

# **International Health Policies and Procedures Executive Summary**

**Approved by the School of Nursing Academic Planning Council  
February 24, 2005  
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## SECTION A. INTRODUCTION

The following policies were recommended by the UW Health Sciences International Health Advisory Committee (IHAC) and approved by the UW Medical School Academic Planning Council on August 20, 2003. These policies are established to support high quality, safe international health activities for faculty, staff, students, and foreign visitors. These activities include teaching, consulting, research, public service, and education programs abroad. Consistent policies across health science schools will facilitate further development of interdisciplinary international health programs. These policies and additional travel resources will be easily accessible to faculty, staff, residents, and students through the Global Health Program website.

Representatives of the UW Schools of Medicine, Nursing, Pharmacy, and Veterinary Medicine, UW Legal Services, UW Risk Management, UW Office of International Studies and Programs, and UW Hospitals and Clinics were involved in their development. The policies adhere to UW System Guidelines for the Conduct of Study Abroad Programs.

Highlighted areas refer to the Policy Guidelines for the Conduct of International Programs in the UW System (ACIS 7.1-7.4).

## SECTION B. UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN FACULTY AND STAFF (STATE OF WISCONSIN EMPLOYEES)

### 1. Professional Liability Coverage for International Activities

- ◆ As a general rule, State of Wisconsin employees (including faculty, staff, and student employees), acting within the scope of their employment or responsibilities, are covered for liability protection through the State of Wisconsin Self Funded Liability Plan. Any work that is not a typical day-to-day duty, such as volunteer medical care, teaching or research outside the U.S., must be:
  - a) Recognized by the employee's department Chair or Dean as related to the teaching, service, or research mission of the University.
  - b) Approved by the employee's department Chair or Dean prior to departure. Chair or Dean's approval must be documented in writing and indicate the date, location and nature of the services being provided. Electronic communication is considered acceptable documentation of approval.
- ◆ UW volunteer (zero dollar) faculty and staff who participate in international teaching, research, or service activities must have primary liability coverage through their own employer's policy, or carry personal professional liability protection. The State Self Funded Liability Plan provides secondary coverage if the activity has been approved in writing by the department or school in which the faculty or staff person holds a volunteer appointment.
- ◆ Community health professionals who are not UW paid or volunteer (zero dollar) employees, but who wish to participate in UW-sponsored international health activities outside the U.S., must obtain a volunteer faculty appointment and written authorization for participation by the appropriate school or department prior to undertaking such activities. Liability coverage is provided as stated for volunteer (zero dollar) employees.
- ◆ Retired UW faculty and staff members who maintain volunteer appointments have primary liability coverage through the state liability plan provided that 1) the international work done is under the direction and control of the UW; and 2) written approval has been obtained by the sponsoring department or school.

## 2. Authorization of International Travel for UW Faculty and Staff

- ◆ Health science faculty and staff undertaking international work-related travel are required to follow established travel reporting and approval procedures in their respective schools or departments and utilize forms developed for such purposes. Faculty and staff are asked to submit requests at least 10 working days prior to their anticipated absence and to make arrangements for coverage of their professional responsibilities.
- ◆ Leave arrangement (paid or unpaid) for the activity does not affect liability coverage, but should be agreed upon prior to travel absence.
- ◆ Expenses incurred for international travel on University business should be discussed with the appropriate school or department official in advance. Expense reimbursements should comply with established department, school or grant guidelines.
- ◆ Faculty and staff are advised to carefully review the risks of travel to countries where State Department or Centers for Disease Control travel warnings have been issued. The University of Wisconsin cannot guarantee the health and safety of its employees or students traveling abroad.

## 3. Medical and Evacuation Insurance Coverage

- ◆ The State of Wisconsin provides **automatic evacuation and repatriation** insurance coverage at no cost through MEDEX for University of Wisconsin employees traveling abroad for business purposes. Employees are responsible for obtaining information about such coverage through the UW Office of Risk Management prior to travel. Medical expense coverage is not provided through the MEDEX policy.
- ◆ UW employees are advised to carry personal health insurance that will cover medical costs incurred during international work-related travel.
- ◆ Employees may purchase optional medical and additional evacuation coverage through a University of Wisconsin contract with Cultural Insurance Services International (CISI) provided employees are engaged in UW work-related activities abroad. Coverage is not provided for University of Wisconsin Hospital and Clinic employees who are not employed by the State of Wisconsin.
- ◆ The State of Wisconsin worker's compensation plan provides benefits if an employee is injured in the course of employment, regardless of work location.
- ◆ Employees on official leave should verify their employment status with human resource personnel to determine eligibility for worker's compensation and MEDEX coverage. CISI insurance may be purchased by any employee, including employees on **official** leave/sabbatical, provided they are engaged in work-related educational activities abroad.
- ◆ Volunteer (zero dollar) faculty and staff not on the University of Wisconsin payroll are not covered by the MEDEX evacuation insurance policy. CISI medical and evacuation insurance may be purchased by faculty or staff accompanying students engaged in UW-sponsored educational activities abroad. Volunteer faculty and staff engaged in other work-related activities abroad are advised to purchase comparable coverage for the time they are engaged in UW-sponsored activities.

#### **4. Faculty and Academic Staff Conduct Abroad**

- ◆ As outlined in the UW System Policies for the Conduct of International Programs (ACIS 7.2), faculty and academic staff abroad are governed by the same policies that define faculty and academic staff rights and responsibilities on the home campus. Faculty and staff abroad should be sensitive to the customs of the host country and act in accordance with the laws of the host country. Faculty and staff abroad should be willing, upon return to the home campus, to provide the broadest value to the institution for the time spent abroad.

#### **5. Approval and Risk Management for the Conduct of UW Group Programs Abroad**

- ◆ UW faculty and staff conducting or supervising group study tour, education, research, or medical service programs abroad as UW-approved activities are required to comply with the UW System Policy Guidelines for the Conduct of International Programs (Section 7.1). The System guidelines apply to all student, faculty and staff participants and include requirements for disclosure of health and safety risks, pre-departure orientation, insurance, emergency procedures, financial management, and participant and sponsor responsibilities. Designated faculty leader(s) and their departments are expected to advise participants of requirements and risks of participation in sponsored programs.
- ◆ The Chair or Dean of the sponsoring department or school should approve faculty-led group programs for which students will receive academic credit, no less than three months prior to the planned departure.
- ◆ Participants are required to sign the UW System Uniform Statement of Responsibility (liability waiver).
- ◆ Group international activities such as medical service trips that include UWHC employees or housestaff must be reviewed and approved by the appropriate UWHC supervisor(s) and Graduate Medical Education program director(s), in addition to the department Chair(s).

#### **6. Conduct of UW- Sponsored Research Overseas**

- ◆ Faculty or staff engaged in conducting research abroad are bound by the same policies and procedures applicable to the conduct of research within Wisconsin.

### **SECTION C. UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN HOSPITALS AND CLINICS EMPLOYEES**

(This section is under development by the UWHC housestaff office and legal counsel.)

#### **1. Professional Liability Coverage for International Activities**

- ◆ The University of Wisconsin Hospitals and Clinics (UWHC) professional liability policy provides coverage for employees engaged in international clinical, research, and service related pursuits anywhere in the world provided a claim for damages or legal action is filed, commenced and concluded in the United States of America, its territories or possessions, Puerto Rico, or Canada. Employees of UWHC must be performing duties on behalf of the hospital or within the scope of their residency or fellowship program.

#### **2. Authorization of International Travel for UWHC Staff Employees**

- ◆ UWHC staff employees are required to discuss international travel plans with their supervisor and to submit a Request for Leave of Absence form, signed by the supervisor, to the Human Resources Department for approval prior to departure.

### **3. Authorization of International Travel for UWHC and Department of Family Medicine Housestaff Employees**

- ◆ Housestaff (residents and fellows) planning international rotations are required to submit a written request from their graduate medical education program director to the UWHC Housestaff Office administrator. The letter should describe the proposed rotation experience, supervision arrangements, and dates of leave, and specifically request continuation of salary support and liability coverage. The Housestaff Office and UWHC General Counsel will review all requests.
- ◆ UW Graduate Medical Education programs are advised to review their ACGME program requirements related to offsite rotations to ensure that any proposed rotation is in compliance with these requirements.
- ◆ Housestaff in the Department of Family Medicine (DFM) should contact their campus program directors for approval of international rotations. Written documentation should be on file which includes the rotation description, dates, and a request for salary and liability coverage. DFM residents are not required to send copies to the UWHC housestaff administrator for approval.

### **4. Medical and Evacuation Insurance Coverage**

- ◆ UWHC employees are strongly advised to carry medical and evacuation insurance which provides emergency coverage for international travel. Employees are advised to check the applicability of their personal medical insurance coverage while traveling outside the country.
- ◆ The University of Wisconsin or UWHC does not provide overseas health or emergency assistance to UWHC employees. The CISI and MEDEX insurance policies offered by the State of Wisconsin and the UW are not available for purchase from the State or the UW by individuals who are not State of Wisconsin employees.

## **SECTION D. SCHOOL OF NURSING EXCHANGE VISITOR PROGRAM (EC 98-004)**

The UW-Madison School of Nursing (SoN) is part of a world-class university where faculty and alumni have developed international reputations for their programs of research, education, and practice. Accordingly, requests are received from persons around the world to study or to participate with specific faculty in a defined research program or project or to observe curricula, research, or practice. The Exchange Visitors Program prescribes that scholars come for a specific objective, which shall not include intent to enroll in degree programs or postdoctoral study. This document proposes guidelines to accommodate visitor objectives, to provide structure to the Exchange Visitor Program, and to allocate resources for provision of study. Persons who request Exchange Visitor status will herein be referred to as exchange visitors and may be provided with either budgeted or zero-dollar appointments upon consultation with the Executive Committee (EC) and approval from the dean.

### **Areas of Study**

The Exchange Visitor Program is designed for scholars who desire specialized study, but do not wish to obtain a degree. Individualized curricula or activities are planned and implemented to meet the needs of the scholar. Such activities may include observation of curriculum, clinical or field observation, or research. For example, a scholar may wish to observe the baccalaureate curriculum in order to begin a program in another country or a nurse practitioner may wish to obtain a particular skill in research or practice.

### **Application for Study**

A cover letter and CV is completed by the applicant and submitted to the Office of the Dean at least four months before study begins. The cover letter and CV must address the following:

- a) personal information such as citizenship and licensure;

- b) educational information such as professional preparation, academic degrees and institutions attended;
- c) professional practice information such as positions and specialties; and
- d) proposed study plan such as educational and professional goals that the applicant hopes to attain upon completion of the visit.

A letter of reference written on the applicant's behalf by a senior administrator at the applicant's institution will be required. This letter will attest to the professional and academic capability of the applicant and will be sent directly to the Office of the Dean.

### **International Exchange Visitor**

The sponsor must work with SoN Human Resources (HR) Office to determine the necessity for a J visa. To ensure proper planning, beginning and end dates for study must be specified in the cover letter with sufficient time allowed for processing the required IAP-66 application form. Once the Office of the Dean has approved the applicant's request, the IAP-66 form, which certifies eligibility for exchange visitor status, must be completed. A CV must accompany Form IAP-66 upon submission to the International Faculty and Staff Services (IFSS) Office. The application and additional information are available on-line at: <http://www.ohr.wisc.edu/ifss> (click on immigration information). The SoN HR Office will assist in coordinating and submitting application materials to IFSS. Proof of health insurance and financial means of support during the study period is a required part of the application.

A J-1 exchange visitor is admitted to the United States to carry out a specific objective related to a program or project. Upon completion of the specific objective, the exchange visitor is expected to return home to share their experience with their colleagues. The exchange visitor is unable to change the primary objective, as listed on the IAP-66, while in the United States. The J-1 Exchange Visitor Program encompasses 11 distinct and different categories, which have somewhat differing regulations. The most prevalent categories are:

**•professor or research scholar:** must have the equivalent of a U.S. bachelor's degree; they can only be appointed to an appropriate professional (academic staff, visiting faculty or employee-in-training) position. *The maximum stay is for three years, with extensions beyond the three years under very limited circumstances.*

**•short-term scholar:** program may be identical to professor or research scholar, but the duration of the program is *from one day up to six months. Extensions are **not** permissible.*

**•specialist:** an expert in a specific discipline, with specialized knowledge or skills, coming to the U.S. to observe, consult or demonstrate in this area. This category is useful for those within the fine arts and/or highly technical fields. *One year maximum stay with **no** extensions possible.*

### **Selection**

Faculty should forward requests for exchange visitors to the Office of the Dean. The dean or an associate dean will bring the request to the appropriate program committee or faculty group for action. Applicant acceptance is predicated on the match between the scholar's goals and the abilities of the school or program to meet them, congruence of the applicant's activities with the school's strategic plan, and availability of faculty or staff to serve as a sponsor and resource. A sponsor is responsible for working with the applicant throughout the application process and, with the assistance of the Office of the Dean, planning a program of study based on the scholar's interest and goals.

### **Resource Allocation**

Each exchange visitor will be provided: (a) assigned space in an office that includes access to telephone and e-mail; (b) library privileges; (c) access to the computer laboratory. No housing

is available; however, the SoN HR Office can assist the scholar by providing contact with IFSS to obtain listings of campus and privately owned housing and facilities.

### **Expectations and Evaluation**

Exchange visitors are expected to engage in regular scholarly exchanges with faculty, staff, and students and to present a colloquium or lecture near the end of their visit to discuss their experience and activities. Each exchange visitor will be evaluated by the appropriate sponsor and by the Office of the Dean. An evaluation report will be submitted to the EC.

## **SECTION E. UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON NURSING STUDENTS**

### **1. Professional Liability Insurance Coverage**

State liability coverage applies to students engaged in approved educational activities performed under the "direction and control" of the UW. Most health science international experiences such as clinical or research electives are undertaken at sites that are not under direct UW control. Alternative liability coverage options are under discussion and review by UW Legal Services and UW System Risk Management. At the present time UW Legal Services advises health sciences schools to presume coverage for students completing required clinical or research training in approved programs abroad. Elective clinical experiences for non-degree credit, e.g. summer programs, which are not under UW direction and control are not covered.

### **2. Approval Procedures and Requirements for Student International Electives**

Policies and procedures for UW or externally sponsored student international experiences such as study tours, summer field experiences will be administered through to the Associate Dean for Academic Programs.

- a) Ensure that student participants enrolled in clinical, research, or service activities outside the U.S. are informed of the risks of study abroad and appropriately oriented;
  - b) Ensure that UW-sponsored programs are developed and conducted in compliance with UW System Guidelines for Study Abroad Programs (Section 7.1).
  - c) Maximize the educational value of international experiences.
- ◆ All students undertaking for-credit clinical, research, or public health electives outside the US must meet the requirements stated below.
- a) Meet with a faculty advisor to discuss educational objectives, review elective guidelines and application process, verify academic eligibility, obtain site information, and identify faculty resources for advising and orientation. Students are expected to maintain contact with the faculty advisor periodically throughout the process of completing an international health elective.
  - b) Gather information concerning any in-country political problems, safety concerns, or health hazards by consulting current State Department announcements and publications, Centers for Disease Control (CDC) information, and the sponsoring site.
  - c) Submit a letter from the in-country faculty supervisor confirming the dates of elective, including a description of educational activities, on-site supervision, financial obligations and housing arrangements. Obtain elective course approval from the Associate Dean for Academic Programs and complete registration.
  - d) Participate in a course, orientation workshop, or self-directed study in preparation for the elective.
  - e) Submit UW Medical Assessment Form for study abroad. Obtain travel health advice and immunizations appropriate for host country.

- f) Investigate visa and other entrance requirements that may be enforced in the host country.
  - g) Purchase the required UW System medical/evacuation insurance policy (CISI) for the duration of the elective and provide verification of purchase prior to departure.
  - h) Designate emergency contact persons at the elective site and in the US.
  - i) Register with the US Embassy in the host country prior to or upon arrival.
  - j) Adhere to laws of the host country, standards of professional behavior, and standards of conduct set by the program site.
  - k) Sign and submit the University of Wisconsin System Uniform Statement of Responsibility, Release, and Authorization to participate in study abroad and exchange programs prior to departure which establishes informed consent, assumption of risk, and understanding of the terms and conditions of the program abroad.
- l) Submit an official evaluation of student academic performance and grade completed by the site preceptor. Credit will not be granted for electives without such evaluation.

### 3. Health and Safety Requirements

- a) Assess health and safety risks particular to the host country or elective site.

Approval for electives in countries where the State Department or CDC has issued travel warnings or serious outbreaks of infectious disease will be reviewed case-by-case by the Office of Academic Affairs in consultation with the State Department, CDC, UW, and local site authorities. Approval may be denied. In the event a warning is issued while the student is abroad, determination of the appropriate action will be made on a case-by-case basis in consultation with the student, supervising preceptors, Global Health Program and State Department officials.

- b) Review US State Department country information and communicate with local site regarding known risks.
- c) Submit verification of appropriate faculty supervision at host site.
- d) Complete orientation for study abroad, through self-study or formal preparatory sessions offered by the school. Such orientation will emphasize knowledge of personal health and safety precautions, universal precautions, infectious disease risks, cultural conditions, personal and professional behavior standards, emergency contact procedures.
- e) Sign UW System Uniform Statement of Responsibility (liability waiver).
- f) Purchase required UW medical evacuation and health insurance offered by Cultural Insurance Services International (CISI). Coverage through the Student Health Insurance Program (SHIP), the International Student Identification Card, or any private insurance policy does not satisfy this requirement.
- g) Complete travel health consultation prior to departure.
- h) Provide emergency contact information to the School of Nursing.

Approval of international experiences will not be granted if it is determined that undue risk exists or if students fail to comply with the stated requirements.



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## **FOR MORE INFORMATION**

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Questions and information about MEDEX and CISI insurance coverage may be directed to Jeanine Critchley, UW Office of Risk Management, [jcritchley@bussvc.wisc.edu](mailto:jcritchley@bussvc.wisc.edu), 262-8925.