**Requests for Waiver to the UW-Madison International Travel Policy under COVID-19**

As you likely are aware, under the UW-Madison international travel policy, there is a formalized process to request a waiver to the prohibition for students, including graduate and professional students, to travel to U.S. Department of State (DoS) level 3 and/or 4 advisory locations or a CDC level 3 warning location, or to locations otherwise identified as a “Travel Warning locations” by the Provost. This is known as the University International Travel Committee (UITC) process. The UITC is charged by the Dean and Vice Provost of the International Division as the university’s senior international officer (SIO) under authority delegated by the Provost. It is a committee of some 21 members across the campus with representation from senior faculty, academic staff, health professionals and other specific areas of supporting expertise.

Right now, in addition to the International Division’s worldwide suspension of student programming abroad (this suspension currently lasts through July 1, 2021), the overwhelming majority of countries worldwide remain under a CDC level 3 warning and/or a DoS level 3 or 4 advisory. See the linked resources below to look at specific countries:

CDC travel notices page here:

<https://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/notices>

And the CDC’s associated COVID-19 travel condition map and country lists here:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/travelers/map-and-travel-notices.html>

The DoS travel advisory system can be accessed here:

<https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/traveladvisories/traveladvisories.html/>

During the current unique circumstances created by COVID-19, rather than continue the existing UITC process and required submission of the formal waiver request, we have abbreviated the process temporarily in an effort to remain responsive to student needs. The Vice Provost has appointed three people (the associate dean of the International Division, the director of international internships, and the international safety and security director) as an interim UITC working group to review requests for waiver and offer recommendations to him in each case. The decision authority remains with the Vice Provost, as delegated by the Provost on all international matters.

Under this abbreviated process, we are asking that a student (undergraduate, graduate, or professional) who is requesting a waiver to the policy, submit a compelling narrative description of circumstances (detailing housing, safety, resources, etc.); academic purpose; how the program/research will advance them toward degree completion; duration for the requested waiver; and plans for addressing the local risks associated with COVID-19. All of these elements should be addressed with enough specificity to allow us to reach a justified recommendation for the Dean’s review and decision. Additionally, if the request is to conduct research abroad, it should be accompanied by a letter of support from student’s academic advisor or thesis/dissertation advisor. This process is also required for students to enroll in coursework at an international college or university on a non-affiliated program for the purpose of transferring credits back to UW-Madison.

If the traveler is a citizen of a foreign country and will remain in their country of record, the request must include a description of the health and medical insurance that will cover the traveler’s needs both while in the country and during any period of transit. All other students must enroll in Cultural Insurance Services International (CISI), the university’s international health and medical insurance.

Requests should be sent electronically to the requestor’s study abroad office (e.g., International Academic Programs—IAP). The study abroad office will review the request to ensure it has the office’s support and then forward the request and all related supporting materials to the International Safety and Security Director (ISSD) at ronald.machoian@wisc.edu. Each request should include as much detail as possible to support the Dean’s consideration.

We understand that the current circumstances due to COVID-19 are dynamic and unforeseen. UW-Madison’s position on students abroad during the pandemic is clearly expressed in the International Division’s [directive of 11 March 2020](https://international.wisc.edu/message-from-dean-podesta-on-covid-19-and-spring-2020-study-abroad/) and in the actions taken since that date to suspend outbound student travel, but exceptional requests for waiver to this policy will be considered on their individual merit.

Requested information for waiver requests under the abbreviated UITC process.

Your complete name:

Name of your degree(s) program of study:

Who is the dean or vice chancellor who approved your request for exemption to the [Chancellor’s outbound travel suspension](https://news.wisc.edu/updates-to-university-travel-for-employees-students-and-student-organizations/) under the characterization of “essential” travel?

Name of your academic advisor or thesis/dissertation advisor:

A point of contact(s) in the host country in case of emergency:

An expeditious means of communication with you if needed (personal e-mail addresses and internationally enabled cell phone number):

Who will take primary responsibility for you at UW-Madison while you are traveling (e.g., your dissertation advisor, committee chair, etc.). This person must understand that during your travel, they will act as the primary means of any necessary communication with you during time of need. Provide that person’s primary contact information here:

The physical address of your intended lodging:

In a narrative statement, please incorporate answers to the following questions to support your request for waiver to the UW-Madison international travel policy as well as any other information that you believe may be relevant for review.

* Describe your academic purpose and how the program/research will advance these purposes toward degree completion and why this travel cannot be postponed until the conditions of global pandemic have been mitigated to greater degree.
* Write a description of your circumstances including your housing and living arrangements, transportation plans, and any dynamic plans for either if you are going to move from place to place as your research plan indicates, etc.
* State the expected duration for the requested waiver and how you intend to return if the pandemic accelerates or is sustained beyond your planned research or curriculum and thus your return is precluded or interrupted (e.g., will you remain in the host country? What if your only route of travel is through a country that remains under significant threat from the pandemic? Etc.)
* Describe your capability to abide by public health and safety guidelines with comments on access to local resources in case of need.
* Address in detail your plans to mitigate any other risks identified in the U.S. Department of State travel advisory page specific to your destination, location, and activities.

During your time in the host country, what are your plans for addressing the local risks associated with COVID-19 and ensuring that you are not the source of virus to vulnerable populations? How will you meet any requirements to quarantine on arrival in the host country?

* Describe how you will remain insured for health and medical needs throughout the period of your intended time abroad under the requested waiver as well as during transit to and from the location (e.g., your eventual return to Madison, Wisconsin, even if that is only to defend a thesis or dissertation and file for graduation). Please be specific with the name of the plan and tell us if you already are enrolled or have previously been enrolled under the plan in the past.

*(Note: Remember, that a UW System policy requires you, as a UW-Madison student on university-sponsored travel of any kind, to enroll in Cultural Insurance Services International (CISI), the university’s international health and medical insurance plan. However, if you are at UW-Madison as a non-immigrant international student and are in, or will return to, your country of record for the requested travel, you will not be able to enroll in CISI and must explore other insurance options. Options could include coverage through a private provider or coverage under a national healthcare plan while you are at home. Please contact International Academic Programs (IAP) or the ISSD to discuss your specific circumstances if you are unsure how this requirement affects you.)*

* Provide a list of accessible medical facilities and briefly describe their capabilities. Include the closest surgical hospitals that can treat acute illness or traumatic injury as well as clinics/care available at each planned stop if you are moving about the country to conduct research.

Thank you for providing complete answers to the above questions. Your answers will help the UITC review your request and provide a meaningful recommendation to the Vice Provost and Dean of the International for his review and decision.