

MEMO

To: Cabinet

From: [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Re: Proposed Revision to International Travel Policy

Date: April 23, 2021

The ongoing COVID-19 pandemic has caused disruptions to every day life globally. As we look to responsibly restart international travel, we recognize that each destination requires a careful review of the risks to our students, faculty, and staff.

Recently, the U.S. State Department has reissued their Travel Warnings to align better with CDC guidance around COVID-19. Almost 80% of countries are now listed as a Level 4: Do Not Travel due to the ongoing pandemic, including destinations that were a Level 2 last week. The U.S. State Department has stated that “this does not imply a reassessment of the current health situation in a given country, but rather reflects an adjustment in the State Department’s Travel Advisory system to rely more on CDC’s existing epidemiological assessments.”

We recognize that COVID-19, and other epidemiological outbreaks, are not going away in the long term. We believe that in cases where a country or a region listed within a country are listed as a Level 4 due to medical/health advisories, the University should adopt the Level 3 petition process for consideration of travel instead of an automatic blanket no.

We in no way want to discredit the U.S. Department of State, and trust that their opinions of international travel are based in the best interests of U.S. Citizens abroad. However, we recognize that a country placed on a Level 4 Travel Advisory for increased crime/violent crime, civil unrest, war, a recent natural disaster, or where travel is inadvisable due to U.S.-host country relations is a different level of risk than some medical/health related advisories.

In the long-term, the adoption of this proposed revision will give us more flexibility to support international travel in locations where a medical/health advisory may pose little to no risk to most travelers, especially if it is region-based in an area our travelers are not going to. The adoption of this revision still allows the University to ultimately say no, and does not mean approval is guaranteed.

In the short-term, we propose a case-by-case consideration of allowing travelers to still go abroad if they are fully vaccinated for COVID-19 per CDC recommendations, and provided that entry into the host country is permissible. International travelers will still submit a petition with evidence they’ve been fully vaccinated.

We have worked with [REDACTED] to discuss the need for this revision long-term, and the additional risk reduction steps we can take to provide additional support in the short-term.

We are seeking Cabinet approval to adopt the proposed revision to this policy.

References:

U.S. State Department Travel Advisory Updates Media Note April 19, 2021:
<https://www.state.gov/travel-advisory-updates/>