



OVERVIEW

Every time your school sends students and staff overseas, it opens itself to risk. It is crucial to have a crisis and management plan in place to protect your program and its travelers.

We have provided three checklists as a quick guide so that you are prepared to handle a crisis situation quickly and efficiently:

- Protecting University Assets
- Mitigating Risk
- Managing Crisis

How to Create a Risk & Crisis Management Plan

Imagine if you woke up one day and found out about a crisis involving students or staff from your institution traveling overseas. The crisis had been unfolding for hours while you slept. If that imaginary scenario has you in a mock state of panic because you don't have a crisis and risk management plan in place comprehensive enough to control a situation like this, it's time to start planning.

Every time your school sends students and staff overseas, whether that trip is part of a study abroad program or just one faculty member traveling to a conference, your school opens itself to risk. Managing that risk is a team effort. It includes managing potential damages to your university,

working to mitigate potential risks, and planning for crisis so that when one does occur, your staff is ready to handle the situation quickly and efficiently.

Use the following checklists to assess your program's risk and crisis management plan. Your plan should be built and housed in such a way that it is easily accessible by all members of your administration and staff. Make sure you have a software system in place to help standardize the creation and distribution of your risk management plans.

This list should not necessarily be considered complete, but it provides a quick guide to determine if you are on the right track to protecting your program and its travelers.



Protecting University Assets

You need to manage your study abroad program in a way that protects university assets. If you don't, your university may not find that your program is economically feasible. Carefully manage your insurance and other policies that allow student and staff access to university assets. All staff involved with your program need to understand what processes and procedures must be followed to access university assets and to ensure that the insurance will be there when it is needed.

Inform students and overseas staff about the insurance coverage available for the trips, as well as what insurance is required for participation in the trip.

Before allowing any student or staff member to travel overseas for any university sanctioned program, make sure they have the requisite insurance coverage including all possible medical needs, repatriation, accident and life insurance.

Make sure students understand how much their evacuation insurance will include.

Establish contacts that can advise you as to whether medical care should be administered in the United States or overseas.

Run credit checks on all staff who will have access to program funds.

Explicitly inform all students about the risks of the program and require each student to sign a waiver.



Mitigating Risk

In addition to limiting damage to university funds and resources, you need to be constantly vigilant about mitigating risk itself. While insurance is an important way to protect your university from damages after the fact, risk mitigation reduces the chance of injury to students and staff in the first place. It also can minimize any resulting damages to the university.

Your university has a moral obligation to protect students and staff, but it doesn't stop there. If your lack of planning is found to be negligent, your university could be found liable for harm inflicted on travelers. Consequently, it is extremely important that all staff members are aware of their role in keeping staff members and students safe.

The following checklist will walk you through a variety of steps you can take to better manage risk and keep your travelers safe.

- **Make sure all university staff understand what is considered acceptable and unacceptable behavior in professional and personal settings.**
- **Analyze the risks and potential emergencies that may be unique to your destination.**
- **Completely eliminate activities classified as “high risk” if possible. Your program’s definition of “high risk” may be different than other programs depending on your destination. Activities like skiing or mountain climbing are examples of typically high risk activities students and staff may want to engage in when overseas.**
- **Make sure university staff overseas plan all activities before the trip, giving enough time for the activities to be given a risk assessment and have a crisis management plan implemented.**
- **Verify the email and phone contact information you have for every student and staff member that travels overseas as part of a university sanctioned trip or study abroad program.**
- **Carefully screen applicants to assure they are appropriate for the study abroad program.**
 - Police records
 - Driving records
 - Student conduct reports



High Risk Activity

You may sometimes find that high risk activities are necessary to your study abroad program. If that is the case, you should follow this checklist for mitigating risk in these special situations.

- **Give extra consideration to the capability of the participants to safely take part in the activity.**
- **Make sure all staff and students are made aware of the anticipated risks, code of conduct, and required documentation in pre-travel meetings.**
- **Avoid making unrealistic or misleading promises, representations or statements that could give rise to liability. Be honest with your assessment of risk.**





Managing Crisis

Even with the best risk mitigation plans, something may eventually go wrong. It is important to have plans in place to handle these situations swiftly and efficiently. Although thinking about the potential calamities that may befall your program is not an easy task, it is an essential part of formulating plans to protect your university and its overseas travelers.

The more detailed planning you can do before a crisis happens, the faster and more efficiently you will be able to reduce the damage done, and the more likely you will be able to prevent a similar crisis from occurring in the future.

- **Form a crisis management team and draft a written emergency plan.**
- **Set up procedures to make sure at least one member of the crisis management team is available at all times.**
- **Make easy to follow checklists to guide program administrators in case of a crisis. These checklists should be made widely available online, easily accessibly by all members of your staff.**
- **Keep careful records at your university as well as overseas of the facts of the emergencies and the actions your university takes.**
- **Be ready to answer questions from the media, keeping in mind any statements will be considered an official statement representing your university.**
- **After the crisis is over, give a chance for those who were part of the crisis to discuss their experiences and recall what happened. This can be an important part of the healing process after a crisis.**
- **Have the facts of the crisis written down before the memories and evidence become less clear.**

SPECIAL THANKS

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For additional information, please view his article, [COLLABORATION BETWEEN STUDY ABROAD STAFF AND RISK MANAGERS: HAVE YOU DEVELOPED A RISK AND CRISIS MANAGEMENT PLAN?](#) which was featured in our July newsletter.



ABOUT TERRA DOTTA

Terra Dotta is committed to effective process automation and the secure management of data. The flexibility and robust features have made our software essential to all types of organizations. Terra Dotta's international education roots and innovative software capabilities serve the complex needs of many educational and business offices.

Terra Dotta software simplifies your everyday processes from the way you access information to the way you gather data and create reports. Risk management capabilities are an integral aspect of the software, providing the ability to locate and communicate with your applicants and travelers worldwide. Simply put, Terra Dotta software allows you to realize the full potential of your data and use the software your way at your institution.

