**International Travel Guidance**

**Updated September 7, 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 the health and safety risks of travel and complements processes that contribute 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 The highly restrictive travel policy in place for much of the pandemic has therefore been replaced by a much less restrictive policy where almost all requests for travel to DOS Level 1 and Level 2 destinations are being quickly approved.

Given studies demonstrating that being up to date with COVID-19 vaccines helps prevent hospitalization and severe disease from COVID-19 infection, prospective travelers can reduce their risk of the worst COVID outcomes by being fully vaccinated, including boosters for those eligible. [Guidance](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/stay-up-to-date.html#recommendations) 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.

Given that vaccinated and boosted individuals are still at 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 planned 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.

Travel will continue to be considered high risk to countries with a DOS advisory Level 3: Reconsider Travel and 4: Do Not Travel. 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.*