

## Working Draft

# **Penn State Altoona Emergency Response Plan For Education Abroad and Exchange Programs**

**\*PLEASE NOTE: Plan applies to Penn State Altoona Study Abroad Programs only. Programs run through other universities/campuses, including Penn State University Park Office of International Programs and Conferences and Institutes, will have their own emergency procedures.**

### **Operation Principles**

The following operating principles form the guidelines for these procedures:

- Safety is the number one concern
- Confidentiality of information must be kept
- Legal liability of the University and its employees should be considered
- Predetermined procedures must be followed

### **Introduction**

This document outlines the specific procedures for any emergency or crisis involving participants in Penn State Altoona's study abroad programs. These procedures are meant first and foremost to ensure the safety and well-being of participants and faculty. Instructions for specific emergencies will be addressed later.

These procedures differentiate between "real" and "perceived" emergencies:

**Real emergency:** A genuine or imminent risk to participants, or a disturbance that has already occurred. Examples: political coup, civil unrest, natural/manmade disaster, incarceration, physical/emotional illness, accident, physical assault, disappearance for an inordinate period of time, kidnapping, terrorist threat and/or attack, pandemic event.

**Perceived emergency:** No significant risk, but perceived as threatening by student, faculty, family, university officials, or others in or outside the U.S. Examples: Sensationalized reporting of an event abroad, distortion of information provided by a participant, and/or nervousness of a family member or student with little or no international experience.

**NOTE:** Perceived emergencies can affect students, family members and others in the U.S. as strongly as real emergencies. They need to be treated seriously and response should be made in a timely fashion.

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### EMERGENCY RESPONSE

#### PERCEIVED EMERGENCY

No specific risk, but perceived as threatening by students, faculty, family, university official, or others in or outside the U.S.

#### **1. Response A- The perceived emergency has not yet created widespread or persistent rumors:**

- a. Contact will be made with a university employee who will fill out an incident report form, gather information and forward to Director of Planning and Program Development as soon as possible and no later than the next morning.
- b. Director investigates information and will contact additional people for further information if necessary. This may include checking with the Faculty Leader.
- c. Director diffuses the situation and reassures concerned parties: inquiries have been made, participants/faculty secure, program proceeding normally, welfare provided for participants/faculty.
- d. Staff in the Risk Management Office, the Chancellor's Office, the Office of University Relations, the Office of Student Affairs and the Office of Education Abroad will be informed of the situation so they may respond in a like manner if other inquiries are received.
- e. If participants/faculty cannot be reassured that they are safe, Director will work with the Office of Education Abroad and the Faculty Leader to decide how to handle situation, including the financial and academic implications of returning home.

#### **2. Response B - If the perceived emergency has created widespread or persistent rumors and a strong public perception of risk:**

- a. Director to inform Risk Management, the Chancellor, Associate Dean for Academic Affairs, Director of University Relations, Director of Student Affairs and Office of Education Abroad.
- b. If, after discussion with the appropriate offices, the Faculty Leader and participants will also be advised about perceived emergency and about the University's response.

#### REAL EMERGENCY

**Note:** All of the crisis responses outlined will require that the Director of Planning and Program Development or first person contacted, usually Police Services, complete the Incident Report Form (See Appendix A) as soon as the details of the incident are received.

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### **I. General Procedures**

1. Call is received about a real emergency.  
**Note:** Faculty Leader, additional faculty members, and students will be encouraged to contact Police Services first at 814-949-5222
2. Information is gathered and logged using the incident report form. (See Appendix A)
3. Director of Planning and Program Development (hereafter referred to as Director) is notified and informed of the situation immediately.
4. Director decides what type of emergency was logged and establishes the appropriate steps.
5. The Director will consult with the Faculty Leader and/or appropriate university personnel in order to decide what specific measures should be taken in responding to the crisis. Any telephone conversation should be well documented and logged.
6. Once the appropriate response strategy has been determined the Director will phone the Faculty Leader and the affected students. This contact will contain a detailed description of the course of action that they will be required to follow in response to the crisis. The Faculty Leader will see to it that all program participants are made aware of the course of action. The Faculty Leader will follow the appropriate course of action.
7. The Director will write a brief and accurate description of the events and will distribute it, with a copy of the written response strategy to the following people:
  - Chancellor
  - Associate Dean for Academic Affairs
  - Assistant Dean for Academic Affairs
  - Director of Student Affairs
  - Office of Education Abroad
  - Police Services
  - Director of University Relations
  - Risk Management
8. Once the description has been written and delivered to the above individuals, all media inquiries will be directed to the Director of University Relations.  
**Note:** The Office of University Relations should clear what is being said with University Relations at University Park, and ensure that Risk Management is informed.
9. If necessary the Director will contact the U.S. Embassy or other official government agencies and ask for advice and assistance. (see Appendix B for numbers)
10. The Director is also responsible for ensuring that the families of the students involved in an emergency are notified of the emergency and shall coordinate assistance to the families of the students on behalf of the university.

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### SPECIFIC EMERGENCIES

#### STUDENT/FACULTY LEADER INJURY (including rape and sexual assault)

1. Information is gathered and logged using the incident report form. (See Appendix A)
2. Director is notified and informed of the situation immediately.
3. Director will contact Risk Management, the appropriate college offices and, if necessary, governmental agencies.
4. The Director will remind the caller to keep a log of the chronological events leading up to the individual's condition and/or discussions with the physician.
5. The Director will arrange to notify his/her designated emergency contact.
6. The Faculty Leader should inform the Director of all updates on the individual's condition. In the case of a Faculty Leader Injury either the program provider or a designated student will inform the Director of all updates on the individual's condition.
7. In some cases, the individual may need to be evacuated in order to receive appropriate medical treatment; Director along with the Office of Education Abroad will arrange for such transportation.
8. If a student/faculty member requires a medical procedure, it may be wise to arrange contact with their personal physician.
9. In the case of Faculty Leader injury, please follow the procedures outlined above. However, please note that it may be necessary to send a university representative to join students.

#### DEATH OF A STUDENT

1. Information is gathered and logged using the incident report form. (See Appendix A)
2. Director is notified and informed of the situation immediately.
3. Director must get full details of incident from the Faculty Leader and/or students. Director needs confirmation that Assist America or university insurance policy will handle repatriation of the remains, information on burial and/or repatriation, including police or immigration procedures. Director will inform the Faculty Leader that family may be in contact with him/her.
4. Director will write summary of circumstances surrounding the death and send it to the following individuals:
  - Chancellor
  - Associate Dean for Academic Affairs
  - Assistant Dean for Academic Affairs
  - Director of Student Affairs
  - Office of Education Abroad
  - Police Services
  - Director of University Relations
  - Risk Management
5. Director determines who should notify the next of kin. Typically, this is done by the Director of Student Affairs.

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6. Director contacts family to offer condolences. (This should not occur until it is confirmed that the family has been informed.) The Director puts family in contact with Assist America (if appropriate) and offers to work with family in contacting Faculty Leader for specific arrangements.

**Note:** There is a student death protocol. It can be found at the following website - [http://www.sa.psu.edu/death\\_response/](http://www.sa.psu.edu/death_response/)

Additional contacts may need to be made with:

1. Risk Management
2. Participants/faculty
3. Attending physician(s), clinics, health care professionals
4. Translators
5. U.S. Embassy and State Department
6. Local law enforcement or public security officials, particularly English-speaking local officials.

### **DEATH OF FACULTY LEADER**

1. Information is gathered and logged using the incident report form. (See Appendix A)
2. Director is notified and informed of the situation immediately.
3. Director must get full details of incident from the students and/or program provider. Director needs confirmation that Faculty Leader's benefits or private travel insurance policy will handle repatriation of the remains, information on burial and/or repatriation, including police or immigration procedures. Director will inform Risk Management that family may be in contact with them.
4. Director will write summary of circumstances surrounding the death and send it to the following individuals:
  - Chancellor
  - Associate Dean for Academic Affairs
  - Assistant Dean for Academic Affairs
  - Director of Student Affairs
  - Office of Education Abroad
  - Police Services
  - Director of University Relations
  - Risk Management
5. Director determines who should notify the next of kin. Typically, this is done by the Chancellor.
6. If Faculty Leader is deceased, the Director will check to see if the Program Provider can assist with students' return to the United States or will consult with various college offices to determine the appropriate university employee to send to assist the students.
7. Chancellor contacts family to offer condolences (should not occur until it is confirmed that the family has been informed). The Chancellor puts family in contact with Risk Management and offers to work with family in contacting the Program Provider for specific arrangements.

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### **DISAPPEARANCE**

1. Faculty Leader will contact the university.
2. Information is gathered and logged using the incident report form. (See Appendix A)
3. Director is notified and informed of the situation immediately.
4. Director will gather further information and, if necessary, contact Risk Management, local authorities and U.S. Embassy and work with program director and providers in locating the student(s).
5. Director will contact student's family and keep them informed of the situation.
6. Once student is found, a disciplinary action may need to be taken. (See guidelines below)

### **DISCIPLINARY ISSUES/INCARCERATION**

1. Information is gathered and logged using the incident report form. (See Appendix A)
2. Director is notified and informed of the situation immediately.
3. If student is incarcerated, the Director will contact the local police and embassy for assistance.
4. Director, with the support of the Faculty Leader and appropriate university offices, will determine appropriate disciplinary procedures.
5. If removal from program is decided, Director will contact student's family and arrange for appropriate transportation back to the U.S. at students expense.

### **FACULTY RESPONSE TO DISCIPLINARY ISSUES**

1. If a student breaks a rule for the first time, the Faculty Leader may warn the student in writing or verbally.
2. Fax or e-mail the infraction to the Office of Education Abroad and Director.
3. If a student violates the rules of conduct a second time, or the student's first violation (such as drug use) warrants expulsion from the program, the Faculty Leader may be required to expel the student.
4. Faculty Leader will communicate with Director about appropriate actions and assist with travel arrangements home if necessary.
5. Faculty Leader will keep a written record of events, discussions with student, etc.

### **NATURAL DISASTER, POLITICAL UNREST, TERRORISM/WAR, TRAVEL WARNING ISSUED, PANDEMIC EVENT**

1. If the crisis is pandemic refer to the Pandemic Crisis Plan.
2. If a Travel Warning is issued for the country where a program is taking place, the Director will work with Risk Management and the appropriate university offices to make arrangements to bring the Faculty Leader and participants back as soon as possible.
3. The Director will contact the Faculty Leader to determine the real danger to program participants. Some of the issues to be discussed will include: the type of crisis; the safety of participants; the geographic proximity of the Penn State Altoona program to the crisis; the impact of the crisis on the supply of critical supplies (availability of food water and medical supplies), transportation and communication networks, and the quality of life; if the crisis is political, the

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intensity of the military presence in the area of the program; whether classes can be continued in the current location; and the group's ability to travel in the region/country.

4. **The first priority is the safety and well-being of students. The on-site faculty should contact all students, gather them, take roll, assess their well-being, and escort them to a safe location.**
5. Director, Risk Management, and appropriate university offices will complete the following items.
  - a. Assess the severity of the unrest and the intended target of the unrest by contacting the home country state department country desk, the home country overseas embassy, local police and other relevant agencies.
  - b. Consider the in-country culture and how the university can use that knowledge to respond to the situation (consult with faculty experts).
  - c. Establish a communication chain that can be easily implemented.
  - d. Devise an evacuation route that will assure the safety of all participants. Notify appropriate parties of the evacuation route. Work with local, embassy, state department if necessary.
  - e. Maintain anonymity of all programs participants in both the home and host countries.
  - f. Warn program participants to avoid popular U.S. and tourist "hang outs" (i.e. pubs, theaters, clubs, etc.).

The Director (or designated staff) must handle incoming calls from concerned family and friends, newspapers, and television reporters, federal government agents and other interested parties. Honesty and brevity are the best policies. All external calls will be handled by the Director of University Relations.

**Note:** The Office of University Relations should clear what is being said with University Relations at University Park, and ensure that Risk Management is informed.

6. The Director and the Office of Education Abroad will arrange to contact the emergency contacts for all program participants and update them regularly regarding the situation.

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**APPENDIX A**

**Penn State Altoona  
Education Abroad Incident Report**

Date and Time of Incident: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Person Reporting Incident: \_\_\_\_\_

Contact Information (i.e. telephone, email, etc): \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Program:

- |                                 |   |                                   |                                      |                               |
|---------------------------------|---|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Belize | <input type="checkbox"/> Germany                | <input type="checkbox"/> Mexico   | <input type="checkbox"/> Puerto Rico | <input type="checkbox"/> Rome |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Sweden | <input type="checkbox"/> St. Martin/St. Maarten | <input type="checkbox"/> Tanzania | <input type="checkbox"/> Other       |                               |

Name and ID#s of Students or Faculty Involved in Incident: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Description of Incident (Type of incident, place, involved parties, etc.):

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Your Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_

Any action taken by person reporting incident: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**\*\*\*\*\* After you fill out the report please IMMEDIATELY contact the  
Director of Planning and Program Development,  
Dr. Carl Larsen, W120A Smith Building, 814-949-5282**

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**APPENDIX B: Important Numbers**

**Agency or Organization**

**Phone/Web**

**U.S. Dept. of State's Citizen Emergency Center**

*Situation:* Serious illness, death, financial crisis, theft, or arrest

1-202-647-5225

**U.S. Embassy for Appropriate Country**

*Situation:* Public Announcement/travel warnings, etc.

<http://travel.state.gov>

**State Dept's Counter-Terrorism Office**

*Situation:* Info concerning terrorist threat or action

1-202-647-9892

**Centers for Disease Control**

*Situation:* Medical emergency/disease outbreak

1-800-311-3435

[www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov)

**Assist America: Global Emergency Medical Assistance**

1-609-452-8570

**Relevant Penn State Altoona Numbers**

**Dr. Lori J. Bechtel, Chancellor**

1-814-949-5012

**Dr. Patti Mills, Associate Dean for Academic Affairs**

1-814-949-5094

**Dr. Carl Larsen, Director of Planning & Program Development**

1-814-949-5282

**Mandy Reinig, Education Abroad Advisor**

1-814-949-5335

**Michael Lowery, Chief of Police**

1-814-949-5222

**Sean Kelly, Director of Student Affairs**

1-814-949-5053

**Shari Rutch, Director of University Relations**

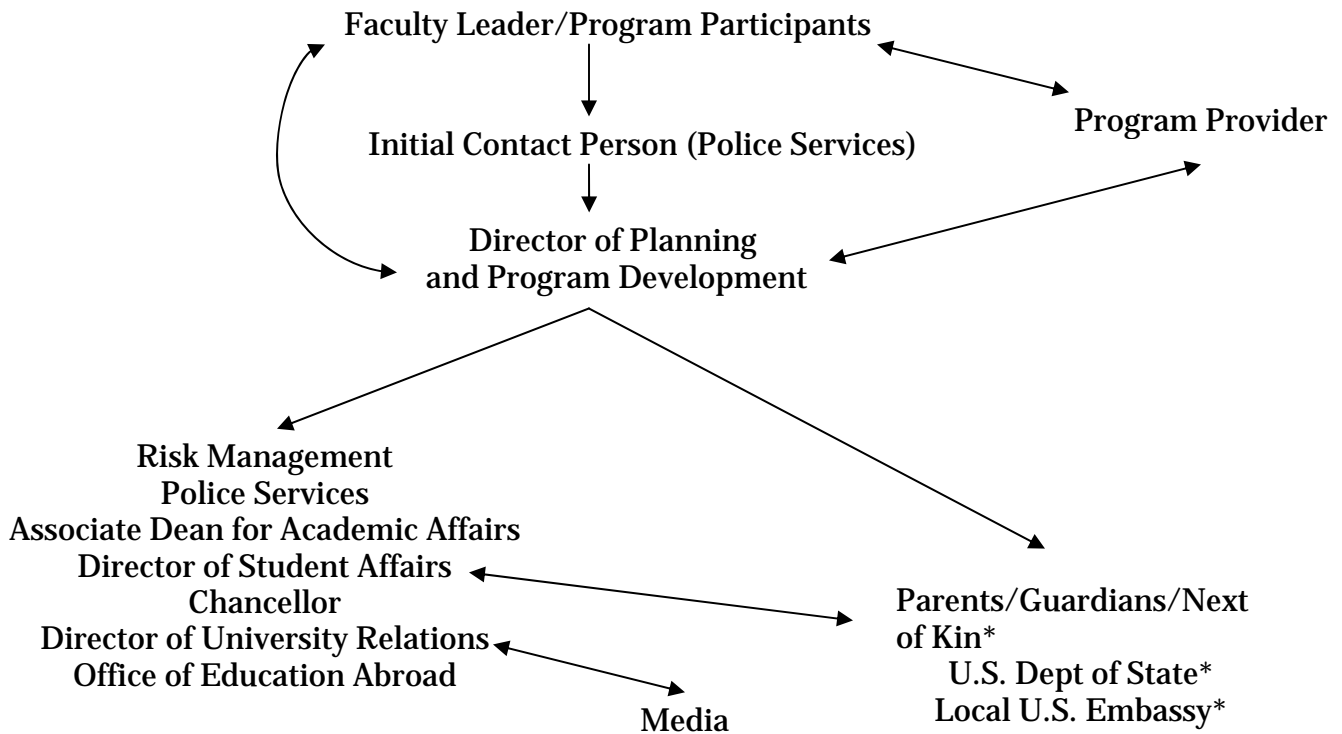
1-814-949-5105

**Gary Langsdale, University Risk Officer**

1-814-865-6308

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APPENDIX C: Chain of Communication in Event of Emergency Abroad



\*If Necessary

**Plan Adapted from:**

Georgia Institute of Technology [http://www.oie.gatech.edu/fac/Emergency\\_Procedures.pdf](http://www.oie.gatech.edu/fac/Emergency_Procedures.pdf)  
California State Polytechnic University  
The University of Iowa  
[www.region4.nafsa.org/sections/secussa/ui\\_study\\_abroad\\_emergency.doc](http://www.region4.nafsa.org/sections/secussa/ui_study_abroad_emergency.doc)