International Travel Guidelines and Resources for UAB Employees and Students

[Revised August 1, 2021]

Purpose:

UAB and its affiliated entities support and encourage international travel by employees and students for the purpose of educating our students and furthering the medical, research, and educational missions of the University. The purpose of these guidelines is to enable employees and students to undertake international travel safely and within the policies and procedures established by the University and by regulatory authorities.

Travelers on UAB business should be aware that policies and procedures governing employee behavior and financial affairs and other UAB and affiliated entity policies apply regardless of the location where UAB business is conducted.

Definitions:

For the purpose of these guidelines, the following definitions apply:

1. UAB – includes the University of Alabama at Birmingham and UAB Medicine. UAB Medicine includes UAB Hospital, UAB Hospital Management, LLC, the UAB School of Medicine, and the following UAB Affiliates: UAB Health System, University of Alabama Health Services Foundation, UAB Callahan Eye Hospital Authority, and the University of Alabama Ophthalmology Services Foundation.

2. UAB employees – includes faculty, staff, postdocs, and medical residents of the UAB entities named above.

3. UAB student— is any individual who is currently enrolled in or has registered for any undergraduate, graduate, or professional academic program at the University regardless of location (University Premises, online, off-campus, or auditing); is not enrolled for a particular term but has a continuing relationship with the University; or is participating in an educational program sponsored by or affiliated with the University, including, but not limited to, orientation or education abroad programs.

4. International Travel – Any UAB-related travel outside the United States. For more detailed information on what constitutes UAB-related travel, please refer to the UAB-Related International Travel Policy.

International Travel Risks:

International travel has inherent risks associated with it. UAB recommends that travelers fully inform themselves of those risks, as response systems in other countries may be very different from those available here in the United States. Risks include automobile accidents, crime, loss of or damage to property, medical emergencies, political risks, and export control risks.
Other Sources of Information:

UAB-Related International Travel Policy – available from the UAB Policies and Procedures Library.

IT Acceptable Use Policy – provides guidance on acceptance use of UAB owned property.

Financial Affairs Travel Overview – outlines regulations regarding travel costs and allowability.

Office of the Provost – responsible for approving all UAB-related international travel for the university. Contact the Senior International Officer for the Provost at 934-0622.

UAB Education Abroad – administers, establishes, and sends UAB students on high-quality education abroad opportunities to prepare them for success in the globalized world. Oversees the health & safety response for UAB students; Contact the Director at 975-6611.

Office of the Vice President for Research – coordinates affiliation agreements focusing on research. Contact the UAB Director of Export Control and International Compliance at 996-2735.

UAB Office of Insurance and Risk Management (also referred to as the UAB Office of Risk Management) – assists with accident and medical evacuation insurance, crime/political risk insurance questions, and emergency information for international travelers. Contact the Director, University Risk Management at 934-5382.

International Student and Scholar Services – advises international students and assists visiting international faculty/scholars and students on matters of immigration, taxation, and orientation to Birmingham. Primarily a resource for incoming students and faculty. Contact the Director at 934-3328.

UAB Travelers’ Clinic – a leader in travel and tropical medicine. Staffed by specialized physicians, the clinic offers comprehensive pre- and post-travel consultations as well as vaccinations. Located on the 5th floor of UAB Hospital-Highlands, 1201 11th Avenue South. Contact 731-9366.

UA System Board Rule 413 – travel and reimbursements for travel must be consistent with University of Alabama System Board Rule 413.

UAS International Travel Assistance Program - a robust program to help protect and assist our international travelers engaged in Educational Travel and Business Travel abroad. The UAS International Travel Assistance Program has been established to assist travelers in times of unexpected circumstances that call for prompt action.

International SOS – a worldwide travel assistance service offered in association with the UAS International Travel Assistance Program.

U.S. State Department – A wealth of information including travel safety tips, passport information, country specific information.

World Health Organization
Guidelines:

1. Registration and Approval. All University faculty, staff, and students participating in international travel as defined in the UAB-related International Travel Policy must complete and submit an online UAB-related International Travel Registration Form. Education Abroad students participating in approved faculty-led programs or semester programs abroad will complete an official application through Education Abroad in lieu of an International Travel Registration form. Employees of UAB Affiliates, as defined above, with dual University appointments/employment should follow the University procedure. Otherwise, employees of UAB Affiliates planning UAB-related international travel should document their travel and receive approval according to the policies and procedures of their employing entity.

The UAB-Related International Travel Registration process is the primary vehicle through which the UAB-related International Travel Policy is implemented in the University. It is used for reviewing UAB business purpose, approving funding of University employee international travel, logging international travel for travel services and insurance purposes, and processing and approving student international travel activities. All student travel is officially recorded through UAB Education Abroad’s online software application.

Student Registration:

- The student completes and submits an application with UAB Education Abroad.
- If students are participating in non-credit bearing experiences (e.g., conferences, athletic travel, and other similar activities), they will be required within their UAB Education Abroad application to submit the UAB-Related International Travel Registration Form prior to travel.
- UAB Education Abroad reviews the form, accounts for travel services and insurance expenses, and Education Abroad approves/disapproves the travel.
- If UAB accounts are to be charged, relevant department/unit representatives, school deans, library directors, Vice President/Provost review the form for purposes of authorizing funding of travel.
- If a sponsoring agency is a source of funding for the international travel, the traveler, with the Principal Investigator, must ensure all necessary sponsor approvals have been secured through the Office of Sponsored Programs.

Employee Registration:

- The University employee completes and submits the online UAB-Related International Travel Registration Form prior to travel. Pre-registration allows the traveler to identify funds proposed to cover expenses and meet all appropriate standards and guidelines. In addition, such pre-registration provides UAB with itinerary information in case of an emergency abroad. It is recommended that travelers submit forms no later than 7 days before departure to allow sufficient time for review.
• Relevant department/unit representatives, school deans, library directors, Vice President, and Provost of UAB review the form for purposes of authorizing UAB business purpose and funding of travel.

• If a sponsoring agency is a source of funding for the international travel, the traveler, with the Principal Investigator, must ensure all necessary sponsor approvals have been secured through the Office of Sponsored Programs.

• If the travel is to accompany a student on international travel, UAB Education Abroad reviews the form and approves/disapproves the travel. The employee is responsible for informing the student of necessary registration processes, outlined above.

• Traveler receives an automated e-mail when the online international travel registration form is complete at all levels. A copy of the e-mail should be attached to travel reimbursement forms, conference registration fee requisitions, airline ticket requests, or any other payment/reimbursement requests related to international travel.

• If the traveler holds national security clearance, the Facility Security Officer receives an automated notification e-mail when the online international travel registration form is complete at all levels.

• The Office of the Vice President for Financial Affairs and Administration accesses the international travel registration database to ensure appropriate approvals have been obtained before payment/reimbursement is processed.

2. Country Restrictions. Employees and students are expected to consult the U.S. State Department’s travel advisories and other sources of information and to understand the risk involved. The approvers listed above may elect not to approve travel based on the risk involved or for other reasons.

Students

International travel by students to locations for which a current U.S. Department of State Travel Advisory Level 3 or higher or CDC warning exists must be reviewed and approved in advance through the heightened review protocol in place through UAB Education Abroad. UAB Education Abroad Risk Management Committee reserves the right to deny requests for student travel to such locations. Additionally, no student shall be required by UAB to travel to an international destination that the student reasonably believes to be unsafe.

Employees

International travel by employees to locations for which a current U.S. Department of State Travel Advisory Level 4 or CDC warning exists, and/or warnings or current U.S. Trade/Economic Sanctions in place or where sudden and unexpected safety issues may arise must be reviewed and approved in advance through the heightened review protocol in place through Export Control and International Compliance.
Criteria for review of such requests includes, but may not be limited to, the nature of the risk and warnings, the timing and purpose of the trip, and the traveler’s familiarity with the local area, customs, etc.

3. **UAB Education Abroad.** Employees should be aware that any UAB student undertaking UAB-related international travel must register with UAB Education Abroad. This applies to students participating in designated faculty-led Education Abroad programs as well as students traveling to conferences/workshops as representatives of UAB, choir members participating in a competition, inter-college or intra-collegiate athletes, members of recognized student organizations, students participating in international exchange activities, and any other student participating in UAB-related international travel. **Education Abroad** is defined as any UAB-related Student international travel including, but not limited to:

1. Any course of study for which academic credit is received and transferred to UAB at a UAB Education Abroad-approved domestic or foreign institution.

2. Research for which academic credit is received and transferred to UAB that is conducted at a domestic or foreign institution approved by UAB Education Abroad, UAB Office for Undergraduate Studies, or a UAB academic department.

3. Service Learning for which academic credit is received and transferred to UAB. This includes internships, volunteerism, shadowing, clinical rotation, and observations.

4. University-sponsored activities that take place outside of the United States that are either credit-bearing or non-credit-bearing, including Outreach Abroad, Outdoor Pursuits, artistic performances, athletic activities, or other Student organization travel.

5. Any other UAB-related Student activity not included above, such as attendance or participation in conferences as a UAB representative.

4. **Travel Preparation.**

1. Before leaving the U.S., employees should review their approved UAB-Related International Travel Requests to ensure that the information reflected there is entirely complete and accurate. Requests should contain the name and telephone numbers of a person in the U.S. to contact in the event of an emergency and final itineraries for the travel abroad, including dates of travel and names, addresses, and telephone numbers of all hotels/lodging arrangements. Any necessary updates to the Request may be made through the electronic form modification process. Also, travelers should investigate emergency procedures in the country to which they will be traveling. Know the equivalent of “dialing 911” in that country if such a service is available or determine how to contact the local police and medical emergency responders.
2. To receive destination alerts, access important medical and security information, and access one-touch communication with International SOS, download the International SOS Assistance App to your smartphone by visiting http://uasystem.edu/international-travel-assistance/. Print and carry your International SOS membership card with you at all times.

3. Review UAB IT Guidelines for International Travel to ensure your electronic devices and data are appropriately secured based on the applicable data classification. Contact UAB IT Security for information and availability of loaner devices.

4. Check with UAB Information Technology/Communication Services or Health System Information Services to be certain that your electronic devices have the functionality required to allow you to communicate in the areas in which you will be traveling. Consider equipment with GPS capability with prior review and approval from UAB Director of Export Control and International Travel.

5. Travelers are strongly encouraged to register with the U.S. embassy in the country/countries to which they will be traveling. This can be done through the U.S. State Department website (http://travel.state.gov/travel). Under International Travel, select Smart Traveler Enrollment Program (STEP). Travelers should check in with the local U.S. Embassy upon arrival in a foreign country if staying in the country more than a few days.

6. Travelers should carry with them the names and contact information for persons who can make decisions for them (e.g., financial, healthcare) in the event they are incapacitated. University travelers should download and activate their International SOS app prior to departure and familiarize themselves with the variety of ways to contact International SOS in case of an emergency.

7. Review all travel advisories, warnings, and safety information provided through the U.S. State Department web site up to and including the day of departure.

8. Carry your itinerary and a copy of your birth certificate and passport in your carry-on baggage, and keep a copy in your checked baggage, as well, to allow airlines to locate you if you should be separated from your luggage.

9. If you are carrying medical or research equipment or supplies including, but not limited to, medications, test tubes, and syringes, consider obtaining a letter (on UAB letterhead) describing the materials in your luggage, why you have it, and where it is going. Include a contact name and number for a UAB representative and a representative at the foreign location to which you are traveling. Contact the UAB Director of Export Control and International Travel at 996-2735 for direction to the appropriate contact for questions regarding export controls.

5. Travel Insurance and Assistance Services. The University of Alabama System Travel Assistance Program provides global medical and travel accident insurance for employees traveling on UAB business outside of the United States and their home country. For travel insurance purposes, "home country" is defined as a country from which the employee holds a passport. The policy is not intended to take the place of major medical insurance as benefits are limited. The policy will pay to evacuate a traveler for the purpose of receiving medical attention if the insurance company and travel services provider
determines that evacuation is required. Transportation will be to the medical facility selected by the insurance company. The insurance company’s service representative, International SOS, also offers services to travelers such as assistance with replacing stolen/lost cash or passports or assistance locating an English-speaking attorney. The insurance company does not pay for those services (such as expenses related to extending travel resulting from a lost passport), but International SOS will help travelers with arrangements if requested. Contact information for International SOS is noted below, and a card with emergency contact information is available through the UAS International Travel Assistance Program website (http://uasystem.edu/international-travel-assistance/)

There are policy limitations and exclusions. If you have any questions, visit UAS International Travel Assistance Program or contact the UAB Office of Risk Management.

The travel accident and medical evacuation coverage provided through the University applies only to foreign, not domestic, travel outside of the employee’s home country (a country from which the employee holds a passport) and only for periods of 365 days or less. The policy does not cover UAB employees who are assigned to a permanent location outside the United States except when they are making occasional visits to another foreign location, nor does the policy cover UAB employees who are traveling to their home country which, for travel insurance purposes, is defined as a country from which the employee holds a passport. If your online international travel request is approved, you will be provided with further information regarding insurance and travel assistance services. Questions about insurance may be directed to the Director, University Risk Management in the UAB Office of Risk Management at (205) 934-5382.

**6. On-the-Job Injury/Illness/Workers Compensation Programs.** For employees of UAB (not UAB Affiliates), the UAB On the Job Injury/Illness program applies on a worldwide basis for injuries and illnesses that occur in the course of and arising out of employment at UAB. The program applies only to UAB employees (not UAB Affiliates). Volunteers and students are not eligible for OJI benefits. The program is administered through UAB Human Resources. Contact (205) 934-5548. UAB Affiliates each maintain workers compensation programs. Contact your respective administrative office as follows: UABHS (205) 996-4392; HSF (205) 731-9639; CEFH (205) 325-8100; OSF (205) 325-8361.

**7. Rental Car Insurance.** When traveling in a foreign country, it is usually preferable to use public transportation, since unfamiliarity with vehicles, roads, and the motor laws of a foreign country increase the risk of driving. If a vehicle is rented or leased outside the U.S. or U.S. territories for use on UAB business, the renter should purchase any liability and/or physical damage (collision/comprehensive coverage) that is offered by the rental company. Secondary insurance may be available through UAB. The UAB Office of Risk Management must be notified in the event of any accident occurring while on UAB business, regardless of the location.

**8. Personal Travel Associated with UAB-Related Travel.** The University of Alabama System Travel Assistance Program will extend limited coverage to “side-trips” of a personal nature that are associated with UAB-related international travel. For example, if an employee visits a tourist attraction (such as a zoo or museum) during the course of a conference at a foreign location, coverage will apply. Questions about the program’s coverage for personal deviation may be directed to the Director, University Risk
Management or the Senior Director of Insurance and Risk Finance in the UAB Office of Risk Management at (205) 934-5382.

9. **Spouses or Guests and International Travel.** Dependents and companions of covered travelers, such as spouses or others on the trip, are not covered by the UAS International Travel Assistance Program. There are many sources for global medical/travel accident insurance available online. One source for coverage for leisure travel for dependents and companions is Arthur J. Gallagher (“AJG”). AJG is the broker for the UAS International Travel Assistance Program. Information on AJG’s offerings may be accessed by visiting [https://www.gallagherstudent.com/products/leisure-travel-insurance/](https://www.gallagherstudent.com/products/leisure-travel-insurance/).

Children under the age of 19 should not travel with UAB employees on a UAB-related trip unless a spouse or legal guardian of the minor is also participating in the entirety of the trip.

10. **Export Controls.** Any UAB traveler who intends to take equipment, software, supplies or other UAB property to a foreign location or who plans to travel to a country under U.S. Government sanctions must check with the Office of Export Control and International Travel in order to ensure that they are acting in compliance with federal laws and regulations. For more information, please visit [UAB’s Export Control website](https://www.uab.edu/orec).

11. **Property Insurance.** There is no insurance available through UAB for loss of or damage to employee’s personal property. UAB property is insured through UAB, but only while it is within the United States. If UAB property is being taken outside the U.S., contact the Office of Risk Management to determine if insurance should be purchased.

12. **Emergency Response.**

**Employees on travel NOT coordinated through UAB Education Abroad:**

In the event of an emergency (e.g., arrest, auto accident, personal injury, or loss of/damage to property), political or civil unrest, natural disaster, infectious disease outbreaks/epidemics, employees should:

**STEP 1:** Contact the local authorities (U.S. embassy, police, fire, etc.) about the emerging event.

**STEP 2:** Contact International SOS at: 1-215-942-8478

If you are asked for a policy number for the name of the “insured,” provide the following information:

- ISOS Membership Number: 11BCAM831609
- Member Organization: Board of Trustees of the University of Alabama

If you become aware of or suspect an abduction/“kidnapping” or extortion demand, you should contact the local authorities (police) and then immediately contact International SOS.
Emergency Response for Education Abroad Faculty Leaders:

**STEP 1:** Secure the safety and health of students and faculty with local law enforcement, US Embassy, and/or program provider(s).
   A. Get to a safe location.
   B. Seek medical help, if necessary, through International SOS.

**STEP 2:** Once everyone is accounted for, contact UAB Education Abroad.

**STEP 3:** UAB Education Abroad will initiate additional phone calls as deemed necessary.

**STEP 4:** Faculty Leader and UAB Education Abroad will complete an Incident Report form.