitted to travel to High-Risk Destinations on WPI-Sponsored International Travel, unless they obtain an exception from the GTRRT pursuant to Section IV(C).¹

It may be necessary for WPI to approve additional restrictions on all WPI-Sponsored International Travel on an interim basis in order to comply with legal requirements or for other compelling reasons, such as war or pandemic disease. Any interim restriction on WPI-

¹ After a comprehensive review of conditions in the program location, the GTRRT has the authority to make recommendations to the Provost that individuals in a program be granted an exception to this policy prior to departure and/or while the program is in location. The Provost (or designee) will decide whether to grant the exception.



Sponsored International Travel will be announced by the President of WPI and will remain in force for up to six (6) months from the date of issuance.

C. Exceptions to the Prohibition on Student Travel to High-Risk Destinations

WPI students, or faculty and staff traveling with students, may petition the GTRRT for an exception to the prohibition imposed on student travel to High-Risk Destinations on WPI-Sponsored International Travel.

Students, or faculty and staff who are traveling with students, seeking an exception must submit a [High-Risk Travel Exception Petition](#) to the GTRRT demonstrating a detailed knowledge of the risks involved in their proposed travel to a High-Risk Destination and the steps they are taking or plan to take to mitigate those risks. The GTRRT will review the petition, meet with the petitioner and their advisor, as applicable, and make a recommendation to the Provost. The Provost (or designee) will decide whether to grant an exception.

If the Provost (or designee) grants an exception, the students, and faculty and staff who are traveling with students, must sign the [Assumption of Risk and Travel Waiver](#) prior to traveling and submit it to the GTRRT. This waiver must be signed by each individual traveling, and undergraduate students must also obtain the signature of their parent/guardian.

The Provost may also require students, and faculty and staff who are traveling with students, to take further steps to mitigate risks, including, for example, additional health, safety and security precautions,² further training, special waivers, and/or additional insurance coverage.

D. WPI-Mandated Modification or Cancellation of WPI-Sponsored International Travel

It is possible that travel abroad may require modification or suspension by WPI due to sudden changes of health and/or safety risks. A decision to modify or cancel WPI-Sponsored International Travel will be made by the President or Provost, upon the recommendation of the GTRRT.

In making this assessment, the GTRRT may consider the following factors, including without limitation:

- The risks associated with continuing the activity at that location
- The risk management plan for the students, faculty, or staff involved
- The value of the academic experience in that specific location
- The advice of WPI's medical and security assistance provider.

² Such as carrying a satellite phone or tracking device; contacting a designated WPI official upon arrival in country and/or at regular intervals during travel; and obtaining permission from a WPI official before making side trips.



In circumstances where students, faculty, or staff are perceived to be in imminent danger and immediate action is required, WPI reserves the right to suspend the affected programs or activities immediately and initiate evacuation proceedings.

Students, faculty, or staff who fail to follow university orders do so at their own risk; may forfeit WPI's international travel assistance, academic credit, tuition payments or expense reimbursement; and may be held responsible for additional expenses incurred by WPI due to the individual's refusal to follow the University's order(s). Students may be subject to disciplinary action.

The Associate Director of Global Risk Management, in coordination with International SOS, will work with the student, faculty or staff member to appropriately and safely evacuate.

E. Trip Interruption and Cancellation Insurance

WPI encourages students, faculty, and staff to consider supplemental insurance options to cover trip interruption and cancellation costs.

V. Questions

If you have any questions regarding this policy, please contact The Global School at globaltravel@wpi.edu.

* * *

Policy Sponsor: Associate Director of Global Risk Management

Responsible Department: The Global School

Effective Date (i.e., date of Presidential Approval): November 2, 2020

Updated: June 24, 2021