



ISEP HEALTH & SAFETY POLICY

Updated October 2024

ISEP is a community made up of higher education institutions around the world. We make the health, safety, and well-being of our students a priority. In doing so, we also strive to respect the cultural differences surrounding health and safety in our vast network. In addition to depending on the emergencies and procedures of our member universities on-site, ISEP has outlined the following policies and guidelines to enhance the confidence our members have in each other and in ISEP when responding to emergency or crisis situations.

ISEP Health and Safety Task Force

ISEP is committed to making the health and safety of our students a top priority. As such, ISEP has appointed a permanent health and safety task force to ensure that the organization holds itself accountable in striving to meet best practices and good standards as defined by the education abroad industry.

Members:

Alexandra Kahn-Johnston *Chair & Primary Decision Maker*; Director of Health, Safety & Risk Management; Director of Member Relations

Katie Wiggins-Gawlik *Secondary Decision Maker*; Assistant Director of Member Relations

Melody Stratton Director of Communications and Marketing

Jaycie King Senior Manager, Institutional Marketing

Jolene Blackmon University Relations Manager

Olivia Cordero Student Services Supervisor – Program Operations

The task force will be responsible for overseeing the following:

- Maintaining a comprehensive ISEP Emergency/Crisis Management Plan related to student emergencies
- Maintaining organizational policies related to student emergencies
- Providing a template and criteria for conducting appropriate risk assessments
- Ensuring ISEP staff are properly trained in student emergency/crisis management
- Maintaining an awareness of legal issues, privacy laws and federal regulations that affect how ISEP and membership approach health and safety issues
- Maintaining internal procedures to enhance student health and safety preparedness and staff preparedness for crisis situations
- Communicating ISEP's health and safety policies to the membership and work with staff to ensure member adherence to ISEP's health and safety standards
- Reviewing student emergency protocols and policies on an annual basis
- Discussing specific student emergency situations as they arise and determine courses of action
- Holding debriefings on student emergencies in order to make improvements and identify lessons learned

Statement of Responsibility: ISEP

- A. ISEP will maintain an emergency action plan and protocols for various emergency scenarios. This action plan will be reviewed and updated annually.
- B. ISEP will maintain a code of conduct for all programs and communicate the consequences of non-compliance to participants.
- C. ISEP will provide a general health and safety orientation for all ISEP students prior to their departure.
- D. ISEP will require that all students complete a medical self-assessment form after placement to help host coordinators prepare for possible health and safety risks.
- E. ISEP will require all students purchase comprehensive health insurance provided a plan of a similar or higher level is not provided in country.

- F. ISEP will require health insurance of all students entering the U.S. on a J-1 visa per SEVIS regulations.
- G. ISEP will require that all students purchase medical, evacuation, and repatriation insurance.
- H. ISEP will include questions regarding health and safety in the application for ISEP membership and will evaluate membership in part based on health and safety preparedness and the medical and professional services offered. Some of our considerations will include:
 - o Location and likelihood of emergency situations due to location
 - o Past health and safety concerns/most common health and safety concerns for international students
 - o Protocols in place to handle student emergencies (for the university and study abroad office)
 - o Medical and mental health service availability
 - o Dorm and host family safety

*Please note, ISEP will consider the norms of the host country and will strive make reasonable requests regarding health and safety based on the particular environment and resources available.

- I. ISEP will maintain good communication with all necessary parties in cases of emergency.
- J. ISEP will initiate safety check-ins with ISEP students in cases of a level 1 emergencies for students who are currently within the start and end dates of their ISEP program. The decision to check-in with students will be determined based on the location, size and scope of an event. ISEP is not responsible for checking in with students post-program who may be traveling or for checking in with students who are traveling to a country where ISEP has suspended or canceled programs for health and safety reasons. Should a student be traveling after their program or in a country where ISEP has suspended/canceled a program for health and safety reasons and have active ISEP insurance, the student should contact ISEP for assistance, and ISEP will do its due diligence to assist.
- K. ISEP will maintain an emergency contact number available 24 hours a day / 365 days a year: (+1) 301.681.2388
- L. ISEP will monitor a variety of sources to ensure that we are aware of any potential or current problems in countries where we have programs. These include but are not limited to:
 - o Information from ISEP Coordinators on-site
 - o Consular Affairs Bureau of the U.S. Department of State
 - o Overseas Security Advisory Council (OSAC) managed by the Bureau of Diplomatic Security
 - o The Center for Disease Control (CDC)
 - o World Health Organization (WHO)
 - o AXA Team Assist and other security partners
- M. ISEP will remain knowledgeable about health and safety issues pertinent to international education and will provide ISEP staff adequate training to properly address these issues.

Statement of Responsibility: Students

**Adapted from "Responsible Study Abroad: Good Practices for Health and Safety," 2002*

In study abroad, as in other settings, participants can have a major impact on their own health and safety through the decisions they make before and during their program and by their day-to-day choices and behaviors.

Participants should:

- A. Assume responsibility for all the elements necessary for their personal preparation for the program and participate fully in orientations.
- B. Read and carefully consider all materials issued by ISEP, the home institution and host institution that relate to safety, health, legal, environmental, political, cultural, and religious conditions in the host country(ies).

- C. Conduct their own research on the country(ies) they plan to visit with particular emphasis on health and safety concerns, as well as the social, cultural, and political situations
- D. Consider their physical and mental health, and other personal circumstances when applying for or accepting a place in a program, and make available to ISEP, the home institution and host institution accurate and complete physical and mental health information and any other personal data that is necessary in planning for a safe and healthy study abroad experience.
- E. Obtain and maintain appropriate insurance coverage and abide by any conditions imposed by the carriers.
- F. Inform parents/guardians/families and any others who may need to know about their participation in the study abroad program, provide them with emergency contact information, and keep them informed of their whereabouts and activities.
- G. Reply to communications from ISEP to confirm their safety in an emergency situation
- H. Understand and comply with the terms of participation, codes of conduct, and emergency procedures of the program.
- I. Attend pre-departure and on-site orientations
- J. Be aware of local conditions and customs that may present health or safety risks when making daily choices and decisions. Promptly express any health or safety concerns to ISEP Staff, the home institution or host institution before and/or during the program.
- K. Sign up to receive embassy and travel alerts for their host country and countries to which they may travel.
- L. Accept responsibility for their own decisions and actions.
- M. Obey host-country laws and comply with on-site authorities in the event of an emergency or crisis.
- N. Behave in a manner that is respectful of the rights and well-being of others, and encourage others to behave in a similar manner.
- O. Avoid illegal drugs and excessive or irresponsible consumption of alcohol.
- P. Become familiar with the procedures for obtaining emergency health and legal system services in the host country.

Statement of Responsibility: ISEP Members

ISEP is aware of the cultural differences surrounding health and safety. ISEP understands that these statements may be interpreted in the context of local country laws. The following are general standards for ISEP members to follow:

- A. Provide ISEP emergency contact information for the ISEP coordinator or relevant campus emergency contact information in order to be able to reach someone in the event of an emergency.
- B. Remain familiar with ISEP's Health and Safety Policy and Emergency Action Plan
- C. Ensure that coordinator or other designated advisor is available at appointed times and in emergencies and designate a substitute during absences from the office

- D. Notify ISEP of student emergencies or other major emergencies as soon as possible
- E. Make every effort to maintain consistent and thorough communications with ISEP and students during an emergency situation including, if relevant, the provision of the local medical contact's information in order to facilitate care for a student.
- F. Make every effort to provide necessary support to ISEP student(s) throughout an emergency situation
- G. Provide a pre-departure orientation for outgoing students addressing health and safety issues and emergency information students should collect upon arrival at the host institution
- H. Provide an on-site orientation for incoming students addressing health and safety issues, emergency protocols and necessary emergency contact information
- I. Provide specific information for both medical and mental health services locally either on campus and/or in the local community
- J. Review all incoming student medical forms and consider the information in conjunction with any additional medical information and forms the member may require upon arrival

Travel Advisory Policy

ISEP closely monitors global travel advisories from governments of the following countries:

- Australia
- Canada
- France
- Germany
- Netherlands
- New Zealand
- Spain
- Switzerland
- United Kingdom
- United States

ISEP may choose to continue to run programs in countries with active travel warnings and advisories due to additional information we receive from our other monitored sources including but not limited to the host country's government, the Overseas Security Advisory Council (OSAC), the World Health Organization (WHO), and the Center for Disease Control (CDC), and ISEP's security partners.

In the event that a travel advisory level is heightened for a country after a student applies but before a program begins, and the home university prohibits students from participating on a program in a country with a travel advisory at that level, ISEP will:

- Attempt to find the student an alternate academically appropriate placement,
- Defer the student to a later semester in the same program, or
- Refund all fees paid to ISEP (Only if the student does not wish to accept an alternate placement).

Should ISEP determine to cancel or suspend a program due to a travel warning, ISEP will follow the program cancellation and suspension policy.

Program Cancellation, Suspension Policy

Despite ISEP's confidence in our partners and the health and safety protocols in place, ISEP may determine it necessary to suspend or cancel a program for reasons including but not limited to political unrest, social instability, contagious disease control, military operations, terrorism concerns within a host country, or other health and safety concerns.

The final decision to suspend or cancel a program will be made by ISEP on a case-by-case basis, taking into account advice from the host university, the U.S. Department of State (or that host country's government), the Overseas Security Advisory Council (OSAC), the World Health Organization (WHO), the Center for Disease Control (CDC), ISEP's security partners, and any other sources that may be relevant to the specific emergency.

ISEP will notify any students and coordinators affected by a program cancellation or suspension as soon as possible after a decision has been made. ISEP will work with member universities to try to find alternate host sites for students affected if at all possible. Should ISEP not be able to find a desirable academically appropriate site for a student or defer the student to a later semester in the same program, the student will receive a refund of any fees paid to ISEP less non-recoverable costs.

If students have already arrived on-site when this decision is made, ISEP will follow its evacuation policy and procedures. Should ISEP determine it necessary to suspend or cancel a program, ISEP recommends that other ISEP students do not travel to this area. As such, ISEP will not do active check-in communications if an emergency event were to take place in the location.

Evacuation Policy

The decision to evacuate a program will be made by ISEP on a case-by-case basis, taking into account advice from the host university, the U.S. Department of State (or that host country's government), the Overseas Security Advisory Council (OSAC), the World Health Organization (WHO), the Center for Disease Control (CDC), ISEP's security partners, and any other sources that may be relevant to the specific emergency. ISEP is the final decision maker as to whether or not evacuate a program and reserves the right to do so in the best interest of participants. If a student refuses evacuation from ISEP or AXA Team Assist, the student releases ISEP of any further responsibility for their safety or future evacuation needs. ISEP can only require evacuation of students who are within the program dates.

In the event of a program evacuation, and dependent on the incident, AXA Team Assist will evacuate students to the nearest safe location or home country either through commercial airlines or a chartered flight. The method of evacuation and location to which students will be evacuated is determined by AXA Team Assist. Students may be responsible for penalties assessed by air carriers that may result from itinerary changes or cancellations depending on the exact situation and coverage determinations under the AXA Team Assist evacuation policy.

- Depending on the point in time during a semester when the cancellation takes place, ISEP will work with home and host coordinators to find ways for students to finish their semester if at all practicable. This may include completing course work remotely or finding an alternative placement at an ISEP member university.
- ISEP will work with the host institution to salvage any grades and course work already completed at the host institution.
- ISEP staff will also work with students and coordinators individually to adjust member balances and possibly make partial refund payments depending on the circumstances.

Should ISEP determine it necessary to evacuate program participants from a specific location, ISEP also recommends that other students do not travel to this area. As such, ISEP will not do active check-in communications if an emergency event were to take place in the location.

Student Privacy Policy

ISEP strives to maintain student privacy in emergency situations. ISEP will not release any student information to external parties who are not directly involved in resolving an emergency situation. However, ISEP will do its due diligence to report incidents to a member university in order to assist in their compliance with local and federal regulations.

Note to U.S. members: As ISEP does not receive federal funding, ISEP, itself, is not subject to the reporting regulations of the Clery Act or Title IX.

ISEP does not receive funds under an applicable program of the U.S. Department of Education. As such, ISEP is not subject to the regulations of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). However, ISEP will strive to maintain student privacy with the following exceptions allowed for by FERPA as deemed necessary by ISEP executive or program staff:

- School officials with legitimate educational interest;
- Other schools to which a student is transferring;
- Specified officials for audit or evaluation purposes;
- Appropriate parties in connection with financial aid to a student;
- Organizations conducting certain studies for or on behalf of the school;
- Accrediting organizations;
- To comply with a judicial order or lawfully issued subpoena;
- Appropriate officials in cases of health and safety emergencies; and
- State and local authorities, within a juvenile justice system, pursuant to specific State law.

If ISEP is informed of an emergency situation of which the home and host coordinator are unaware, ISEP reserves the right to inform the necessary parties if it is deemed to be in the best interest of the student by ISEP executive or program staff.

ISEP may choose, in consultation with the home and/or host coordinators, to inform emergency contacts about a potential emergency abroad without the student's permission, such as when the student:

- is unable to speak for him/herself
- has been missing for more than 24 hours
- is perceived to be a danger to him/herself or others, or when
- a significant health, safety, or security incident affecting the entire program has occurred abroad

ISEP will store all medical information provided in a secure online environment. The medical self-assessment form is shared with home coordinator, host coordinator, and ISEP staff. In case of a student emergency, this information may be shared with any parties that may need to know pertinent medical information.

Student Code of Conduct

A student's participation in an ISEP program may be terminated early by ISEP, the home institution or the host institution if:

- 1) The student fails to remain enrolled full-time at the host institution
- 2) The student fails to maintain academic standards as defined by the student's home or host institution
- 3) The student is found in violation of the laws and/or regulations of the host country or institution
- 4) The student engages in the following prohibited behavior:
 - a. Behavior that is detrimental to the student's health, welfare or safety or that of others
 - b. Self-endangerment including involvement in activities that could result in personal harm
 - c. Disruptive behavior
 - d. Disorderly, indecent, or obscene conduct
 - e. Violent or threatening behavior against others
 - f. Falsification of personal records including, but not limited to, alteration of transcripts or grade reports, medical records, or other documents required for participation.

- 5) Provide inaccurate information in the voluntary ISEP Student Self-Assessment Medical Form enclosed with the acceptance packet.
- 6) Voluntarily provide ISEP inaccurate or incomplete information about medication or medical treatment that they have received or is receiving and there are related problems during the program
 - a. *While a certain amount of stress due to culture shock is normal these stressors may aggravate disabilities or illnesses that the student may have under control in their regular environment.*
- 7) Fails to abide by the laws of the country or state where they are studying as well as the rules and regulations of the student's host and home institution. It is the student's responsibility to be informed about the laws of the country and/or state in addition to the regulations of the university and conduct himself/herself in a manner that complies with those laws.

Early Termination of Placement

ISEP reserves the right, in coordination with the home and host ISEP coordinator, to terminate a student's placement at any time if they are deemed to have violated the ISEP student code of conduct, the host country laws and/or the home and host institution rules and regulations.

ISEP will do its due diligence to collect information and statements from all parties involved in an alleged violation. ISEP program staff will review all information and will make a decision regarding the consequences of a violation in conjunction with the home and host ISEP coordinators.

If ISEP program staff, the home institution or the host institution deem it necessary to terminate a student's placement, the student will lose their ISEP benefits and will be expected to leave the host institution within 48 hours. ISEP reserves the right to require a student to leave sooner than 48 hours if it is determined by the ISEP, the home or host that the student is a danger to him/herself or others. ISEP will provide a transcript for any completed courses at the time of the incident. If the student has not finished course work, the student risks not receiving a transcript from the host institution.

The financial requirements and consequences of a student whose placement is terminated early are as follows:

- Pay the ISEP placement fee.
- Pay the full program fee at the discretion of your home institution in collaboration and agreement with ISEP and your host institution.
- Pay any non-recoverable costs incurred by your host institution based on your acceptance.
- Forfeit your right to receive benefits as an ISEP student and reimburse your host institution for any money advanced to you to cover benefits beyond the date of your withdrawal, termination, or early return.
- Be aware that you may lose financial aid or scholarships due to loss of full-time student status.
- For students bound for the United States, the loss of full-time student status constitutes non-compliance with your student visa, necessitating your immediate departure from the U.S.
- Pay penalties assessed by air carriers that may result from itinerary changes. Any additional expense resulting from the itinerary change or cancellation is the responsibility of the student.