

## **Faculty Procedures for Handling Emergencies Abroad**

The safety and well being of students and faculty participating in a SIUE study abroad program is of highest concern to all of us. As the faculty director of a short-term travel study program, you may find yourself facing an emergency involving one of more of the students who are in your care, or an emergency of your own. Participants can and do become ill, suffer accidents, become the victims of muggings, thefts, and assaults, find themselves caught up in potentially violent political situations, or fail to return on time to programs after a weekend. While it is impossible to plan for all contingencies, we need to follow procedures that will allow us to react in a responsible and levelheaded way when emergencies arise. We need to provide for the safety and well being of our students in a consistent and predictable way. We also need to take reasonable and prudent measures to limit the University's legal liabilities.

International Programs is responsible for coordinating the University's management of emergencies affecting participants in SIUE travel study programs. **As the Faculty Leader of a SIUE program, it is your responsibility to follow the procedures outlined below and inform the students in your group about these procedures when you arrive on-site.** SIUE Travel Study Safety Guidelines are available on the faculty website at <http://www.siu.edu/international/octravel>. Adherence to these guidelines and adequate pre-departure preparation of the students, along with common sense, can prevent many of the crisis situations discussed below.

### **I. What Is An Emergency?**

For our purposes, an emergency is any circumstance that poses a genuine risk to program participants, or that has already disturbed their safety and well being. Emergencies include, but are not limited to, the following:

- death
- serious illness or injury requiring hospitalization
- emotional or psychological stress requiring intervention
- program participant or faculty leader is a crime victim (e.g. assault, rape, theft, etc.)
- disappearance or kidnapping
- terrorist threat of attack
- local political crisis affecting safety and well being
- arrest or questioning by police or other security forces

### **II. How to Prepare For Emergencies**

Health and medical care are important topics to be discussed with students throughout the program and should be incorporated into orientation sessions. Students should be reminded to notify you immediately about any health problems that may arise. The need for hospitalization can often be prevented by prompt treatment. The program's location is a major factor in health risks and available medical care. You should do appropriate

research to compile a list of reputable local medical clinics or hospitals. If you are not being housed with the students, the students must be given the address and phone number of where you are staying. They should carry this with them at all times.

### **III. On-Site Briefing for Students**

You should meet with students first thing after arrival at the program site. At this meeting, explain to the students that they are required to inform you immediately about any medical emergency, and that you are in turn required to contact the Director of International Programs at SIUE as soon as possible to inform him/her about the emergency. Inform the students that this information will be treated with the strictest confidentiality, and that it will be shared by the director only on a “need to know” basis. Students must be advised to avoid travel to or through any location where political/social tensions exist and where travel may be dangerous. Strongly discourage travel to any specific country or region where the US State Department has issued a warning against travel.

### **IV. Responding To Emergencies**

Emergencies range from the irritating but benign (a lost or stolen passport) to the imminently dangerous (motor vehicle accidents; political coups). Each situation must be assessed in its own context by you. In the event of an emergency maintain daily contact with the International Programs Director and with host country informants (host university, U.S. embassy, etc.). Members of the host culture may be best able to assess the seriousness of any given situation, and able to give excellent advice.

In an emergency, your first responsibility is to safeguard the safety and well being of program participants. You should do whatever is necessary to ensure this, whether this means obtaining prompt and appropriate medical attention, U.S. Embassy intervention, or police protection. When all that has been done to reasonably ensure the students’ immediate well being, **contact the SIUE Police at 618-650-3324 to report the emergency.**

The SIUE police have contact information for all International Programs representatives and other appropriate individuals on-campus. They also have a copy of the SIUE Study Abroad Crisis Management Plan on file. The police will assess the situation and contact the appropriate University Official(s). If you are able to make multiple telephone calls or have access to e-mail, contact the International Programs Director (Ron Schaefer), Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs (Narbeth Emmanuel), and/or Study Abroad Coordinator (Julie Beall-Marshall) as appropriate, depending on the emergency.

This document contains contact information to reach the individuals above at home and on campus. During an on-going crisis, keep the International Programs Director informed on a regular basis through telephone or e-mail, until the crisis is passed.

Notify the local U.S. Embassy or Consulate about the crisis, and follow whatever procedures they suggest. If there is a continuing risk to the students (during a terrorist threat, for example), ask the appropriate Embassy or Consulate official to advise you on a regular basis about the evolution of the crisis, and about how you and the students should respond. In any other sort of emergency, notify the local police about the situation, if you

and the Embassy feel it is appropriate; then follow the procedures the police may require of you and/or the students.

During a political crisis or some other emergency during which foreigners in general or U.S. citizens in particular may be at risk, tell the students to keep a low profile. They should avoid demonstrations, avoid behavior that could call attention to themselves, avoid places where Americans are known to congregate, and avoid using luggage tags and wearing clothing which identifies them as Americans.

It is highly unlikely that participants will need to be evacuated from a site abroad. In many situations, it is much safer to lie low than to draw attention to the group through an evacuation process. The University will, however, bring students and faculty directors home if a situation were to deteriorate to the point where the degree of potential risk to participants was deemed unacceptable. If this unlikely event were to happen, the International Programs Director, in consultation with the faculty travel study leader, the US Embassy and State Department, and the appropriate individuals on campus, would develop an evacuation plan in as much detail as possible. The plan would be transmitted to the faculty leader in confidence, and officials on the home campus would work closely with the faculty leader throughout the evacuation process.

In general, follow these guidelines when communicating with the students during and emergency situation:

- **Share information:** Give students accurate information and do it as frequently as possible.
- **Document the situation and communicate** with the SIUE International Programs Director, Ronald Scheafer (rschaef@siue.edu) on a daily basis as deemed necessary.
- **Assess the situation:** How long will it last? Is it an inconvenience or a threat?
- **Keep calm, and keep others calm:** Do not panic. Discourage students from gossiping and thus escalating the situation.
- **Give students choices:** In a serious emergency, allow students when possible to make their own informed decisions about whether to leave the program or to stay. Remember that this option is only ethical when students have enough information to make a reasonable choice.

## V. DOCUMENTATION

In any serious emergency situation, facts and details must be thoroughly documented by those involved on-site as well as by staff at the home institution. In the event of any legal action the incident report form will serve as the basic official college record of what transpired and what actions were taken by SIUE representatives.

The Incident Report Form is available online at:  
[http://www.siue.edu/studyabroad/pdf/incident\\_report\\_form.pdf](http://www.siue.edu/studyabroad/pdf/incident_report_form.pdf)

## VI. EMERGENCY CONTACT INFORMATION

- **24 HOUR SIUE POLICE (618) 650-3324** (this is your first point of contact!)
- **Office of International Programs (front desk): (618) 650-3785**  
**Fax: (618) 650-5099**
- **Ronald Schaefer, International Programs Director**  
SIUE Contact Numbers: (618) 650-5264, 650-3785, 650-2419, 650-3298  
Home: (618) 288-3850  
E-mail: [rschaef@siue.edu](mailto:rschaef@siue.edu)
- **Dr. Narbeth Emmanuel, Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs**  
SIUE Contact Number: (618) 650-2020  
Home: (618) 659-9497  
E-mail: [nemmanu@siue.edu](mailto:nemmanu@siue.edu)
- **Julie Beall-Marshall, Study Abroad Coordinator**  
SIUE Contact Numbers: 650-2419  
Home: (314) 772-6423  
Cell: (314) 749-1518  
E-mail: [jbeall@siue.edu](mailto:jbeall@siue.edu)
- It may be useful for faculty to carry contact information (telephone & e-mail) for their Dean and other faculty/staff who may provide valuable assistance during an emergency situation.

## VII. ISIC/ITIC Card Insurance

All SIUE students participating in SIUE travel study programs are required to obtain the ISIC (International Student Identify Card) for the emergency medical insurance provided through Travel Guard. In a non life threatening situation, the faculty leader or card holder should contact Travel Guard before seeking (non-emergency) medical care (covered by the ISIC/ITIC card insurance) abroad. When possible Travel Guard will arrange direct payment to a member of their preferred medical network, saving the insured the time and paperwork associated with reimbursement of the medical expenses. By calling Travel Guard first, they can authorize a cash advance for medical providers that require upfront payments. Travel Guard's assistance coordinators can also help locate the nearest and most appropriate medical provider and monitor care. The Travel Guard Insurance International (TOLL FREE) Number is 1-715-342-4104

Faculty travel study leaders should carry with them a copy of the procedures, emergency numbers, and services provided to ISIC card holders. The description of coverage and services pamphlet can be obtained from the SIUE Office of Study Abroad. Full details are available online at [www.myisic.com](http://www.myisic.com) (click on "travel" and then "travel insurance").

**Carry Copies of ISIC Cards:** Faculty leaders should have copies of all participants ISIC card numbers. Travel Guard/ ISIC will require the insured student's ISIC card number when you call for assistance. All SIUE faculty leading SIUE Travel Study Programs should obtain the ITIC (Int'l Teacher ID Card), which provides the same insurance coverage as the student card. The ITIC is available online at [www.myisic.com](http://www.myisic.com) or through the SIUE Office of Study Abroad. The cost of the card is \$22. Additional details are available at <http://www.siu.edu/studyabroad/ISIC.shtml>.

### **VIII. Faculty Workshops**

International Travel Study Faculty Workshops are held each semester. The workshops address legal issues and responsibilities as well as practical issues related to leading students on international travel study programs. Contact the Office of Study Abroad for upcoming workshop dates.

### **IX. Faculty Checklist of Important Numbers & Documentation to Carry Abroad:**

1. Photocopies of all participants' passports
2. Original copy of all participants' medical release forms (authorizing you to secure necessary emergency medical treatment) with emergency contacts
3. Photocopies of all participants' ISIC cards
4. SIUE Police 24 hour telephone number 650-3324
5. Additional SIUE emergency contacts
6. Address and phone number of U.S. Embassy closest to Travel Study destination(s)
7. Copy of ISIC insurance procedures and emergency telephone numbers

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