



THE UNIVERSITY *of* EDINBURGH

PROCEDURE

PLEASE NOTE: THIS POLICY IS UNDER REVISION

GO ABROAD POLICY

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Purpose	The Go Abroad Policy provides information and guidance on the procedure to be followed in planning and preparing students for study or research abroad, as part of their Edinburgh degree. This also includes the protocol for dealing with an emergency evacuation and/ or crisis management situation of students participating in a study or research abroad.
	The policy applies to all students on study or research abroad. All staff need to be aware of the provisions of the policy when planning and preparing students for study or research abroad. Staff also need to be informed of how to deal with an emergency evacuation and/or crisis management situation of students on study or research abroad.
The Procedure	<p>In planning and preparing students for study or research abroad, staff are required to adopt the following procedure:</p> <p>1. Pre-Travel Considerations</p> <p>1.1 All students going abroad on academic business or for academic study/research are required to read the University of Edinburgh Study Abroad Handbook http://www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/international-office/exchanges/ which provides comprehensive guidance on all aspects of preparing for a period of study or research abroad. In addition, all staff involved in the planning or preparing of students for a period abroad must review the guidance on what to do in the event of an emergency situation arising and who to contact (http://www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/international-office/exchanges/).</p> <p>1.2 <u>All students</u> travelling overseas participating in study or research are required to complete a Travel Risk Assessment and will need to confirm that a Travel Risk Assessment has been completed by them. The University will provide travel and medical insurance cover to all students who have completed a Travel Risk Assessment and where the Insurance Office has been notified.</p> <p>1.3 In the event that the study or research abroad is not co-ordinated by the International Office, the School is responsible for carrying out a risk assessment of the country and region for the study abroad. The School</p>

is advised to seek guidance from RED24, the University's global security advisers and inform the International Office that advice has been requested. In the event the study or research abroad is not co-ordinated by the International Office, the School is required to arrange pre-departure briefings and provide pre-departure information to its students. RED24 can be accessed via www.red24.com/ace by entering access code 7797.

1.4 The School is also required to enter into an Agreement (Appendix 1) between the School and the Student which explains that in the event of a crisis, should the University decide to recall students from an institution or a country, then the University will communicate this decision and will provide the necessary support and information on how to proceed. The University's decision is final and the student must adhere to the instruction. In the event a student does not adhere to the instruction to be recalled from an institution or country, the University may take the decision not to award credit for the course of study undertaken abroad. This is because in such situations the University would not be able to assure the quality of the student experience and/or the quality of academic standards.

2. Evidence Required for Decision to Evacuate

In the event of a crisis situation abroad, any member of the Emergency Protocol Panel can instruct the University's insurers or its agents to proceed with evacuation.

The University of Edinburgh's procedure on dealing with emergency evacuation and crisis management for students on overseas study or research is as follows:

2.1 If the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) changes its Travel Advice to warn against all travel to the country or even an area within a country, where any staff and students are on official University business (including related professional activities), then the decision should be immediately taken to arrange evacuation of all the staff and students.

2.2 There will be occasions when the FCO advises against all non-essential travel but does not raise the security level to advise British citizens in the country to leave immediately. In these circumstances the School/Subject Area with staff and students in the country should seek advice from the Emergency Protocol Panel (Appendix 2) in order to use their expert knowledge to assess the risk to staff and students. The Emergency Protocol Panel has the final authority to determine whether students and staff should be evacuated even if the FCO has not issued advice that all British nationals leave the country. This will be made in consultation with Red24, the University's global security advisers, who will inform the decision. Our duty of care has to be paramount.

2.3 Sometimes other countries will instruct their citizens to leave a country, before the FCO acts. Under such circumstances, the University will be

guided by the action of the FCO and the advice from Red 24. It will treat a group of students or staff in the country as a single cohort, and treat all in the same manner, irrespective of nationality.

2.4 Where the situation and time permit, the Emergency Protocol Panel (membership listed in Appendix 2) should always be consulted as soon as possible.

2.5 Where a decision has to be taken in an emergency by a Head of Subject Area or Head of School (e.g. at night, or over a weekend) the decision to evacuate staff and students in order to protect their safety will always be supported and honoured financially by the University.

3. Payment of costs of an Evacuation

3.1 The University has contingency funds to cover such crises.

3.2 Where the FCO has issued an instruction to its citizens to leave the country, this will be organised by RED24. The costs of evacuating all staff and students and bringing them either to the UK or to a neighbouring safe country of the University's choice will be covered under the travel insurance policy.

3.3 Where the FCO has **not** issued the advice and the Emergency Protocol Panel deem it necessary to evacuate and require assistance from Red24 help organise the evacuation, the University will cover the costs. Red24 will submit an invoice and will require a signed contract so that they have a guarantee of payment. Normally the Director of Finance or alternatively a member of the Emergency Protocol Panel will sign this on behalf of the University. In the event of an emergency, if the Emergency Protocol Panel cannot be consulted (for instance at the weekend or during public holidays), the involvement of Red24 can be initiated by a Head of School, who would then sign the contract to authorise payment, on behalf of the University.

4. The University's responsibility extends to all staff and students who are on formally-approved University business, academic study or research in the country in question. It does **not** extend to students and staff on holiday in the country; or students undertaking independent work, voluntary work, or independently-organised internships in the country; or to family/friends accompanying staff and students.

5. Press Office and Other Central University Office involvement

5.1 The International Office will alert the Press Office to any emerging crisis where students or staff might be evacuated as soon as possible, along with the University Secretary and Principal. The Press Office will prepare a statement in case they receive press enquiries.

5.2 The Director of Finance will authorise payments as required e.g. to Red24.

5.3 The Student Finance and Scholarships Office will assist students who have lost accommodation deposits and rental; cannot change their tickets home, and need emergency assistance with subsistence costs.

6. After Care of Students and Staff, and Debriefing

6.1 This is the responsibility of the School who will consider if counselling or other support need to be offered to returning staff and students. The School will make the necessary arrangements to provide support and will also make arrangements to debrief the staff and students.

APPENDIX 1 (Please contact International Office for copy of this form)

Draft Agreement Between School and Student

Name:

Student Number:

Travel to:

From (dates):

_____ to _____

Address in country

(or email to School ASAP on arrival)

Mobile:

Passport No: _____

Nationality: _____

I accept that my travel to _____ (name of country) to undertake

The nature of study or research might need to be curtailed by the University in the event of a crisis which is considered likely to put me in danger. Should the University decide that it wishes to recall students from an institution or a country then it will communicate this decision directly to me and will provide support and information about how to proceed.

I confirm that I will regularly check my University email account for advice and in an emergency will leave when told and will either return to Edinburgh or travel to another safe country to undertake suitable alternative work to complete the requirements and obtain the credits for my degree.

I accept that the alternative study or research arrangements then made by my School could last longer than the original plan (to compensate for lost opportunities during the crisis).

I accept that if I do not adhere to the instruction to recall me from an institution or country, the University may take the decision not to award the credit for the course of study undertaken abroad.

I accept that I will have no claim for compensation from the University for loss of credits or academic opportunity. I also accept that the University of Edinburgh cannot be held responsible for the impact that natural disasters or other "Force Majeure Events" may have on my study experience.

APPENDIX 2

Emergency Protocol Panel Members

This Policy is under revision.

If the Emergency Protocol Panel members need to be contacted out-of-hours, contact needs to be made with the 24 hour Emergency number **(0131) 650 2257**. The relevant Panel members will then be directly contacted.

In the event of a crisis, if the University takes the decision to evacuate, rather than the authorities, any member of the Emergency Protocol Panel can instruct RED24 to proceed with an evacuation. RED24 will provide details of how the instruction should be given. Contact details are as follows:

Link below to allow access to Red 24 for up to date information:

www.red24.com/ace

by entering the access code 7797

Staff to be kept informed of progress:

Communications and Marketing – Press Office

Relevant Head of College

Relevant Head of School and Subject Area

Guidance Notes for Emergency Protocol Panel Members:

This is guidance drafted by the Finance Office regarding when the University Insurers will cover the costs of an emergency evacuation.

The insurance policy will only provide cover when students are studying overseas and the political evacuation cover is triggered. In order for this to happen the British Government via the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, any legally authorised regulatory or governmental or local authority in the affected country and AonProtect Assistance need to recommend emergency evacuation. The Government or similar in the affected country needs to declare a state of emergency necessitating immediate evacuation which would then involve RED24 in arranging evacuation to the nearest place of safety or to the Insured Person's Country of Permanent Residence. It is their experience that when trouble spots arise, the problem is short-lived and so removal to the nearest place of safety until things blow over would be the most appropriate action. If however the situation becomes prolonged and it is clear that return to the country in the near future is going to be impossible then RED24 would return the people to their home country and in the case of these students this is assumed to be the UK.

The term 'Country of Permanent Residence' is defined as the country in which the 'Insured Person resides indefinitely or where an Insured person intends to reside indefinitely'.

The majority of 'Insured Persons' will be employees or students whose normal home is in the UK and for such persons it is simple to determine their 'Country of Permanent Residence'. For foreign students coming to the UK and then travelling outside the UK as part of their study, it is not so transparent and the University would need to consider whether, irrespective of where they come from, the UK is to be regarded as their usual country of residence for the purposes of safe evacuation as a single cohort of staff/students.

In the event that the University makes alternative arrangements for students caught up in a crisis situation to resume/continue their studies in another country, then because the students' original journey was curtailed due to something outside their control, additional costs for travel incurred to enable them to continue the interrupted journey would come within the parameters of the cancellation/curtailment section of the policy cover. There is no cover for any extra tuition costs that might result from such a change of provider.

In the event that a non UK student is advised by his or her own Government to evacuate, the Insurers have confirmed that as the student is part of the

	<p>University, then the UK Government advice will take precedence. If the student were to insist on evacuation, and the UK Government was not advising, then any costs would have to be borne by the University.</p>
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DOCUMENT CONTROL	
Date approved	23 rd January 2014
Approving authority	Emergency Protocol Panel Curriculum and Student Progression Committee (CSPC) endorsed the statements about credits on 23 January 2014
Consultation undertaken	International Office, Finance (including the Insurance Office), Scholarships and Student Funding, University Secretary and CSPC (credits issue only).
Equality Impact assessment	No impact
Amendment dates	Annual review
Date for next review	The protocol is checked annually to ensure that the reference to the University insurer is current. The protocol is reviewed on a five-year cycle.
Role responsible for procedure maintenance & review	International Office
Related policies, procedures guidelines & regulations	Study Abroad Handbook which provides comprehensive guidance on what to do in the event of an emergency situation arising and who to contact. (http://www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/international-office/exchanges/).
Procedures superseded by this procedure	The Go Abroad Policy supersedes the Emergency Evacuation and Crisis Management Procedure
Alternative Format	If you require this document in an alternative format please email Kirsty Gillies kirsty.gillies@ed.ac.uk or telephone 0131 6504 295.
Keywords	Go Abroad, study and research abroad, emergency, crisis, evacuation.