



INTERNATIONAL STUDIES ABROAD, INC.

SAFETY, SECURITY, AND WELL-BEING OF ISA PARTICIPANTS

The safety, security, and well-being of study abroad program participants are of primary importance to ISA. While neither ISA nor ISA's affiliate universities can guarantee a risk-free environment, all efforts are made to best ensure the safety, security, and well-being of our students and faculty participants throughout the duration of the program. ISA follows prudent measures to verify that all transportation, lodging, medical facilities, communications, and emergency responses are in place to best provide a safe environment for the study abroad program and their participants.

While ISA is firmly committed to the provision of this support, we also emphasize to students, faculty, and parents that all program participants must take responsibility for their own safety, security, and well-being. This is highlighted during pre-departure preparations, on-site orientation, and throughout students' stay in the host country. This means using common sense, being aware of their surroundings, and not putting themselves in compromising positions with the abuse of drugs or alcohol. The same precautions anyone would follow in their home communities in the U.S. should be maintained when traveling abroad.

The information below describes the infrastructure in place at ISA program sites abroad that provides logistical support for the students. A brief description of the safety and security measures taken regarding ISA's transportation, lodging, health support, and communications will demonstrate how daily activities lend to the safety and well-being of ISA program participants. Also detailed below are the guidelines and procedures established in the event that an act of war, terrorism, pandemic outbreak, or natural disaster occurs. ISA strongly encourages all participants to utilize governmental and private websites to read and learn about their study abroad destination including health, safety and security recommendations. Some key resources may be found:

<http://www.studiesabroad.com/resources>.

ISA Staff Support:

ISA employs local personnel at the majority of our international sites. Most were raised in the program city and all, without exception, are highly knowledgeable about the available facilities, customs, support services, and local people. A staff to student ratio of 1:20 is maintained with few exceptions on all ISA programs, and staff members are available 24-7 to respond to the needs of the program participants. In addition, each main ISA Resident Director has a cell phone, at least two land-lines (home and office), and email services at their disposal.

Stateside ISA support is available to students, faculty and parents 24-7 as well. The ISA Austin office may be contacted during regular business hours (Monday-Thursday, 7:00 AM . 7:00 PM CST / Friday, 7:00 AM . 5:00 PM). During the weekend and evening hours, ISA Austin's telephone answering machine provides the number for the ISA Austin office emergency contact that is on duty 24 hours per day, 7 days per week. The ISA Austin staff is trained to answer emergency calls and respond appropriately by following the ISA emergency guidelines.

ISA on-site staff provides support to students in the event that a program participant must go to the hospital or to a doctor. The on-site staff will assist in scheduling the appointment, accompanying the student on the visit, and aid the student in any other way necessary. Additionally, they will ensure that the student is aware of all procedures required to file a claim for reimbursement for medical services.

Lodging:

While there are no risk-free residential areas in any American or foreign city, ISA's student housing accommodations are located in areas deemed to be of lower risk. The same attentiveness is given to the arrangement of lodging during ISA-organized excursions. Hotels are selected based on the security of the area in which the accommodations are located, and also on their proximity to the sites to be visited. Furthermore, all students are provided with a description of their host family or housing arrangements and a contact telephone number prior to their departure in the event that a family member in the U.S. needs to contact the student abroad.

Medical Insurance:

Medical insurance is included in the price and covers the program participant for the official on-site period of program. This is not an optional benefit; every ISA participant will be covered by the ISA medical insurance coverage. ISA requires that all students have comprehensive insurance and has arranged for a group insurance policy. A detailed description of the coverage may be found [here](#).

Monitoring Worldwide Security Levels:

ISA stateside and on-site staff closely monitor U.S. State Department Travel Warnings, Travel Alerts, and Country Specific Information at all times. We also encourage students to visit the following two State Department websites for more information:

Department of State, Tips for Students Studying Abroad:

http://travel.state.gov/visa/americans/americans_1252.html

Department of State, Travel Warnings and Consular Information Sheets:

http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis_pa_tw/tw/tw_1764.html

U.S. State Department Travel Warnings:

If the U.S. State Department issues an official Travel Warning for an ISA location, and the warning includes an official State Department recommendation that all U.S. citizens evacuate the country, ISA's default action will be to cancel the program and proceed with evacuation procedures. If the program has not yet started, ISA's default course of action will be to suspend the program. Exceptions can be made if the language in the Travel Warning gives ISA management clear reason to believe that the warning is the result of dangers that exist in areas well outside of the city/cities where our program is operating. If we do suspend the program, we will work with students to transfer them to another ISA program. During this process, we will ask students to obtain written approval from their home institution. For further information about all State Department Travel Warnings, Travel Alerts, and Country Specific Information please click [here](#).

ISA Region-Specific Travel Restrictions:

In order to maintain the highest level of safety for all ISA participating students, ISA has restricted travel to certain areas of the world.

ISA participants are not allowed to enter or travel within the following regions during the participation of an ISA program:

- Haiti
- Iraq
- Afghanistan
- Eritrea
- Sudan
- Somalia
- Tunisia
- Egypt
- Côte d'Ivoire
- Libya
- Central African Republic
- Congo-Kinshasa
- Iran
- Cuba
- North Korea
- Syria
- The Gaza Strip

There are a wide variety of criteria that ISA uses to determine whether or not to restrict travel to a specific region. The restriction may be based on an ongoing situation which poses an immediate threat to ISA participants, significant regions of the country that are dangerous for ISA participants, the lack of services for US citizens, or other factors.

This list of restricted locations is continually updated based on ISA direct observation, US Department of State recommendation, Overseas Security Advisory Council, WHO reports, and expert consultation.

ISA reserves the right to add countries/regions to this list, without notice. Please contact ISA for more information on specific travel restrictions if you are planning to visit any location outside of your host country while participating on an ISA program:

All ISA students are made aware of the regions that have travel restrictions when they sign our Code of Conduct which states that they will abide by all travel restrictions established by ISA. It is the ISA student's responsibility to be aware of the most current travel restrictions, which can always be accessed on ISA's website here. Violation of any ISA travel restriction is cause for automatic dismissal from the ISA program, and participants will be required to return to the U.S. immediately.

Potential Evacuation of Students from Program Site:

Any decision to evacuate participants from an ISA program site will be based largely on the advisories and warnings of the U.S. State Department, but also on information gathered from OSAC, news media, local government, law enforcement agencies, and trusted friends/colleagues residing at the affected site. In the event the U.S. State Department issues a Travel Warning for an ISA location after the program has started, and if the warning also includes an official State Department recommendation that all U.S. citizens evacuate the country, ISA's default action will be to evacuate students. Evacuation efforts will include the following:

- ISA resident staff at affected ISA program location will work to help students make necessary changes to their return flights back to the United States. Students will be

responsible for any fees charged by airline to change flights. ISA is prepared to temporarily cover these fees for participants who cannot pay. A detailed accounting of the expenses incurred by ISA on behalf of students will be maintained, and participants will be invoiced for the costs accordingly.

- ISA office(s), computers and phones at the locations will be made available for students to contact airlines and/or interested parties. The ISA on-site office(s) would serve as the main communications center(s), although ISA student housing in most sites are also equipped with phones, and some with internet.
- Another key resource is CMI, ISA's insurance provider. CMI can provide information and coordination of various resources as necessary in the event an emergency evacuation is deemed necessary by ISA Management.
- ISA's host university(s) will be ready to offer assistance. All of our host universities are prepared to provide various resources in the event of a political unrest, and these resources would include meeting spaces, communications infrastructure, and temporary safe havens, should the entire ISA group need to remain in one place at one time to coordinate the evacuation response.
- Per the U.S. State Department web page on section regarding evacuation (www.state.gov): "Sometimes commercial transportation entering and leaving a country is disrupted during a political upheaval or natural disaster. If this happens, and if it appears unsafe for Americans to remain, the embassy and consulates will work with the task force in Washington to charter special airlifts and ground transportation to help Americans to depart. The U.S. Government cannot order Americans to leave a foreign country. It can only advise and try to assist those who wish to leave. By law, an American receiving evacuation assistance is required to sign a promissory note, Emergency Loan Application and Evacuation Document agreeing to reimburse the government for some of the evacuation costs." ISA will help students with the arrangements to utilize this assistance.
- ISA will arrange for ISA participants. Ground transportation to airport(s). Evacuation by ground transport to neighboring cities or countries may also be necessary due to airport closures, overbooking of flights, or loss of access to nearby airports. ISA will arrange and cover the expenses for this transportation. ISA's agreements with providers of ground transportation will facilitate these efforts.
- ISA on-site staff in nearby ISA program locations can assist students who may need to be rerouted through those locations.
- If evacuation is delayed due to circumstances beyond the students. Control, ISA will arrange for students. Extended housing in the host country. Students will be responsible for covering the costs of the extended housing and related incidental expenses. For students who are temporarily unable to pay, ISA is prepared to offer temporary financial assistance. Detailed accounting of the expenses incurred by ISA will be maintained and the participants will be invoiced for the costs.
- ISA will use its resources and communications network to try to keep interested parties (e.g. home institution, parents, embassy etc.) informed, as necessary and appropriate, of the students' whereabouts, status, and wellbeing.
- ISA will work with students' host institution(s) to salvage the work they've completed during their time in the host country. ISA cannot guarantee that these efforts will be successful. ISA will explore various possibilities, including the completion of coursework at remote locations. The possibility of completing the cancelled program at an alternative ISA program location will also be explored.
- If ISA cannot provide students with a reasonable means of completing the academic coursework for the affected program, ISA will make attempts to recover and refund tuition plus any other recoverable program costs.

Safety Orientation:

We begin sharing safety information with students prior to their departure, as soon as they are accepted to the program. ISA's on-line pre-departure orientation covers a variety of valuable

information and is divided into three parts: "Ready", "Set", and "Go". The orientation provides recommended safety precautions, links to a number of health and safety resources, and important ISA information for emergency situations.

Prior to their departure from the U.S., students are provided with the names and photographs of the ISA on-site staff or drivers who will be meeting students at the airport. Students are given detailed information regarding their airport pick-up and transportation, and are advised to only accept rides from the specified individuals. Upon the students' arrival to the program site, the on-site ISA resident staff facilitates an orientation meeting to provide useful information on acclimation to the host culture as well as emergency situation procedures. The staff provides all students with instructions regarding the protocol to follow in the event of a political crisis, terrorist event, natural disaster, or other emergency. Each program participant is provided with a Contact Card upon arrival in-country that contains the names and cell phone numbers of all on-site ISA staff members, the appropriate U.S. embassy phone number and address, the recommended local medical facilities, and the local equivalent to the U.S. emergency "911" number. Students are strongly encouraged to carry the contact card with them at all times while are the program. During orientation, students also receive names, addresses, and phone numbers of medical facilities at the program site. Medical facilities are recommended based on the quality of their services, proximity to the areas in which students live and/or to the university or classroom facility, and their experience providing services to American students.

Student Health And Safety:

Please click [here](#) for up-to-date alerts for ISA program locations

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The information below describes ISA infrastructure, procedures and guidelines that will help ISA reduce students risk while abroad.

Transportation:

ISA is consistent in utilizing the safest and most reliable transportation (bus and plane) for ISA-sponsored travel. The companies are selected based on their prior safety records, insurance coverage, their administrative responsiveness, and the mutual trust that has developed as a result of the well-established relationships with ISA. In the selection of a transportation company, ISA also takes into account the recommendations from trustworthy external advisors.