International Program Leader Handbook

Developing and Directing International Programs

The University of Texas at Dallas

02/01/2019 revision
# Table of Contents

Introduction ................................................................................................................. 2  
Contact Information ..................................................................................................... 3  
Program Development Timeline .................................................................................. 4  
Program Proposal .......................................................................................................... 5  
Promotion and Recruitment ......................................................................................... 6  
Comets Abroad Portal ................................................................................................. 7  
Reviewer Function in Comets Abroad .......................................................................... 7  
Program Documents Checklist ..................................................................................... 8  
Working with Students ................................................................................................. 8  
Student International Travel Insurance ....................................................................... 9  
Faculty as a Student Mentor ....................................................................................... 10  
Student Behavior ......................................................................................................... 11  
Pre-Departure Orientation ......................................................................................... 12  
IEF Scholarship ........................................................................................................... 13  
International Risk and Safety ..................................................................................... 14  
Responsible University Official (RUO) ...................................................................... 14  
Planning Ahead ........................................................................................................... 14  
Managing Crisis / Emergencies Abroad ..................................................................... 15
Introduction

A note to program leaders

Thank you for your time, energy and commitment to lead and provide a quality study abroad experience to UT Dallas students.

This handbook is designed to assist you with the information you will need to develop and implement a successful program abroad.

All program leaders, including those who have previous experience leading programs, should take this handbook to use on site. It is also available online at www.utdallas.edu/ea/staff/.

We wish you a safe and rewarding experience abroad with your students!

Education Abroad @ UT Dallas
**Contact Information**

**Emergency assistance abroad**

| International SOS | 215.942.8059 or 215.942.8226  
Identify yourself - UT Dallas Member #11BSGC000037 |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Local number equivalent to 911</td>
<td><a href="http://travel.state.gov/content/passports/english/country.html">http://travel.state.gov/content/passports/english/country.html</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Other emergency contact(s)  
*if applicable* | |

**UT Dallas resources**

| UT Dallas International Risk & Safety | [irso@utdallas.edu](mailto:irso@utdallas.edu)  
24/7 phone 214.906.7640 |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>UT Dallas Police</td>
<td>972.883.2222</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| UT Dallas Education Abroad | [educationabroad@utdallas.edu](mailto:educationabroad@utdallas.edu)  
972.883.4715 |
| Other UT Dallas contact(s)  
*if applicable* | |

**Know how to get local alerts, warnings or emergency updates while at your destination**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ISOS Assistance App</th>
<th><a href="http://www.utdallas.edu/rs/isos/">http://www.utdallas.edu/rs/isos/</a></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>U.S. Department of State STEP</td>
<td><a href="https://step.state.gov/step/">https://step.state.gov/step/</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| U.S. Citizens Dep of State emergency number | From Overseas +1 202-501-4444  
From Canada 1-888-407-4747 |
| Local Alert Source | [http://travel.state.gov/content/passports/english/country.html](http://travel.state.gov/content/passports/english/country.html) |

**Education Abroad**

| Lisabeth Lassiter, Director | [Lisabeth.Lassiter@utdallas.edu](mailto:Lisabeth.Lassiter@utdallas.edu)  
972-883-4059 |
|-----------------------------|--------------------------------------------------|
| Andrea Diaz, Assistant Director | [Andrea.Diaz@utdallas.edu](mailto:Andrea.Diaz@utdallas.edu)  
972-883-4084 |
| Karen Stepherson, Coordinator | [Kes067000@utdallas.edu](mailto:Kes067000@utdallas.edu)  
972-883-6702 |
| Alissa Qualheim, Advisor | [Alissa.Qualheim@utdallas.edu](mailto:Alissa.Qualheim@utdallas.edu)  
972-883-4041 |

**Risk & Safety**

| Imperio Shanks, Risk & Safety Analyst | [Imperio@utdallas.edu](mailto:Imperio@utdallas.edu)  
972-883-4042 |
Program Development Timeline

MONTHS PRIOR TO DEPARTURE

12
- Submit Proposal Part 1
- Submit Program Details

10
- Begin marketing

9
- Start reviewing applications

8
- Request Trip Risk Review

6
- Request High Risk Region Review (if applicable)
- Close application
- Complete application reviews

4
- Collect program fees deposit
- Arrange Pre-departure Orientation

2
- Submit Travel Details (Part 2)
- Submit missing program documents
- Collect remainder of programs fees
- Obtain Travel Authorization

1
- Host Pre-Departure Orientation

PROGRAM DEPARTURE

Program becomes active on Comets Abroad portal
Program Proposal

Access to portal

12 months Before Departure
To request Academic Approval, complete the Program Proposal Application in the Comets Abroad Portal. You will be asked to submit:

- The Program Proposal Part 1
- Syllabus (SACS format) that contains:
  - Title of course, course registration number(s), level(s) of course
  - Course Assignments and Objectives (varied for levels)
  - Course dates on-campus and abroad
  - Proposed cost to student
- Special Session Course Request Form
  www.utdallas.edu/registrar/files/Special_Session_Course_Request_Form.pdf
  - Submit in Program Proposal before getting Provost Signature
  - Education Abroad will get remaining signatures
- Dean’s letter

After Academic Approval
After your application is accepted, please submit the following items in your application:

- The Program Proposal Part 2
  - Travel details and logistics should include actual information.
- Marketing Details – details to market your program to students
- Program Fee – EA offers to facilitate program fee charges
- Pre-Departure Orientation – to schedule the session for your group

Four Weeks before Departure
To request Institutional Travel Authorization for program participants:

- Students will submit the travel authorization request through the Comets Abroad online portal (http://utdallas-ea.terradotta.com/)
- Faculty/staff leaders will submit the travel authorization request for employees directly to International Risk and Safety at IRSO@utdallas.edu.
- Complete remaining items in the program application: Foreign Contact Information, Copy of Contract, Non-Program Participants (see Working with Students section on pg. 7).
- Pre-Departure Orientation Session with Education Abroad staff

Proposal Renewal
To request approval to renew previous program, complete the Renewal Application:

- Eligible for program 2nd and 3rd year after original proposal was approved.
- Program must have identical components: Course number/syllabus, instructor, length, Location (country), and proposed cost (within $500).
- Obtain Dean’s signature on the Renewal Form before uploading.
- Replaces Part 1 and Part 2 of the Proposal Process for eligible programs.
Promotion and Recruitment

Promotion of your program is essential in recruiting students. Education Abroad can support you in doing this. Some examples are:

**Brochure in Comets Abroad online portal.** Education Abroad will include a brochure for your program in Comets Abroad online portal (Terra Dotta) for all students to browse and apply. Including pictures and detailed information is essential in making the program brochure attractive to students. Education Abroad uses the marketing details submitted in the proposal application to create the brochure.

**Program Highlight.** Education Abroad sends a monthly newsletter to approximately 3300 students on the Education Abroad listserv. Also, programs are highlighted each Friday on our Facebook page. If you would like your program highlighted, send details of your program to EducationAbroad@utdallas.edu. One example of a program highlight is:

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**Summer Study in Switzerland**
This faculty-led program offers students a unique opportunity to study in Lugano, a beautiful lakeside city located in the Italian-speaking region of southern Switzerland. Participants will earn 6 credits over 4 weeks, with the option to take two UT Dallas courses or one UT Dallas course and a beginning Italian language course at Franklin University Switzerland. The program also includes a multi-day excursion to Rome, Italy. For details on the program, cost, and application, visit the [Comets Abroad Portal](#).

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**Study Abroad Fair.** Education Abroad sponsors one study abroad fair each fall in October. All approved UT Dallas study abroad programs are invited to attend, present their materials and speak with students.

**Information Booth.** Many program leaders will set up an informational booth in their building, the Student Union, or on the mall. If you would like to reserve a table to promote your program, Education Abroad can help you with the arrangements.

**Information Session.** If you would like to hold an information session about your program, Education Abroad can reserve a classroom and promote the session in the EA Newsletter and Facebook page. Most sessions last approximately one hour, and Education Abroad staff will attend to be available for any application-specific questions.

**Eligible Participants.** Only current UT Dallas students are eligible to apply as program participants. Alumni, including recent graduates, are not permitted to apply or participate as a student. Alumni can only travel on behalf of the University as Official Guests or Volunteers. Official Guests or Volunteers are individuals (not UTD employees or students), who are invited and authorized by UT Dallas to participate in a university activity abroad, and who have a specific role and duties that are integral to the activity, and clearly distinct from those of a student participant.
Comets Abroad Portal

The online brochure for your program in the Comets Abroad Portal allows students to review program details and apply with Education Abroad. Program Leaders can decide if the program requires a program application. If a program application is required, procedures should be included on the online portal.

Program eligibility should be clearly stated on the online brochure. Provide Education Abroad with prerequisite or previous knowledge required for students.

An estimated program fee should be listed so interested students are aware of the cost. Detailing what the fee includes and does not include allows students to properly plan.

All students who wish to participate in the program must apply and be accepted to the program. Each department can determine their own approval process. Education Abroad will work with each program contact to verify who has been accepted by the department before Education Abroad will accept them in the online portal.

Reviewer Function in Comets Abroad

Leaders and managers of customized programs are able to view applications to their program(s) and recommend to accept, reject, or waitlist applicants. As the reviewer, you will be determining who is accepted into your program. Be sure to check the student’s profile in Comets Abroad for items such as credit hours completed, GPA, major, etc. If you require other steps for the student to complete before they are accepted, make sure they are completed before marking the student accepted.

Instructions for reviewing applications:
2. Login using your NetID and Password
3. Click the House icon and select Reviewer to access your Reviewer Home.
4. View students’ applications for the program that you lead.
5. If a student’s application is Ready for Review, click on their name to begin reviewing their application.
6. Type any comments you wish to leave for Education Abroad in the Comments section. Select either Accept, Reject, or Waitlist and check the box Mark as complete.
7. Click the Submit button when finished.

Based upon your review, EA will change the status of the student’s application.
- If your recommendation is Accept, their application status will be changed to ACCEPTED and they may begin to complete the post-decision elements of their application (ex. Passport, Airline Itinerary, etc.)
- If your recommendation is Reject, their application status will be changed to REJECTED as they are not approved for your program.
- If your recommendation is Waitlist, their application status will remain pending, until further notice from you.

Students will be notified via email within 24 hours if their status has changed to ACCEPTED or REJECTED.
Program Documents Checklist

Students
Education Abroad will review the students’ online portal “file” and notify students of missing documents required. Any students whose required documents are incomplete one week prior to departure will be notified that they are not authorized to travel on the program. Program Leader will be copied on that notification.

Program Leader
Education Abroad will verify that all of the items in the proposal application are completed. To facilitate a timely travel authorization we encourage Program Leaders to meet requirements four weeks prior to departure. Requirements include submission of travel documents, providing foreign contact information, and offering Pre-Departure Orientation to participants.

Working with Students

Program Registration
Student application process - All students applying for a customized program use the Comets Abroad Portal (powered by Terra Dotta). Students access the online portal with their UTD NetID and password.

University requirements - Students need to complete required university travel documents, register their trip in International SOS, and attend a Pre-Departure Orientation. Students will not be authorized to travel until all required steps are complete. UT System requires that students traveling on behalf of UT Dallas obtain travel authorization prior to departure.

Non-Program Participants Accompanying Group
On occasion, students, faculty or staff in the group may inquire about a spouse, partner, parent, child, or friend accompanying him/her abroad. It is strongly encouraged that group members participate in the program independently and plan their personal travel outside the program dates with their guest. For more information, review the Guest Guidelines at http://www.utdallas.edu/rs/itguidelines/.
Orientations
Students need to be oriented on culture, safety, and logistics of the program before departure and upon arrival. The initial pre-departure orientation session should take place after students are notified of their acceptance and at least one month prior to the program start date. To learn how to schedule a pre-departure session with Education Abroad, review the Pre-Departure Orientation section.

Passports and Visas
All students must obtain a passport, and some program locations may require a visa. Visa requirements vary depending on the student’s citizenship, their destination, and pass through countries. As a program leader, be prepared to guide students on visa requirements at key points during the pre-departure process. However, obtaining a valid passport and securing the correct visa is the responsibility of the student.

Student Financial Considerations
It is imperative that all students are aware of their financial responsibility attached to the program. Consider requiring a signed payment agreement which would lay out the various payment deadlines and program costs. In particular, students who withdraw from a program are often responsible for a portion of the program fee regardless of whether or not the balance has already been paid. Students should prepare well in advance for anticipated expenses abroad, which vary by program and may include meals, transportation, personal travel, and other miscellaneous purchases. To see the two examples of payment agreements, see Appendix 2.

Student International Travel Insurance
All students traveling abroad on university international travel will be enrolled in the UT System travel insurance plan by registering their trip in International SOS for the period authorized by the University. Enrollment in this insurance program is mandatory, regardless of any other insurance the students may have, including insurance possibly required by a provider or a foreign government.
Faculty as a Student Mentor

Faculty leaders often provide more personal attention than is called for in the on-campus classroom. It is likely that some students have never traveled outside of the U.S. and perhaps a few may never have been on an airplane. You are in a position to be the cultural interpreter and analyst, helping students to understand the host culture. Students will turn to you with a variety of questions about the local culture and customs, perhaps asking about restaurant etiquette or how to work the machines at a laundromat. The faculty leader should be supportive of their students at all times, not simply be authority figures. Be aware of your students’ attitudes and watch for any drastic changes in their behavior. Encourage your students to report any problem – physical, emotional, or financial – to you directly.

While Abroad:
- Conduct on-site orientation within the first two days
- Meet regularly with the group to help participants process and monitor their experience
- Document any complaints or incidents involving the participants

Education Abroad / International Risk & Safety support
- 24/7 phone number
- Emergency Response support
- Medical forms provided electronically
  - Spreadsheet of information
  - Program Leaders encouraged to review medical record, to be aware of potential health concerns

Unstructured Time:
Unstructured or “free” time is a complex issue for program design. Too much unscheduled time questions the academic integrity regarding the amount of credit granted, and too little free time compromises students’ ability to learn due to exhaustion and information overload.

Students need breaks to complete readings and journals, to explore, to rest, and to process. The amount of free time built into the program depends on the program model. Faculty may factor in designed or guided free time into the itinerary. For example, students may be required to choose and attend two to three cultural activities during the week, on their own time, and then report back to the group. The faculty leader is encouraged to provide a list of suggested activities or sites for the students to do or explore during their free time. This allows students to build confidence by traveling on their own, doing their own research, and being held accountable for that time.

Program Assistant
It is recommended that you include a program assistant, regardless of the number of participants. Program assistants are a valuable asset to the program leader as the number of program participants increases. The program assistant should be another UT Dallas faculty, staff, or graduate assistant. While an assistant can be of tremendous help to the program leader, additional costs will need to be considered. Contact the director of Education Abroad if you would like to discuss options.

The program leader should clearly define the role of the program assistant, and discuss with the assistant their roles, emergency and crisis management, and interaction with students, such as the use of titles, and the expectations each have for one another and the program. Program assistants should:
- receive appropriate training on Title IX (utdallas.edu/oiec/training/),
- review guidelines on managing difficult student behavior (utdallas.edu/conduct/faculty/), and
- review the RUO emergency and crisis management manual (utdallas.edu/rs/files/ruoeecmg.pdf).
Student Behavior

Establishing Expectations
Setting expectations prior to departure of a program can be beneficial for both the leader and the student. Visit the Dean of Students Travel Guidelines for useful tools and information.

All UT Dallas students, including students abroad, are bound by the Code of Conduct (http://policy.utdallas.edu/utdsp5003). The code states that students "need to follow all policies and procedures of the University." The program leader may establish additional conduct requirements for the program, or a "Supplemental Code of Conduct". If Program Leaders want to create a supplemental Code of Conduct, it should be approved by the Department Dean and the Dean of Students. These two offices would be who handle adjudication of offenses.

All expectations should be clearly communicated to the students in writing. Consider having the student sign the Participant Responsibility Form, or a version that clearly communicates your expectations.

Reinforce the messages:

- Study abroad is an academic experience, and academic responsibilities take priority over personal interests.
- Students are “cultural ambassadors” and emphasize that their conduct will be seen as representative of the United States, as well as the state of Texas and UT Dallas.
- Alcohol misuse and abuse poses a health and safety risk.

Discipline Clearance
The Education Abroad office will review disciplinary standing, and clear students for the abroad program. The Program Leader will be informed if a student is not cleared.

Misconduct Resolution Process

- Many behavior issues can be resolved by communicating directly with the student(s).
- Attempt to handle any disciplinary problems that occur as soon as they take place.
- Whether the behavioral problems are minor or significant, we urge you to make a written record of all of your observations and discussions with the student.
- If action by the Dean of Student is in order, complete a Critical Incident Report.

Troubling, Disruptive, and Threatening Behavior
At times a student's behavior can interfere with the purpose of the trip, cause others to feel worried, or to be concerned for their personal safety. Review the Behavioral and Mental Health resources in the RUO emergency and crisis management guidelines for advice on steps to take. (pg. 16 – 30, utdallas.edu/rs/files/ruoecmg.pdf)

Reporting unusual student behavior
RUOs can reach out to the following resources at any time to report unusual student behavior.

- Student Counseling Center: Call during office hours at (972) 883 2575. Call after hours at (972)-UTD-TALK. RUOs may consult with a counselor on how to assist and advise a student experiencing excessive stress, anxiety, or other difficulties.
- Referral to BAIT e-form: https://eforms.utdallas.edu/dos-bait-referral/f149112lae
- Discipline Referral to Dean of Students e-form: https://eforms.utdallas.edu/dos-discipline-referral/f152104tag
Pre-Departure Orientation

Pre-Departure Orientations are important tools for preventing and mitigating risks by planning and preparing travelers prior to departure. Education Abroad offers to partner with you on your pre-departure session. The topics below are included in the Pre-Departure Orientations for the group.

Scheduling Your Pre-Departure Session

- The Pre-Departure Orientation will be a presentation of 1½ to 2 hours.
- Request your preferred date/time in your proposal application.

  Topics Covered in Pre-Departure Orientation:

- What to Pack
- Money Matters
- Travel Tips
- ISOS Registration
- Risks & Emergencies
- Advisories & Wellness Checks
- Insurance
- Health & Wellness
- Mental Health
- Conduct
- Incident Reporting
- Identity & Culture
- Cultural Adjustment
- Education Abroad Opportunities
- Final Paperwork
- Fees

Fees

Education Abroad charges two fees to students studying abroad:

**Application Fee ($75).** Non-refundable, charged on/near the first of the month following acceptance of an Education Abroad application. This fee is charged only once per year. If a student applies for a program and does not attend, he/she can apply again in the next two semesters and not be charged an additional fee.

**Insurance Fee ($20/week).** Charged approximately three weeks prior to program. The fee is based on program length, and is charged $20 per week or fraction thereof. This fee covers the cost of the mandatory health insurance required for all UT Dallas students traveling internationally, and cannot be waived. Refundable only if the student does not participate in their program.

Program fees are determined by the department sponsoring the program. Education Abroad will process the fee collection with the information provided in the program proposal application.
IEF Scholarship

The purpose of the International Education Fund Scholarship is to encourage student participation in study abroad. Scholarships are available every Fall, Spring, and Summer semester.

Eligibility

1. Enrolled in UT Dallas courses involving study abroad or enrolled in a study abroad program that transfers credit back to UT Dallas for the semester of the scholarship.
2. Enrolled at least part-time with UT Dallas at the time of application.
3. Students must have a 3.0 or higher cumulative GPA from UT Dallas.
4. Students applying for the IEF Scholarship for short-term (customized) programs must have successfully completed a minimum of 12 (undergraduate) or 9 (graduate) semester credit hours at UT Dallas (residential hours) by program start date.
5. Students from the Executive Division of the Naveen Jindal School of Management are not eligible for the IEF Scholarship.
6. International students intending to pursue international educational programs in their home countries are not eligible for the IEF Scholarship.
7. Students who receive funds from the International Education Fund must comply with all regulations and policies established by the Education Abroad office at UT Dallas. Students must complete necessary paperwork to maintain active student status at UT Dallas while they are away. Upon return, students must complete all credit transfer procedures and submit a reflection about the program.

Application

Complete application packet includes:

- Scholarship application
- Short narrative
- Two letters of reference (submitted online)

Students can apply on the Comets Abroad Portal.

Deadlines

Fall semester: July 15    Spring semester: November 15    Summer semester: April 15

Award Amounts

If awarded an IEF Scholarship, the student's award amount depends on length of program and financial need. Awards are disbursed only after all Education Abroad requirements are completed. IIFS Award amounts as of February 2019:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Length of Program</th>
<th>No Financial Need</th>
<th>Financial Need</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Less than 4 weeks</td>
<td>$400</td>
<td>$800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4-10 weeks</td>
<td>$1000</td>
<td>$2000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Semester/over 10 weeks</td>
<td>$1600</td>
<td>$3200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two semesters or more</td>
<td>$2500</td>
<td>$5000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
International Risk and Safety

Responsible University Official (RUO)

The role of a program leader on an abroad program encompasses the traditional faculty responsibility for academic content, as well as serving as the Responsible University Official (RUO), assuring the well-being of program participants.

Planning Ahead

☐ Your group’s institutional safety net must be set up prior to departure. As an RUO, you will be notified by Education Abroad when the students have submitted all required documents for the International Travel Authorization through the Comets Abroad Portal. This includes registering all segments of their trip in International SOS.

☐ Pre-departure orientation(s). Education Abroad can partner with you on a pre-departure session for your group. Topics covered in the pre-departure orientation include risk and safety, health and wellness, cultural adjustment, and more. Share conduct expectations, trip logistics, and destination-specific laws and customs. Communicate additional information regarding risks due to gender, gender identity, race, ethnicity, or religion. For more information, visit the U.S. Department website: https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/international-travel/International-Travel-Country-Information-Pages.html

☐ Prepare for health emergencies. All program participants should talk with their doctors or with UT Dallas health services about their plans to travel abroad. Advise students to discuss required and recommended vaccinations and make a plan for managing medications, chronic conditions, mental health conditions, dietary needs, or other health concerns that may impact their success abroad if not managed properly.

☐ Review your benefits abroad. Students will be enrolled in the UT System International Travel Insurance plan through their trip registration in International SOS. All program participants can review their insurance benefits and coverage period by visiting http://www.utdallas.edu/rs/travel-insurance/

☐ Student International Travel Handbook. Consider sharing this PDF handbook with program participants. It provides UTD students traveling on behalf of the University with information on international travel requirements and risk mitigation resources. The handbook includes a chronological checklist of recommended risk mitigation steps and travel authorization requirements to meet prior to departure. Other resources include the Traveler Toolkit, Title IX rights and resources, and a fillable Personal Emergency Action Plan (PEAP) template. http://www.utdallas.edu/rs/itguidelines/

☐ Risk assessment for the trip. Remember that your group participants may have different levels of experience with traveling and being away from home. Some may not be as aware of potential risks due to inexperience or lack of familiarity with the destination’s language, laws, or culture. Some may also be more vulnerable due to their gender, race, ethnicity, religion, or disabilities. Request a risk assessment by a team of security experts at International SOS and consider sharing it with participants. See how at: http://www.utdallas.edu/rs/rspdo/
Getting assistance abroad. Ensure that all group participants know how to reach you while abroad, contact their host institution or program provider, and contact each other. All participants should also be advised to carry the International SOS emergency number in their wallets, program this number into their phones, and download the International SOS Assistance App. For the ISOS number and app download, visit http://www.utdallas.edu/rs/isos/.

Guests. If a participant is accompanied by a guest (spouse, child/ren), read the Guest Guidelines carefully by visiting http://www.utdallas.edu/rs/itguidelines/.

Managing Crisis / Emergencies Abroad

Download the RUO Crisis / Emergency Management Guidelines. Find information on how a crisis / emergency is defined, your responsibilities as an RUO to respond to a crisis / emergency, relevant emergency contacts, and what to do if a crime is reported to you. http://www.utdallas.edu/rs/files/ruoecmg.pdf

If an emergency should occur during the program, it is important to remember that you are not alone. The University emergency response plans involve working closely with offices across campus to coordinate the management of crises affecting participants in university group travel.

UT Dallas is firmly committed to providing support during a crisis. However the University cannot guarantee or assure the absolute safety of participants or eliminate all risks from the university group travel environment. Nor can we monitor students’ choices and behaviors at all times, or prevent them from engaging in dangerous, unwise, or illegal activity. The University expects all participants to take responsibility for their own safety, security, and well-being by taking informed precautions, making smart decisions, using common sense, being alert and aware of their surroundings at all times, traveling with a buddy, and never putting themselves in compromising positions with the use of drugs or alcohol.

Assuring the safety and well-being of students, faculty, and staff who are participating in UT Dallas programs off-campus is of the highest importance, and all reasonable actions will be taken to accomplish this.