Appendix A: Travel Permission Application Detailed Requirements (Programs/Group Travel) (revised February 2015)

It is the responsibility of a representative from the sponsoring academic unit to request permission under the Travel Policy from the International Risk Assessment Committee (IRAC) for an education abroad program in a location subject to a U.S. Department of State (DOS) Travel Warning or a Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (“CDC”) Travel Notice Warning Level 3: Avoid Nonessential Travel, and to prepare the documentation with all necessary information. The IRAC will only recommend approval of applications when there is a compelling justification for the program or experience.

The Chair of the IRAC will assist in the development of a travel permission application. Applicants should make every effort to avail themselves of this assistance.

Applications should include the following materials:

1) **Proposal**

   The proposal summarizes the rationale for travel to this the specific site. It should be written in essay or letter form, not exceeding four pages single-spaced, and include the following:

   a) Disclosure of any date frame associated with the U.S. DOS Travel Warning and/or a Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (“CDC”) Travel Notice Warning Level 3: Avoid Nonessential Travel, and a description of specific concerns for travel in this location.

   b) A proposed program itinerary, including a short description of arrival/departure transportation logistics, housing and classroom/meeting facilities, including an explicit description of security measures with regard to the housing and classrooms/meetings. The proposal should clearly address whether this is intended to be a one-time offering or a recurring opportunity, and if course credit is offered, indicate whether or not it will count as credit toward a degree or a general requirement.

   c) An explanation of the compelling academic or experiential rationale for this program location (as opposed to a location not subject to a Travel Warning).

   d) A description of the activities to be undertaken and the locations in which the student would be studying, including any field trips/overnight excursions to other locations outside the main city of study (that are part of the planned itinerary). Be sure to note any activities that may exposes students to unusual risks, such as construction, open-water, volatile chemicals, wild mammals, insects or reptiles, extreme heat or cold, specialized equipment which requires training for operation, medical/dental care/services, etc.

   e) A profile of the type of student this program or experience would attract (age/standing, major, academic motivation, language ability, etc.) and the likely enrollment.

2) **Institutional context**
This section explains the institutional or organizational context of this activity and any institutional health and safety support for the student and should:

a) Describe on-site organizational or institutional support for health and safety that would mitigate the concerns raised in the Travel Warning. Include relevant information about local staff and any related training or experience for managing health, safety, or security issues.

b) Note whether other Northwestern students participated in this program or engaged in similar activity at this location. If possible, the proposal should provide their names and contact information for Committee follow-up.

3) Letter of endorsement from sponsoring academic unit

A complete application will include at least one letter of endorsement from the most relevant, senior academic officer, such as a department chair(s) or college in whose disciplines students will likely receive course credit. This letter need not endorse the safety of the location but should make a compelling and detailed argument in support of the academic or experiential value of the program and the academic rationale for operating a program in a country subject to a U.S. Department of State Travel Warning.

4) List of relevant links

a) U.S. Department of State Travel Warning
b) U.S. Department of State Country Information Sheet
c) CDC Country Profile

5) Health, safety, emergency, and evacuation plan

Northwestern units should provide documentation and procedures regarding safety, security, and evacuation that address:

a) Policies and measures the program will take for ameliorating the specific health or security risks identified by the U.S. DOS or the CDC.
   i. Examples of safety or security measures are avoiding travel to certain neighborhoods in a city or regions within a country, using only specific means of transportation, not traveling alone after dark, avoiding public protests, avoiding crowded public entertainment establishments such as restaurants, etc.
   ii. Examples of health measures are identifying potential exposure to insect-, food- or water-borne illnesses, noting particular health risks associated with specialized activities, such as animal care (rabies) or construction (tetanus), etc.

b) If the program is working with an established sponsoring agency or partner (such as an NGO that organizes internships/fieldwork, a third-party provider, or host institution) the applicant should obtain a copy of its risk management procedures, including an emergency plan (or link to such procedures or plans on the organization’s web site). If the organization cannot adequately respond to such information requests, two options exist: the sponsoring academic unit could work with the organization to develop such plans or find another provider.

c) Pre-departure information/education to be provided to students
d) Confirmation that all travelers will fulfill standard pre-departure travel requirements as outlined by the Study Abroad Office of the Office of Global Safety and Security, such as:
   i. Enrollment in NU’s international medical insurance and assistance plan;
   ii. Referral to the CDC’s Travelers Health web-based resources for information on required and recommended immunizations and/or prophylactic medications;
   iii. Registry with the U.S. DOS’s Smart Travelers Enrollment Program (STEP), and steps to ensure the action has been taken;
   iv. Participation in pre-departure educational programming (on-line or in person); and
   v. Enrollment in the International Travel Registry (not necessary for study abroad participants since relevant information from the program application is dumped into this database).

6) Communications protocols
   List of contact names, addresses and numbers for relevant on-site staff/faculty.
   a) Provide the name of at least one on-site contact person: include 24-hour phone number, office phone number, email address, office address, home address, etc.
   b) Provide the name of at least one NU contact person involved in this program: include 24-hour phone number(s), office phone number and email address.
   c) Provide complete contact information for the U.S. Embassy or Consulate nearest the program’s location. (For traveling programs, provide this information for each overnight location).
   d) Address whether or not participants are required to have a working cell phone in this location. (The Committee recognizes that the possession of a cell phone in some locations makes one a target for crime and that other modes of communications may be preferable). If students are not required to have a cell phone, address how anticipated communications challenges will be met.

Special Note: Please provide all phone numbers as if one were dialing from the U.S. For example, a London phone number would read: 011-44-207-456-6789.

The individual making the application will package all of the aforementioned material in one email and send it to the Director of Global Safety and Security at least two weeks prior to the next IRAC meeting. If the agenda for that meeting is already full, then these materials will be held for distribution and review at the next regularly scheduled or specially called emergency meeting.

Meeting protocol
The IRAC will meet at least six times a year, preferably seven (October, December, February, March, May, June, and July). Meetings will be limited to 1.5 hours. The agenda will be set 10 days in advance of the meeting. Only complete permission request packages will be put on the agenda. No more than two travel permission applications will be scheduled per meeting.
The individual making the permission request will provide a 5-7 minute overview of the program’s location, perceived risks and mitigation strategies. It will be assumed that all members have read the permission application request in full prior to the meeting. Members who are unable to attend the meeting are expected to submit their questions or concerns in advance of the meeting to the Chair, who will ensure that they are discussed. Then, the Chair will open the floor for questions. At the close of the Q&A, presenters will be asked to leave the room while the Committee deliberates. The Chair will follow-up with the presenters as soon as a recommendation is made.