

APPROVAL POLICY FOR UNIVERSITY-SPONSORED INTERNATIONAL TRAVEL (FACULTY & STAFF)

Approved by PLU President's Council July 21, 2022

Updated April 24, 2023

PLU is committed to supporting faculty, staff, students and alumni in activities that advance PLU's distinction and vision for global education such as teaching, research, scholarly exchange, and community-engaged learning opportunities abroad. A key dimension of this commitment is to provide for the safety of our community members when engaged in University-sponsored international travel. To this end, the policy outlined below replaces the COVID-related Interim Policy on PLU-sponsored travel to countries with travel advisories that was approved by the PLU International Travel Risk Assessment and Advisory Task Force (ITRAATF) on May 20, 2021.

As of April 14, 2022, the US State Department announced that, "Given the increases in international travel, the availability of effective COVID-19 mitigation measures, and recently announced changes to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) COVID-19 Travel Health Notice (THN) process, it [sic] has reassessed how COVID-19 considerations factor into [sic] Travel Advisory levels for U.S. citizens". It stated, moreover, that moving forward, "State Department Travel Advisory levels will no longer automatically correlate with the CDC COVID-19 THN level. However, if the CDC raises a country's COVID-19 THN to a Level 4, the State Department's Travel Advisory for that country will also be raised to a Level 4: Do Not Travel due to COVID-19."

Given this development, effective July 21, 2022, PLU's policy for University-related international travel for faculty and staff will rely on the U.S. State Department's four-level [Travel Advisory](#) system as well as other standard points of reference (CDC, WHO, in-country sources such as local embassies, etc.). The policy includes separate procedures for travel to countries with Level 3 and 4 State Department Travel Advisory as well as additional international travel requirements and guidelines for all faculty and staff engaging in University-sponsored travel.

Level 1 - Exercise Normal Precautions: This is the lowest advisory level for safety and security risk. There is some risk in any international travel. Conditions in other countries may differ from those in the United States and may change at any time.

Level 2 - Exercise Increased Caution: Be aware of heightened risks to safety and security. The Department of State provides additional advice for travelers in these areas in the Travel Advisory. Conditions in any country may change at any time.

Level 3 - Reconsider Travel: Avoid travel due to serious risks to safety and security. The Department of State provides additional advice for travelers in these areas in the Travel Advisory. Conditions in any country may change at any time.

Level 4 – Do Not Travel: This is the highest advisory level due to greater likelihood of life-threatening risks. During an emergency, the U.S. government may have very limited ability to provide assistance. The Department of State advises that U.S. citizens not travel to the country or to leave as soon as it is safe to do so. The Department of State provides additional advice for travelers in these areas in the Travel Advisory. Conditions in any country may change at any time.

Varying Levels

The Department of State issues an overall Travel Advisory level for a country, but levels of advice may vary for specific locations or areas within a country. For instance, the Department of State may advise U.S. citizens to “Exercise increased caution” (Level 2) in a country, but to “Reconsider travel” (Level 3) to a particular area within the country.

Risk Indicators

Travel Advisories at Levels 2-4 contain clear reasons for the level assigned, using established risk indicators and specific advice to U.S. citizens who choose to travel there. These are:

- **C – Crime:** Widespread violent or organized crime is present in areas of the country. Local law enforcement may have limited ability to respond to serious crimes.
- **T – Terrorism:** Terrorist attacks have occurred and/or specific threats against civilians, groups, or other targets may exist.
- **U – Civil Unrest:** Political, economic, religious, and/or ethnic instability exists and may cause violence, major disruptions, and/or safety risks.
- **H – Health:** Health risks, including current disease outbreaks or a crisis that disrupts a country’s medical infrastructure, are present. The issuance of a Centers for Disease Control Travel Notice may also be a factor.
- **N - Natural Disaster:** A natural disaster, or its aftermath, poses danger.
- **E - Time-limited Event:** Short-term event, such as elections, sporting events, or other incidents that may pose safety risks.
- **D – Wrongful Detention:** The risk of wrongful detention of U.S. nationals by a foreign government exists.
- **O – Other:** There are potential risks not covered by previous risk indicators. Read the country’s Travel Advisory for details.
- **K – Kidnapping or Hostage Taking:** Criminal or terrorist individuals or groups have threatened to and/or have seized or detained and threatened to kill, injure or

continue to detain individuals in order to compel a third party (including a governmental organization) to do or abstain from doing something as a condition of release.

Acknowledging that PLU faculty and staff may have meaningful research to conduct or work to do in areas that are affected by these risk factors, the University allows its employees to travel to countries falling into Level 1 and Level 2. For travel to countries with a Level 3 or Level 4 Travel Advisory, the following special procedures must be followed:

1. Individual faculty and staff intending to engage in University-sponsored travel to any country with a U.S. Department State Travel Advisory Level 3 or Level 4 must receive approval from PLU's International Travel Risk Assessment and Advisory Task Force (ITRAATF) at least 4 weeks prior to departure. To secure approval, a request for consideration must be submitted to wang.center@plu.edu (ATT'N: ITRAATF). The university, in its sole discretion, may deny approval for international travel.
2. Following approval, faculty and staff will be registered by the Wang Center for Global and Community Engaged Education in Terra Dotta. A Statement of Responsibility and other pre-departure requirements may be assigned.
3. The Wang Center for Global and Community Engaged Education will coordinate ITRAATF approval for programs in countries with a Level 3 or Level 4 Travel Advisory.

Additional international travel requirements and guidelines for all faculty and staff engaging in University-sponsored travel are:

1. All faculty and staff must register any and all University-affiliated foreign travel in PLU's Terra Dotta system.
2. Faculty and staff will receive international travel health, evacuation, and repatriation insurance coverage. [EIIA](#) administers this insurance. Travelers should contact Shawn Thompson, Director of Risk Services, at thompsse@plu.edu.
3. Prior to departure, faculty and staff must register for the U. S. State Department Smart Traveler Enrollment Program or STEP at <https://step.state.gov/step/>
4. No employee shall be required to travel to a country for which a State Department Travel Advisory Level 3 or Level 4 has been issued.
5. Employees who wish to travel to such a country are urged to review the State Department's International Travel Information page at <https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/traveladvisories/traveladvisories.html/> and the CDC's Travel Health Notice at <http://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/>. When applicable, it is recommended that the employee review any other available material about the conditions

in the country in question. Employees should consider carefully whether the value of the travel to them outweighs the risks they would face if they choose to travel.

7. Employees shall take precautions with respect to their personal safety. An employee must recognize that the University, and even the U.S. Department of State, may be unable to help in the event the employee encounters difficulties abroad. Employees who travel to a country for which there is an elevated State Department Travel Advisory are urged to prepare to “Shelter-in-Place” in the event that commercial airlines drastically curtail or even cease operations and/or travel restrictions impede people from returning to the United States or leaving the affected country. “Shelter-in-Place” information can be found at the Centers for Disease Control website (<http://emergency.cdc.gov/preparedness/shelter/>). In cases where the CDC has issued a Level 3 or Level 4 Travel Health Notice (THN), the employee may be requested to monitor their health upon return, or be subject to screening at the port of entry, a process that may include voluntary or involuntary isolation or quarantine of the traveler. Further, an employee may not be permitted to return to campus until they have completed appropriate health monitoring and/or screening to determine that they are not infected with the disease in question. The monitoring and screening required will be decided on a case-by-case basis by the Executive Director of the Wang Center and the Provost in consultation with appropriate public health officials.