Exceptions to Pandemic-Related International Travel Suspension for Graduate Students

Due to the unprecedented conditions created by the global pandemic, the University continues to strictly limit University-sponsored international travel for our students, faculty, and staff. Nonetheless, we recognize that there may currently be circumstances under which graduate students may have both a compelling need and a feasible opportunity to conduct international travel for critical dissertation-related reasons. The process outlined below allows for the appropriate review and potential approval of such travel.

Questions regarding this process may be directed to the Global Safety & Security unit.

I. Conditions for an Exception

The proposed travel must meet the following conditions to qualify for an exception:

A. The graduate student’s department chair or program director must determine:

i. The student has a critical need to conduct research directly related to their dissertation;

ii. The research cannot be completed effectively through remote means or domestic travel, rather than international travel;

iii. The research cannot be deferred until at least December 2021 without irreparably harming the student’s ability to complete their dissertation in a timely manner; and,

B. The Global Safety & Security unit (GS&S) must determine that the proposed travel is feasible and does not pose an unacceptable risk to the health of the student, the community to which the student wishes to travel, and the University community in Princeton.

II. Approval Process

Step 1: Graduate students proposing to undertake University-sponsored international travel should first approach their faculty advisor, and department chair or program director, as soon as practicable to make a case for why their travel meets the criticality measures outlined in Section I above.

Step 2: The department chair or program director will inform the student and GS&S (via email to globalsafety@princeton.edu) if the proposed trip has their approval as meeting the criticality measures.

Step 3: The requesting student will be asked to provide further details on the plans for their trip to GS&S (see Section III below).
Step 4: GS&S will review the information provided by the student and issue a
determination as to whether the trip is feasible and does not pose unacceptable
risks. The student and their department chair or program director, as well as the
office of the Dean of the Graduate School, will be informed of the GS&S decision.
(Please note: Except in exigent circumstances, GS&S requires at least ten
working days to review a request and provide a determination.)

III. Criteria for GSS Review

GSS will review exception requests according to the following broad criteria:

- What is the likelihood the travel can be accomplished as proposed, given current
  constraints on the international travel infrastructure, worldwide?
- What is the overall risk profile for the traveler relative to the proposed
destination(s), including the traveler’s susceptibility to severe COVID-19 and
ability to navigate the local health care system?
- Are there quarantine requirements for entering the proposed destination(s)? If
  so, what are the conditions of the quarantine(s), e.g., government-provided
  facility, self-quarantine with monitoring, etc.?
- What is the current state of pandemic progression and control measures in the
  proposed destination(s)?
- What is the likelihood the health system in the proposed destination(s) could be
  overwhelmed during the proposed stay?
- Are regular commercial flights operating from the proposed destination(s) to the
  United States or the location at which the affiliate will end the proposed travel?
- Does the proposed destination have any active bans on entry and/or exit for
  travelers from other countries?
- If the affiliate will return to the United States after the proposed travel:
  o Can the affiliate return to the United States directly or are travelers from
    their destination banned from entry?
  o How does the affiliate propose to meet quarantine requirements upon
    returning?

To complete its review, GS&S will require the following information from the student,
once their department chair or program manager has approved the proposed travel as
meeting the criticality measures:

TRAVELER BASIC INFORMATION

- Name
- Affiliation (faculty, staff, post-doc)
- Department/Office
- Citizenship
- If in the United States but not a citizen, current immigration status, including expiration
date of both status and any visa
• Is the traveler at higher risk for severe COVID-19 illness according to the current CDC criteria? (NOTE: Please do not provide specific health information in response to this question. We simply need a yes or no answer.)

TRAVEL LOGISTICS INFORMATION

• Full itinerary for the proposed travel, including accommodations and any proposed arrangements for required quarantines on arrival and return.
• How will ground transportation be accomplished at the destination(s) throughout the stay?
• How will the traveler obtain food and other expendable necessities?
• What are the traveler’s arrangements for communications, e.g., mobile telephone, internet access, etc.?

TRAVEL RISK INFORMATION

• Available information to assist in answering the questions outlined in Section III. (NOTE: The more information the requestor can provide, the faster GSS can review and make a recommendation.)
• How familiar is the traveler with the destination(s)?
• Does the traveler speak the local language(s) and to what level of proficiency?
• If the destination(s) is not a major urban center, what and how far is the nearest such center? How is it typically reached (by car, rail, flight, etc.)?
• If unable to return from the destination(s) beyond the proposed departure date:
  ○ What means does the traveler have to sustain themselves at the destination(s)?
  ○ How will the traveler meet their teaching and/or research obligations?

IV. Post-Approval Requirements

Any traveler who is approved for an exception:

• Will be asked to sign an acknowledgement of risk form;
• Must register their travel using the Enroll My Trip tool;
• Must download the International SOS assistance app on a device which they will use during their travel;
• If a citizen of a country with a traveler enrollment program (e.g., the DOS STEP program for U.S. citizens), must provide GS&S confirmation they have enrolled in such program for the approved travel; (NOTE: GSS can assist in determining if there is such a program for a traveler’s country of citizenship.) and,
• Must follow applicable UHS guidance regarding a return to campus, including providing UHS information online ahead of their return so that an appropriate quarantine order can be issued.