



Skidmore College Policy on Risk Assessment for Students' International Travel

Background

In 2021, the US Department of State (DOS) adjusted its Travel Advisory Levels to more closely mirror Travel Health Notices issued by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). This shift was a direct consequence of the ongoing COVID pandemic. The result was that many countries around the world were issued a DOS Level 4 Travel Advisory

study abroad in destinations for which the DOS issued a Level 4 Travel Advisory. The DOS issued a statement with the 2021 change indicating that the shift in Level necessarily indicate a change to the current health situation in a given country. It reflects an

[DOS](#)

[website FAQ section](#))

This shift in the way the DOS assesses risk and assigns Travel Advisory Levels required Skidmore to reevaluate the use of DOS and CDC as the main sources for assessing risk for our students studying abroad. It necessitated a change in policy around travel to and study in countries issued DOS Level 3 (Reconsider Travel) and Level 4 (Do Not Travel) Advisories and CDC Travel Health Notices, Level 3 Warnings (Avoid Non-Essential Travel) and Travel Recommendations Level 4 (Very High) and Level 3 (High). While DOS and CDC continue to play a central role in assessing risk, moving forward Skidmore employs a more holistic approach to evaluating locations with elevated risk levels, particularly as it relates to COVID-19.

The International Study Risk Management Team (ISRMT) reviews programs in countries that the DOS and CDC have indicated pose elevated risk and makes a final determination based on using a variety of sources, including but not limited to:

- DOS Travel Advisories (including specific concerns such as terrorism, crime, health, natural disaster, etc.)
- CDC Travel Warnings (including specific health risk and mitigation factors in-country)
- World Health Organization (WHO)
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- DOS Overseas Security Advisory Council (OSAC)
- International partner and host governmental assessments

Current Policy

This policy applies to any student pursuing any international activity funded, credited, or otherwise supported by Skidmore and affiliated partner institutions abroad. The purpose of such travel might include, but is not limited to, participation in an off-campus study program or other educational experience, an internship, research or volunteer opportunity, a conference, meeting or presentation, or participation in an athletic or cultural event.

- consulate.

- Review the Center for Disease Control Prevention Travel Notices and Destination information at <https://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/>