



TEXAS TECH UNIVERSITY HEALTH SCIENCES CENTER

Operating Policy and Procedure

HSC OP: 10.29, **International Programs for Students**

PURPOSE: The purpose of this HSC Operating Policy (HSC OP) is to establish institutional standards and approval requirements for TTUHSC international programs and for student participation in academic, clinical, research, and other educational activities abroad.

REVIEW: This HSC OP will be reviewed in June of every odd-numbered year (ONY) by the Senior Director of the Office of Global Health (OGH) in consultation with the International Affairs Advisory Board, the Academic Affairs and Curriculum Committee, and the Academics Council.

POLICY/PROCEDURE:

1. Institutional Commitments

TTUHSC supports international academic engagement that is:

- a. Student-centered and academically appropriate.
- b. Integrated into a student's degree program.
- c. Conducted in a manner that meets recognized standards of safety, ethics, and responsibility as established by organizations such as NAFSA: Association for International Educators, Consortium of Universities for Global Health, and the Forum on Education Abroad
- d. Compliant with applicable laws, regulations, executive orders, and policies of the United States, the State of Texas, the host country, the host institution/organization, and TTUHSC.
- e. Of mutual benefit to the host institutions/organization, host community, and TTUHSC learners and team members.
- f. Implemented by TTUHSC academic or administrative units in accordance with approved institutional standards for program operation, oversight, and quality.

2. Definitions

- a. Abroad: Travel to any country(ies) outside the United States.
- b. Approved Sites:
 - (1) Universities or institutions of higher education with which TTUHSC holds a formal agreement; or
 - (2) Universities, hospitals, clinics, or health care organizations approved through the established TTUHSC approval process.
- c. Program Administrator: A designated TTUHSC team member or host-site representative responsible for coordinating and/or leading the international program.

3. Types of International Programs

- a. Institutional Programs: Courses, clerkships, and/or electives offered as part of an academic curriculum at an Approved Site, often supported by an agreement.
- b. TTUHSC-Led Programs: International programs established by TTUHSC team members in their area(s) of expertise to teach TTUHSC students in an environment outside the United States. These programs must receive approval from both the respective school and the Office of Global Health (OGH) and include on-site supervision by TTUHSC faculty or designated program leadership. Leadership may consist of a single faculty member or a leadership team. TTUHSC team members are responsible for designing the program in consultation with their school and OGH, recruiting and selecting students, administering the program abroad, accompanying students, and ensuring the educational content and academic integrity of the program.
- c. Self-identified Sites: International programs not previously designated as Approved Sites but that are offered at an established university, hospital, or clinic abroad, and that are proposed by a learner to meet specific academic or professional goals. Participation requires one-time approval by the school and OGH.

4. Unofficial Travel Activities

TTUHSC team members and students may engage in personal or non-institutional travel abroad; however, such activities are not governed by this HSC OP and are not considered TTUHSC-sponsored. These activities include, but are not limited to, conferences, study, enrichment, service, or any other non-institutional purpose. When TTUHSC team members accompany students or when students participate in activities abroad that are not part of an approved TTUHSC program or course, the activity is classified as unofficial travel.

TTUHSC personnel, facilities, and resources may not be used to support unofficial travel. Team members who choose to engage in such activities with students must ensure clear separation from institutional programs and should refer to guidance and required forms available through the Office of Global Health.

5. Establishment of International Programs for Students

a. Agreements with International Entities

- (1) The OGH provides standardized guidance for establishing or renewing agreements between TTUHSC and international institutions or organizations.
- (2) All agreements related to international courses, exchanges, or degree programs must be submitted to OGH. OGH ensures that agreements comply with institutional standards and are properly reviewed and approved through the TTUHSC contracting system.
- (3) Institution-wide agreements require the review and signature of the president or designee.
- (4) OGH serves as the central repository for all executed agreements approved through the contracting system related to international programs for students.
- (5) For additional details, refer to the Office of [Global Health website](#).

b. Proposal for a TTUHSC-led International Program at a New Site

- (1) TTUHSC team members proposing a new international program site must meet with and obtain approval through OGH to ensure alignment with institutional policies, safety and security standards, and academic requirements.
- (2) For additional details, refer to the [Office of Global Health website](#).

c. Proposal for a TTUHSC-led International Program at an Existing Approved Site

- (1) TTUHSC team members proposing to lead an international program at an existing approved site must obtain approval through OGH to ensure compliance with institutional policies, safety and security standards, and academic requirements.
- (2) For additional details, refer to the Office of [Global Health website](#)

6. Prior to Departure

a. Student Responsibilities

- (1) All students traveling abroad must comply with [HSC OP 77.08](#), Student Travel Policy.
- (2) Students are responsible for meeting eligibility requirements and obtaining approval from their school prior to participation in any international program. Please refer to the OGH website at <https://www.ttuhsu.edu/global-health/eligibility-policy.aspx> for minimum eligibility requirements. Additional requirements may be necessary as determined by a student's school.
- (3) Students must complete an application and all pre-departure requirements, including a pre-departure orientation, as established by the OGH.

b. TTUHSC-led Program Administrator Responsibilities

- (1) Program Administrators are responsible for collaborating with the OGH to recruit participants and ensure applicants meet program eligibility requirements.
- (2) Program Administrators will screen applicants to ensure they meet all requirements and prerequisites set by the students' degree program. OGH will assist in verifying eligibility of all student participants
- (3) Program Administrators must provide students with site-specific information, including visa requirements, safety, health, and host country information at pre-travel team meetings, as appropriate. OGH is available to support these efforts as needed.
- (4) Program Administrators will direct students to OGH to complete an application, pre-departure requirements, including a pre-departure orientation, and other international program requirements.

7. International Travel Approval

- a. All international travel conducted in connection with TTUHSC programs must receive documented approval from the OGH. Travel without such approval is not considered university-related.
- b. OGH is responsible for reviewing travel requests and assessing risks associated with the destination, including health, safety, security, and environmental concerns, with additional oversight from resources such as On Call International, as needed.
- c. TTUHSC reserves the right to withdraw travel approval or require participants to return to the U.S. due to changes in conditions or circumstances.

8. Higher-Risk Destinations

Travel to international destinations is subject to risk assessment by the OGH. Travel to locations designated as **Higher-Risk Destinations** requires additional review, approval, and completion of supplemental requirements prior to authorization. These additional requirements are intended to demonstrate enhanced efforts by the traveler to mitigate risks related to health, safety, and security.

Destinations considered Higher-Risk Destinations include, but are not limited to, locations designated under nationally recognized standards as follows:

- U.S. Department of State (DOS) Travel Advisory Level 3 (Reconsider Travel) or Level 4 (Do Not Travel)
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Travel Health Notice Level 3 (Reconsider Nonessential Travel) or Level 4 (Avoid All Travel)

Current DOS travel advisory levels may be reviewed at:

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

Current CDC travel health notice levels may be reviewed at:

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

All travel to Higher-Risk Destinations requires additional review and approval by OGH to ensure appropriate risk mitigation measures are in place.

- a. TTUHSC retains the authority to review, modify, or withdraw travel approval for any destination due to changes in conditions or circumstances.
- b. Travelers are responsible for monitoring the status of their destination and complying with any additional requirements established by OGH for Higher-Risk Destinations prior to and during travel and must immediately notify the Office of Global Health if a destination's status changes to meet the Higher-Risk Destination criteria.

9. Funding

- a. Information regarding available funding to support partial or full expenses for faculty, staff, and student participation in an international program, including guidelines for the disbursement of the [International Education Fee Award](#), is available through the Office of Global Health.
- b. Student eligibility must be confirmed by OGH prior to the receipt of any international program funding.
- c. Students who are unable to participate in an international program after receiving funding are responsible for returning the funds to OGH.

10. Conduct and Responsibilities While Abroad

- a. **Mandatory Reporting:** All TTUHSC employees traveling or working abroad remain mandatory reporters of sexual misconduct in accordance with TTU System Regulations and TTUHSC policy. Confidential student resources and reporting options are available through the TTUHSC Title IX website.

- b. Clinical Work: Students participating in clinical activities abroad must:
 - (1) Perform duties only within the scope of their identified professional role and responsibilities.
 - (2) Work under appropriate supervision as determined by their degree program and the host institution.
 - (3) Maintain patient privacy and confidentiality in accordance with TTUHSC, host site, and legal requirements.
 - (4) Uphold ethical boundaries of clinical care, including informed consent and professional conduct.
- c. Research: TTUHSC students and team members conducting research abroad must ensure all activities are approved by the appropriate Institutional Review Board (IRB) prior to engaging in research.
- d. Professional Conduct: All students are expected to adhere to the highest standards of professional and ethical behavior, including respecting the host community, host institution policies, and the safety and well-being of all individuals encountered during the program.

11. International **Program Evaluation**

Students participating in TTUHSC international programs are expected to provide feedback to OGH regarding their experience in the form of an exit survey.

12. **Emergency Procedures**

- a. TTUHSC has established procedures and defined leadership chains to respond to emergencies affecting international programs. For detailed emergency procedures, roles, and guidance, refer to the OGH website.
- b. The Office of Global Health (OGH) is responsible for coordinating the institutional response to such emergencies.

13. **Suspending International Programs**

- a. TTUHSC reserves the right to suspend any international program, either prior to the program start date or while the program is in progress, if circumstances indicate a risk to participant safety, health, or security, based on current information from the U.S. Department of State, CDC, and other credible sources, or if the program cannot meet its intended objectives. An upgrade to a Higher-Risk Destination may justify suspension.
- b. The decision to suspend a program can have serious consequences, and should be considered carefully in view of how the cancellation will affect participants and other TTUHSC international programs
- c. Decisions regarding program suspension will be made in consultation with the OGH and in accordance with TTUHSC's established emergency and risk management procedures.
- d. In the event of program suspension, TTUHSC will make reasonable efforts to accommodate students, including alternative arrangements where feasible.
- e. Academic credit and other program-related considerations resulting from a suspension will be determined by the respective TTUHSC schools and academic programs.