

KSAS/WSE Policy: Travel to War Zones and High Risk Areas for Graduate Students, Faculty and Staff

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I. Background

In May of 2004, the Johns Hopkins University Council of Deans endorsed a new policy designed to assure appropriate considerations are taken into account when deciding whether to permit undergraduates to study or conduct research abroad. The University-wide policy (which can be found here: http://www.jhu.edu/news_info/reports/wztf/), developed by the Provost's Office in collaboration with the Deans of Hopkins' schools with undergraduate programs, prohibits undergraduate travel to countries where the U.S. State Department has issued a Travel Warning. (A provision that allows students to petition for an exception was included.) Subsequently the Deans agreed that it would be wise to consider what standards, if any, the University should adopt to deal with the safety and security of other members of the University community — namely faculty, graduate students, and staff — who travel on University-related business to high-risk areas of the world.

Provost Steven Knapp convened the War Zones Task Force (the task force) in September 2004 to explore safety and security issues for Johns Hopkins faculty, staff, and graduate students who travel to high-risk areas of the world (including war zones) for the purpose of conducting research, engaging in collaborative scholarly activities, administering public health training programs, and other University-related activities.

Associate Provost Pam Cranston chaired the task force, which was made up of ten faculty, staff, and administrators. The task force began its work with a review of existing University divisional policies, procedures, publications, websites, and other materials related to international travel. It met with the University's risk and benefits managers, conducted an informal survey of peer institutions to ascertain their policies governing international travel, and consulted with a variety of non-governmental organizations that work regularly in high-risk areas of the world.

The War Zone Task Force has left the implementation to each of the individual Schools. This policy will cover the Whiting School of Engineering and the Krieger School of Arts and Sciences.

II. Definitions

High-Risk Areas. Countries or regions of the world on the U.S. State Department's Travel Warning list found at travel.state.gov/travel/cis_pa_tw/tw/tw_1764.html and on the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Travel Health Warning list found at www.cdc.gov/travel/index.htm.

Business Travel. Travel related to one's employment at or enrollment as a graduate student in Johns Hopkins University for the purpose of executing one's responsibilities as a faculty, graduate student, or staff member.

Permanent Resident. A resident of, or regularly employed in, a country for three months or longer. This definition is used by The Hartford Group, which provides Johns Hopkins' group travel accident insurance for active, full-time faculty and staff.

III. Graduate Students

KSAS and WSE graduate students are free to travel with the following requirements. The University has determined that it has a duty to make certain all graduate students traveling to high risk areas understand the risks and voluntarily accept those risks. The University requires that a release form be signed. Graduate students also must complete the Checklist for Students Traveling Abroad. The form's purpose is to remind graduate students of considerations that may affect their health and safety if they do independent study or carry out research projects in a foreign country.

IV. Faculty and Staff

Faculty and staff are cautioned, but not prohibited, from traveling to high-risk areas. However, no one may be required or coerced (by a faculty member, advisor, or supervisor) to travel to a high-risk area. Faculty and staff need to provide contact and itinerary information as part of the International Travel Form.

V. Insurance Coverage

The University provides **group travel accident insurance** coverage (via The Hartford Group) for faculty and staff who are traveling on University business from their place of permanent residence.

War risk coverage under the **travel accident insurance policy** is automatically provided everywhere in the world other than the United States, Canada, and any country of which the employee is a permanent resident.

Terrorism or terrorist acts are not excluded from the Johns Hopkins group travel accident insurance policy. It provides coverage with respect to terrorism and acts carried out by terrorists, in addition to the war risk coverage provided by the war risk rider, described above, which pertains only to war or acts of war, defined as "hostilities between two or more governments or sovereign nations, not to acts of terrorism by individuals or political groups who are acting independently."

The voluntary **personal accident insurance** offered to Johns Hopkins faculty and staff by AIG excludes coverage for "declared or undeclared war, or any act of declared or undeclared war." Individual acts of terrorism are not considered in and of themselves as

an act of war, and it is not clear whether losses occurring as the result of a terrorist act would be excluded. Such determination would be made on a case by case basis.

Under the Johns Hopkins **life insurance plan**, there are no exclusions or limitations regarding faculty and staff traveling to or on assignment in high-risk countries. However, the Johns Hopkins **short-term and long-term disability plans** (provided by CNA) do not cover any loss caused by, contributed to, or resulting from declared or undeclared war or an act of either. The policy does not address losses due to terrorism.

Graduate students in the Krieger and Whiting schools automatically receive health insurance coverage through The Chickering Group. The plan, which can be used while traveling, includes medical evacuation and other services provided by Assist America, Inc.