



International Travel Guidance Updated June 22, 2022

As the System Office prohibition on University-affiliated international travel remains in effect, all University-affiliated international travel continues to require an exception to proceed. This international travel approval process manages both the risks of travel and contributes to sound financial oversight.

In April, the Department of State (DOS) revised the advisory levels of many countries that were previously Level 4: Do Not Travel. Now, 70% of the countries tracked are rated Level 1: Exercise Normal Precautions or Level 2: Exercise Increased Caution. The highly restrictive travel policy in place for much of the pandemic has therefore been replaced by a much less restrictive policy where almost all requests for travel to DOS Level 1 and Level 2 destinations are being quickly approved when the University deems the risk of travel is being well-mitigated.

Given studies demonstrating that being up to date with COVID-19 vaccines helps prevent hospitalization and severe disease from COVID-19 infection, a statement that the prospective traveler is fully vaccinated and has received a booster dose of an mRNA vaccine makes a major contribution to an effective risk-management plan and is given serious weight in the evaluation of the travel exception request. [Guidance](#) from the CDC states that you are “up to date with your COVID-19 vaccines when you have received all doses in the primary series and all boosters recommended for you, when eligible.” Each traveler should assess their vaccine requirements according to their own personal risk factors and remember that vaccine effectiveness wanes over time.

Effective June 12, 2022, the CDC rescinded the order requiring air passengers traveling from a foreign country to the United States to show a negative COVID-19 test or documentation of recovery from COVID-19 before they board their flight. Note, [CDC's Order](#) requiring proof of vaccination for noncitizen nonimmigrants to travel to the United States remains in effect.

Given that vaccinated and boosted individuals are still at significant risk of contracting COVID-19, travelers should be prepared for a delayed return to the U.S. and an extended stay abroad if they become ill immediately prior to their return to the U.S. Travelers are advised to have a contingency plan for a possible extended stay abroad and the resulting additional expense for flight changes, lodging and incidentals, as both are essential elements of an effective risk management plan. Note that travelers are required to sign an assumption of risk and release of liability document that includes the following language: “I understand that I may face delays returning home and that the University is not responsible for costs associated with my prolonged stay abroad and delayed return travel.”

Travel will continue to be considered high risk to countries with a DOS advisory Level 3: Reconsider Travel and 4: Do Not Travel and/or where COVID caseloads are exceptionally high and/or access to adequate health care is in doubt. Risk increases for short-term travel, particularly where the traveler lacks support on the ground. An exception may still be granted in higher risk cases if the traveler presents a sound and compelling risk mitigation plan, and the benefit of travel to UNC is clear and compelling.

This policy will be evaluated regularly as the situation evolves.