

# UFIC Emergency Protocols for Study Abroad Programs

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Safeguarding the health and safety of the UF community abroad constitutes a critical priority for the UF International Center (UFIC). This document provides a general guide to assist faculty program directors and UFIC staff in responding to emergencies/crises which could occur during a UF Study Abroad program. While impossible to anticipate every facet of an emergency, the processes described in this handbook are sufficiently comprehensive to inform effective response and timely communication. Emergency readiness requires sound judgment, thoughtful action, and thorough communication to achieve the best possible outcome.

This handbook will be maintained by the UFIC Manager for Health Safety, and Risk Management and will be reviewed semi-annually.

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Dean, International Center & Associate Provost



## Overview

For the purposes of this manual, an emergency may be defined as any urgent, unexpected, or serious situation posing immediate risk to the well-being of students, faculty, staff, and/or affiliated individuals in an officially sanctioned UF international program anywhere in the world.

An emergency could include any of the following:

- Health emergencies of Study Abroad Students
- Legal / bureaucratic emergencies of Study Abroad Students
- Natural or violently enforced disasters in the host country
- Personal emergencies (i.e. death of a relative in the U.S.)

## General Guidelines

- a) **All U.S. citizens traveling internationally are strongly encouraged to enroll in the U.S. State Department Smart Traveler Enrollment Program (STEP).** This is a free service that allows U.S. citizens and nationals traveling and living abroad to enroll their trip with the nearest U.S. Embassy or Consulate. Enrollment can help the U.S. Government alert you in an emergency and can also help family and friends establish contact.
- b) Every Program Director will devise and test within one week of the beginning of the program a system of rapid communication with students and staff of their program. This communication network may be used ordinarily for communicating academic and social notices but should also enable the director to contact all students on short notice and assemble the group quickly in an emergency. An agreed meeting spot should also be determined in the improbable event of communications loss.
- c) The Program Director will inform program participants during orientation that anyone who expects to be away from the program site overnight must inform the staff, as well as a roommate, friend, and/or host family, leaving itinerary and contact information. This information may be essential in any emergency requiring immediate contact with the student.
- d) In the event of a political/security crisis or natural disaster, the Program Director will locate all students and inform the UFIC Health, Safety and Global Risk Manager (HSGRM) about their welfare. Students will be instructed not to travel independently for the duration of the emergency and to remain at a location where they can be reached.

- e) Every Program Director will carry at least one cellular phone with international capacity. Please enter the key emergency response contact information (UFIC, Insurer, Provider) into your phone to ensure efficient alerting and response in matters of urgency.

## **UF Program Leader Guidelines**

### **Avoiding Illness Emergency**

Review all general health precautions that students should follow while abroad. Remind students that if they become sick, they should 1) Inform program staff and 2) seek medical care.

- If a student informs you that they are sick and medical care seems warranted, please advise them on how to seek care. You may have reviewed these details during orientation, but it is wise to reiterate.
- If the student suspects they may have COVID, please advise them to take a COVID test immediately.
- Some students may require additional encouragement to see a physician while abroad. Assure them that, if necessary, a member of the program staff will accompany them to the doctor.
- Provide the students with a phone number where they can reach you or another program contact 24 hours a day in the event of serious illness or injury.

### **Serious Accident or Illness**

(auto accidents; recreational injury, serious illness; drug/alcohol overdose, assault)

- Assess the extent or severity of the illness/accident.
- Assist the student in finding appropriate medical care at the nearest hospital/clinic. Refer to your Emergency Contact Worksheet. Medical referrals (to include English-speaking practitioners) can be obtained through the travel insurer, the U.S. Consulate/Embassy, or even through local mobile medical apps. The referring entities can sometimes also offer translation support if required.
- If needed, accompany the student to the medical facility. If circumstances prevent the program leader from accompanying, ask another program participant to accompany.

- Notify the UFIC Health, Safety, and Global Risk Manager (HSGRM), who will (depending on the severity) open a case with CISI. The UFIC HSGRM will notify other UF administrators as needed.
- Document the circumstances leading up to the accident/illness and the course of the medical treatment as it progresses.
- Continue to monitor the student's condition and update HSGRM as needed.
- If the student's condition deteriorates, or is determined to be life-threatening, UFIC will coordinate with the health insurance regarding possible medical evacuation and/or assisting parent/guardian/family travel to the site to be with the student.
- If the student is determined to be out of immediate danger, please assess the impact of the accident/illness on the student's program participation and academic progress, and please conduct appropriate follow-up discussion with UFIC. Please also assess and prepare to discuss impact on other program participants.

**Information to gather:**

Victim's current location.

Information on diagnosis, prescribed treatment, and prognosis.

Medical treatment received thus far.

Names and titles of any emergency officials on the scene.

Identify attending physician.

Identify whether physician speaks English and whether an interpreter required.

Are other program participants at risk?

Detailed information about the incident.

Were there witnesses to the incident?

Determine if medical evacuation is needed.

Determine if medical reunion is needed.

**Serious Mental Health Issue**

(suicide attempt, ongoing and severe depression, self-inflicted injury, severe eating disorder, manic behavior)

- Engage the program participant. Ask if there is any kind of support that might be helpful.  
Express willingness to share resources. Demonstrate ongoing care while respecting autonomy.  
Gain active collaboration.

- Gather additional data on mental and physical state, usually through talking with other participants and on-site program contacts.
- In the event of an emergency, the UF Counseling and Wellness Center (CWC) 24/7 crisis phone line is available to all UF students, regardless of location. The crisis line can be reached at +1-352-392-1575.
- Inform the UFIC Health, Safety, and Global Risk Manager (HSGRM), who will notify other UF administrators as needed.
- Refer to your Emergency Contact Worksheet. Local medical referrals (to include English-speaking practitioners) can also be obtained through the travel insurer, the U.S. Consulate/Embassy (“U.S. Citizen Services”), or even through local mobile medical apps. The referring entities can sometimes also offer translation support if required.
- Continue to monitor the student's condition and update the HSGRM as needed.
- If the student’s condition deteriorates, or is determined to be life-threatening, UFIC will coordinate with the health insurance provider regarding possible medical evacuation and/or assisting parent/guardian/family travel to the site to be with the student.
- If the program participant’s health and well-being stabilize, assess the potential impact on continuing participation and academic progress, and please conduct appropriate follow-up discussion with UFIC. Please also assess and prepare to discuss impact on other program participants.

**Some Observation Points:**

- Absence of self-care
- Withdrawal from social interaction, unusual eating or sleeping.
- Symptomatic alcohol or drug misuse.
- Inability/unwillingness to participate
- Disruptive behavior impacting other participants
- Threats, attempts, or ideations of harm to self or others

**Information to gather:**

- Details on behavior of concern (continuing or single incident).
- Student response to behavior call-out.
- Student’s support network.

Risk factors

Willingness to consult counseling professional.

Input/observations from others.

### **Sexual Assault/Sexual Harassment**

- Treat any report of sexual assault seriously and respond quickly. Do not ignore or minimize the situation.
- Attend to the immediate health and safety of the program participant.
- Encourage the program participant to access medical care and resources. The first 72 hours after a sexual assault are critical for HIV prevention, use of emergency contraception, and other care.
- Assist the program participant in finding appropriate medical care in a hospital/clinic. Refer to your Emergency Contact Worksheet. Medical referrals (to include English-speaking practitioners) can also be obtained through the travel insurer, the U.S. Consulate/Embassy, or even through local mobile medical apps. The referring entities can sometimes also offer translation support if required.
- Accompany the program participant to the medical facility. If circumstances prevent the program leader from accompanying, ask another program participant to accompany (with consent of the victim).
- Notify the UFIC (HSGRM), who will (as required) open a case with CISI. The UFIC HSGRM will notify other UF administrators.

**PLEASE NOTE:** All university employees are obligated to alert the Title IX coordinator, Dr. Russ Froman, to cases of sexual misconduct. Program participants may not understand this obligation; please explain it as an essential University responsibility to ensure appropriate support and response.

- Contact the nearest U.S. consulate for information on victims' services and available medical care, including whether appropriate post-exposure prophylaxis (PEP) is available. Encourage the program participant to contact local law enforcement in the host country to report the crime and to receive medical attention.
- Assist in finding appropriate mental health/counseling care if requested: utilize the resources through CISI and CWC. Ensure the program participant is aware of these resources. In the event of an emergency, the UF Counseling and Wellness Center (CWC) 24/7 crisis phone line is

available to all UF students, regardless of location. The crisis line can be reached at +1-352-392-1575.

- Program participants who wish to discuss a situation involving sexual misconduct in complete confidence should seek only counseling or psychological services. Students may also be able to speak to a member of the clergy in complete confidence.
- Confidentiality is critical in responding to sexual assault incidents. Beyond your communication requirements to support the victim and alert the university, do not discuss the incident with other individuals (including family members and other students in the course) without specific permission from the victim.
- Assess the student's condition as time passes. Plan for appropriate discussion on impact of the incident on program participation and academic progress.
- In summary:
  - Ensure Safety
  - Explain Responsibilities
  - Share Resources
  - Obtain Facts
  - Communicate

### **Information to gather:**

Type of assault  
Date and time  
Location  
Assault related to program  
Assailant known to victim  
Number of assailants  
Weapon involved  
Witnesses  
Other relevant details of the incident.

### **Arrest or Detention of Student**

(Arrests or detention for theft, assault, drug possession)

- If the student has been arrested, work with on-site contacts to obtain a copy of all relevant information (such as the police report, incident report, and/or hospital admissions information).

- Assess the situation by obtaining as many details as possible. Determine if any other program participants were involved.
- Refer to your Emergency Contact Worksheet and immediately contact the nearest U.S. Consular Affairs at the Embassy/Consulate. The Consular Officer can provide contact information on English-speaking lawyers who can provide the student with legal assistance. Relay this information to the student. The Consular Officer will also work to ensure that the student's human rights are protected.
- Contact the UFIC HSGRM who will notify other UF administrators as required.
- Work with on-site contacts to have someone visit the student wherever they are being held. Assist the student in understanding the legal procedures of the host country and accessing information. Maintain continuing contact with the U.S. Consular Officer assigned to assist the student.
- Continue to update the HSGRM daily.
- Maintain a continuing record regarding the circumstances of the incident, to include discussions or communications with the student, on-site contacts, local authorities, embassy representatives, steps taken, and ongoing developments through resolution.
- Plan for appropriate discussion on impact of the incident on others in the program.

**Information to gather:**

Current student location.

Circumstances of arrest/detention.

Charges made.

Known facts related to the incident.

Case Number.

Agency making arrest.

Names and badge numbers of arresting authorities.

Witnesses.

Notification of U.S. Consulate/Embassy.

Relay advice from U.S. Consulate regarding appropriate course of action.

**Missing Program Participant**

(person is reported missing by roommate/other students/host family/professor).



- Response will vary depending on the length of time that the program participant has been missing—the following steps would be followed for an absence of 12 hours or more:
- Inform the UFIC HSGRM, who will notify other UF administrators as needed.
- Keep a record of all facts obtained, conversations, communications and steps taken. Try to determine when the program participant was last seen, and what they were wearing. Gather information on any unusual behavior.
- Work with on-site contacts to make every effort to locate the person.
- If the program participant resides in homestay or is staying in a hotel of some kind, talk with the roommate, other members of the program, hotel staff, or host family and neighbors. Ask them to contact you immediately if the individual returns.
- If the program participant resides in a student residence at their program site, notify the responsible person in the building. This person should contact the program participant's roommate and friends in the immediate vicinity.
- Notify the local police and other relevant parties as previously identified in Emergency Contact Worksheet. Check hospital admissions.
- Notify U.S. Consulate (“U.S. Citizen Services”) to initiate a Welfare and Whereabouts check, and provide them with as much information as possible. Depending on the time elapsed, Consulate officials may be able to offer guidance and resources in addition to local law enforcement efforts.
- Once the student has been located, inform all local parties immediately. Inform the UFIC HSGRM who in return will relay the information to other UF administrators.

**Information to gather:**

When and where missing person last seen or heard from.  
 Physical description and clothing at time of disappearance.  
 Physical and mental state when last seen.  
 Likelihood of phone on their person; known location sharing.  
 Plans to be absent communicated to others.  
 Means of travel.  
 Date and time of expected return.  
 Ideas from others on whereabouts.  
 Student passport number from online portal.

## **Student Death**

- Verify the identity of the student. Gather as much information about the circumstances surrounding the student's death as possible. A chronological log must be kept of all information surrounding the incident and all discussions and steps taken both on and off campus.
- Immediately contact the U.S. Embassy/Consulate ("U.S. Citizen Services"). The Consulate can act as an intermediary, initiate necessary legal documents, and serve as provisional legal conservator if needed.
- Immediately contact the UFIC HSGRM who will notify other UF administrators as needed and will open a case with CISI to start the repatriation process. The Dean of Students and the Director of the CWC will coordinate a plan for dealing with the impact of the student death on staff, faculty and participants.
- Determine the feasibility of continuing the program as is and/or supporting any students impacted by the incident who may wish to return home.

### **Information to gather:**

Name, title, phone number of person alerting you to death.  
Time, location, and manner of death  
Current location of body  
Autopsy requirement  
Names of witnesses or ill/injured victims  
Date and time of Consulate notification.  
Consular officers/police/medical names, titles, contact information.

## **Large Scale Emergencies**

(coups d'état, violence toward Americans or terrorist acts, severe rioting and civil unrest.

Earthquake, typhoons, floods)

- Address any health and safety emergencies as best able and seek emergency medical treatment as needed.
- Locate all students as soon as possible. You may need to go to pre-determined meet up point to see if any students are there.
- Take steps necessary to protect students from immediate danger or physical harm, in consultation with local officials.

- Contact UFIC HSGRM to notify appropriate staff on campus.
- Seek out local information and updates to protect program participants.
- Consider sheltering in place or moving to another location if needed. Unless instructed by officials, do not take the group to the U.S. Embassy/Consulate. These facilities are seldom able to accommodate large numbers of people and will typically advise all citizens to shelter in place until the immediate crisis passes.
- Contact CISI AXA for medical facility or shelter recommendations or if evacuation assistance will be needed.
- Analyze possible scenarios and activate an emergency plan in consultation with UFIC.
- Remain in contact with UFIC HSGRM and CISI assistance services as much as possible.

After addressing the immediate crisis:

- Start an incident log and document all relevant details.
- Keep students updated on information and instructions.
- Remind all students to report in as safe, if possible.
- Assist in organizing for evacuation, if needed.

**Information to gather:**

Nature of unrest/disaster

Direct threat or imminent danger

Current location

All participants accounted for and aware of risk.

Date and time notification to U.S. Consulate. Name of contact person.

Advise from Consulate/Embassy

Protections or restrictions imposed by local authorities.

Travel permitted.

Current assessment on evacuation

## **Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)**

Students participating in study abroad programs are given the opportunity to sign a release form which recognizes that program staff will disclose information to their families if needed.

If a student is involved in a medical or other emergency, they should be encouraged to contact parents/guardians, or permit the Program Director to make contact. If the student is unable to communicate preference, check the emergency contact form.

If UF believes that certain information must be disclosed because of the severity of the emergency, the University can utilize FERPA's health or safety emergency exception for disclosures.

## **Academic and Behavioral Expectations**

UF Study Abroad programs require all students to attend all formal classes, supplemental instructional components of the program (lectures, meetings with invited experts, seminars, etc. apart from formal class time), and all excursions which are a part of the program itinerary.

Attendance policies should be clearly spelled out in writing prior to the start of the program.

Students will need to understand the difference between "class- time" and "free time", recognizing the fact that "class time" does not have to take place in the actual classroom. The only acceptable excuse for missing a class, supplemental instructional component, or an excursion is illness or injury. Faculty directors should take attendance at all classes and excursions and explain in advance that attendance will affect grades.

Participants in a Study Abroad program are also expected to serve as representatives of both UF and the United States. It is important to stress these issues in both the pre-departure orientation and again upon arrival. These issues include but are not limited to appropriate dress, adherence to local laws and customs, situational awareness, mindfulness of gender dynamics, youth/elder relationships, food and meal etiquette, and attentiveness to signs of displeasure by host country nationals. Students need to be aware that errant behaviors can have negative consequence for themselves and for the Study Abroad program.

Free time is free time, and students can decide how they wish to spend this time. Faculty are not expected to supervise students during their free time, except in emergency circumstances. Students should be discouraged – within articulated reason - from participating in any kind of activity that might be harmful to themselves or others or that could reasonably be expected to diminish the quality or integrity of the learning environment established by the faculty leader.

### **Student Honor Code and Student Conduct Code**

All students must comply with the conduct regulations of the University of Florida Student Honor Code and Student Conduct Code (Regulation Number: 4.040) <https://policy.ufl.edu/regulation/4-040/>

If a Program Director believes that a program participant has committed a violation of that regulation, the Program Director will prepare a report detailing the violation in accordance with the regulation.

The Program Director will alert the UFIC HSGRM and prepare to engage with the UFIC Study Abroad Director to review.

Upon agreement that a violation has occurred, UFIC will report the incident to the Dean of Students, the Director of Student Conduct and Conflict Resolution (SCCR), and any other responsible parties. UFIC will relay the incident report for SCCR review in accordance with the regulation.

If the seriousness of the violation merits **urgent response**, the Program Director will contact the UFIC HSGRM, who will in turn alert the UFIC Response Team.

Program Directors should ALWAYS check first with the UFIC before making any decisions on formal response concerning student misconduct. UF student rights to due process need to factor into any course of action.

## UF Campus Response Guidelines

### **UFIC Emergency Response Team**

The UFIC HSGRM will report all incidents to the UFIC Study Abroad Director, Executive Director (ED) and Dean of UFIC, and provide full updates as new information is obtained.

In the event of an emergency or crisis that affects the immediate safety of University of Florida students, faculty, or staff participating in a study abroad program, an emergency response team will convene at the earliest possible time to assess and coordinate required actions. An emergency response meeting may be convened by any one of these individuals or offices responding to an emergent situation demanding urgent coordinated action.

Response Team:

Marta L. Wayne (Dean, UFIC)	<a href="mailto:mlwayne@ufic.ufl.edu">mlwayne@ufic.ufl.edu</a>	352.273.1536
Susanne Hill (Executive Director, UFIC)	<a href="mailto:shill@ufic.ufl.edu">shill@ufic.ufl.edu</a>	352.273.1500 352.213.9536 (after hours)
John Mulligan (Health Safety Global Risk, UFIC)	<a href="mailto:jmulligan@ufic.ufl.edu">jmulligan@ufic.ufl.edu</a>	352.275.1647 352.246.8148 (after hours)
Jill Ranaivoson (UFIC)	<a href="mailto:jranaivoson@ufic.ufl.edu">jranaivoson@ufic.ufl.edu</a>	352.273.1528
Bart Knowles (UPD)	<a href="mailto:bartknowles@ufl.edu">bartknowles@ufl.edu</a>	352.392.1111
Jonathan Yorkowitz (Interim DOS)	<a href="mailto:jyorkowitz@ufl.edu">jyorkowitz@ufl.edu</a>	352.392.1261
Ernesto Escoto (CWC)	<a href="mailto:eescoto@ufl.edu">eescoto@ufl.edu</a>	352.392.1575
Russ Froman (Title IX)	<a href="mailto:rfroman@ufl.edu">rfroman@ufl.edu</a>	352.275.1242
Brande Smith (General Counsel)	<a href="mailto:brande@ufl.edu">brande@ufl.edu</a>	352.392.1358
Steve Orlando (University Relations)	<a href="mailto:sfo@ufl.edu">sfo@ufl.edu</a>	352.846.3903

The UFIC Crisis Response Team will:

- Review all available related information.
- Propose immediate measures to ensure the health and safety of students and staff.
- Consider additional issues regarding academics, financial aid, public relations, and legal liability.
- Develop appropriate actions to be taken overseas, including dealing with initial student concerns and recommendations regarding appropriate student behavior.

- Develop (if warranted) an evacuation plan. This plan will be developed in cooperation with CISI (TEAM Assist) and the Program Director.
- Prepare a plan for daily communication with the Crisis Response Team and other entities. The Health, Safety, and Global Risk Manager will serve as the link with the UF Program Director and the members of the Crisis Response Team, until the crisis is resolved.