

Procedure to Request an Exception to Policy - International Travel

A. Introduction

The health, safety, and security of faculty, staff, and students is a top priority of Virginia Tech, including during university-supported international travel. Owing to concerns for the safety, security and well-being of our group members, Virginia Tech does not support student participation in university-supported global education activities in locations where an U.S. Department of State Travel Advisory Level 4 (Do not travel) has been issued, or to any region within a country with an elevated, persistent or transient health, safety, or security issue (U.S. Department of State Travel Advisory Level 4 or 3 (Reconsider travel), or other safety concerns unique to Virginia Tech).

Individuals or group members on university-supported activities are prohibited from traveling to countries or coming to Virginia Tech from countries where the Center for Disease Control (CDC) has issued a Warning Level 3 travel notice. This applies across the board to all aspects of university programming whether it be educational, research, or outreach.

In cases of compelling need, travelers can petition the Global Travel Oversight Committee (GTOC) for a waiver to allow for critical travel to a location that is restricted by Virginia Tech [Policy 1070: Global Travel Policy](#).

B. Procedures

Petitions for an exception to Policy 1070 to travel to a location with elevated risk will vary based on the destination, risks inherent to the travel, activities planned, and the traveler. To accommodate this variation, the GTOC allows for flexibility in petition formats. Proposals, mitigation plans, and documentation used for other organizations and agencies can be submitted without significant changes if they support the traveler's petition. GTOC approval does not constitute approval for commitment of funds or financial reimbursement. All petitions are to be submitted by email to VTGlobalSafety@vt.edu, within the timeframe outlined below. Petitions can, and must be submitted after listed deadlines if the advisory is elevated after these deadlines.

B.1 Employee Petitions for Exception to Policy 1070

Virginia Tech employees planning individual travel will submit petitions for exception to Policy 1070 at least 30 days prior to their scheduled departure. Any students accompanying employees must submit an individual petition for exception following the student petition procedure below. If a group of both employees and students is planning to travel, follow the below procedures for group petitions.

Employee petitions for exception to Policy 1070 will include at least:

- Purpose of travel (research description, conference description, description of business meeting, etc.)
- Compelling reason for which this travel merits an exception to policy
- Detailed itinerary from point of origin to destination, interim travel plans, and return
- Risks specific to the destination(s); reasons for elevated Department of State and/or CDC travel advisory levels
- Planned mitigations for identified risks

Global Education Office Procedure

- Evidence of financial resources necessary for mitigations
- Emergency contact at destination
- List of any accompanying travelers, to include dependents and guests
- Confirmation of travel funding, to include funding in the event of an emergency return that is not covered within the scope of Virginia Tech's international emergency medical and security assistance insurance policy
- College Dean or Department Head endorsement of travel
- Other considerations relevant to the individual petition

B.2 Student Petitions for Exception to Policy 1070

For individual travel less than four weeks in duration, students will submit petitions for exception to Policy 1070 at least 30 days prior to their scheduled departure. For individual travel longer than four weeks in duration, students will submit petitions for exception to Policy 1070 at least 90 days prior to their scheduled departure. In consideration of specific global events (pandemics, natural disasters, etc.) an earlier deadline may be set by the GTOC for student petitions for exception to Policy 1070. Event-driven deadlines will be published on the [Global Education Office \(GEO\) website](#) and communicated to all impacted students that are registered with the GEO through their My Study Abroad account. The [Global Education Office Study Abroad Application Fee](#) will not be returned if a petition is denied.

Student petitions for exception to Policy 1070 will include at least:

- Purpose of travel (program name, conference description, competition name, etc.)
- Compelling reason for why this travel merits an exception to policy
- Detailed itinerary from point of origin to destination, interim travel plans, and return
- Risks specific to the destination(s); reasons for elevated advisory levels
- Planned mitigations for identified risks
- Evidence of financial resources necessary for mitigations, to include funding in the event of an emergency return that is not covered within the scope of Virginia Tech's international emergency medical and security assistance insurance policy
- Confirmation of completion of all registration requirements with the Global Education Office
- If university funding is supporting travel, confirmation of travel funding
- College Dean or Department Head endorsement of travel
- Other considerations relevant to the individual petition

B.3 Group Petitions for Exception to Policy 1070

A group or program leader will submit one petition for exception to Policy 1070 on behalf of the group. Group or program leaders will submit petitions for exception to Policy 1070 at least 30 days prior to departure. Exceptions should be obtained prior to significant financial payments.

Group petitions for exception to Policy 1070 will include at least:

- Approved program proposal from the Global Education Approval Committee (GEAC) or VT Engage.
- Compelling reason for which this travel merits and exception to policy
- Detailed itinerary from point of origin to destination, interim travel, and return
- Risks specific to the destination(s); reasons for elevated advisory levels
- Planned mitigations for identified risks

Global Education Office Procedure

- Group rules or community agreements addressing these risks
- Pre-departure communication and training plan related to risk mitigation
- Enforcement mechanisms
- On-site support related to these risks
- Emergency communications plan
- Program budget changes related to planned mitigations and potential emergency costs
- Situations or thresholds that would prevent the program from departing (i.e., facility closures, border entry restrictions, vaccine availability, low number of applicants, etc.) and plan to communicate these situations to program participants
- Confirmation of completion of all registration requirements with the Global Education Office
- Confirmation of travel funding, to include funding in the event of an emergency return that is not covered within the scope of Virginia Tech's international emergency medical and security assistance insurance policy
- College Dean or Department Head endorsement of travel
- Other considerations relevant to the petition

B.4 In-bound Traveler Petitions for Exception to Policy 1070

Petitions for exceptions to Policy 1070 for university-supported guests and non-degree seeking students coming to Virginia Tech facilities from locations with a CDC Travel Health Notice Level 3 or higher will be submitted by the supporting department at least 30 days prior to departure. An exception from the GTOC is required prior to issuance of visa documentation from Virginia Tech.

In-bound traveler petitions for exception to Policy 1070 will include at least:

- Traveler's name
- Traveler's relation to Virginia Tech
- Purpose of travel (program name, conference description, competition name, etc.)
- Compelling reason for why this travel merits an exception to policy
- Confirmation of registration with the [Office of Export and Secured Research Control \(OESRC\)](#)
- Detailed itinerary from point of origin to destination, and return
- Risks specific to the traveler's originating location; reasons for elevated advisory levels
- Planned mitigations for identified risks
- Evidence of financial resources necessary for mitigations
- Confirmation of compliance with recommendations and requirements from the university, Virginia Department of Health, or CDC
- Confirmation of funding and understanding that standard financial processes must be followed
- College Dean or Department Head endorsement of travel
- Other considerations relevant to the individual petition

Sponsoring departments are responsible for communicating policy requirements and relevant mitigations to the traveler.