

## **Off-Campus Study & Exchanges Skidmore College Emergency Response Plan**

### **Disclaimer**

This document describes the efforts made by Skidmore College to help participants enhance their safety and to help them respond to emergency situations. Nothing in this plan is a guarantee that any specific action will be taken in any given situation, nor is anything in this document a contract or part of a contract between Skidmore College and any other party, nor is any statement in this document intended to sell a service to a student, nor to attempt to persuade any party to avail themselves of any program or service provided by Skidmore College. Skidmore College will make every reasonable effort to ensure each student's safety and well-being in an emergency situation. However, it should be understood that some events are beyond Skidmore College's control and therefore the College cannot be held responsible for the outcomes of decisions made during a crisis situation.

### **Emergency Contacts**

The number for Off-Campus Study & Exchanges is +1.518.580.5355. This number is answered from 8:30 AM - 12:00 Noon and 1:00 - 4:30 PM (Eastern Time), Monday through Friday.

Outside of office hours students and parents are advised to contact Campus Safety at +1.518.580.5566. Campus Safety has contact information for the staff. Our resident staff has home and cell numbers for appropriate contact people within Off-Campus Study & Exchanges.

### **International Emergency Response Team**

The International Emergency Response Team is made up of members of the Office of the Dean of Faculty, the Office of the President, and the Director and staff of the Office of Off-Campus Study & Exchanges. These individuals work together to assess an emergency and determine the emergency protocol to implement. Implementation of the emergency protocol will fall to Resident Directors (RDs) and Off-Campus Study & Exchanges staff. For non-Skidmore Approved Programs the program provider will handle the implementation of any protocol; however, Off-Campus Study & Exchanges will facilitate communication among the providers and the various contacts on campus.

### **Public Announcements**

In the event of a major crisis, Skidmore will:

- Post a message on the Off-Campus Study & Exchanges Web site: <http://cms.skidmore.edu/ocse>
- Attempt to send e-mail messages to all participants and their guardians/emergency contacts within 48 hours of the event.
- Off-Campus Study & Exchanges may call students and their guardians/emergency contacts depending upon the severity of the emergency.

### **Risk Assessment**

All decisions regarding program operations are made with reference to data from a number of sources. In addition to the consular information sheets and advisory messages posted by the U.S. Department of State (<http://www.travel.state.gov>), the World Health Organization (<http://www.who.int/en>), and the CDC (<http://www.cdc.gov>), our resident directors, program directors, and partner institutions use information gathered locally and through conversations with other providers in the city or country. The U.S. based staff also uses national and international sources to stay abreast of the progress of any situation and uses this information to determine the appropriate course of action. In making individual decisions concerning participation, we suggest that participants and their parents carefully review the State Department Travel Advisories web page listed above.

The current Skidmore policy does not allow students to participate in any program located in a country in which there is a current Department of State Travel Warning. We also use the Department of State Travel Warnings as a means for determining when to consider canceling a program or bringing students home from a program.

### **Monitoring**

Resident Directors make every reasonable effort to keep abreast of local conditions and changes in local health and safety risks and to inform participants and Off-Campus Study & Exchanges of these changes. Resident Directors and staff of Off-Campus Study & Exchanges subscribe to the U.S. State Department's service and thus automatically receive any Travel Warnings and Advisories as soon as they are issued. In addition, as all programs are registered with the American Embassy or Interest Section the RDs receive Warden notices that provide regular updates on safety issues pertinent to the country or city in which the program takes place.

The following Web sites serve as ongoing resources for Off-Campus Study & Exchanges:

- U.S. Department of State <http://travel.state.gov/travel/warnings.html>
- Center for Disease Control <http://www.cdc.gov/travel>

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- World Health Organization <http://www.who.int/en>
- SAFETI Clearinghouse <http://www.globaled.us/safeti>
- U.S. embassy or consulate in your country of residence or visit <http://www.usembassy.gov>
- Australian Department for Foreign Affairs and Trade <http://www.dfat.gov.au/geo>
- Canadian Department for Foreign Affairs and International Trade [http://www.voyage.gc.ca/consular\\_home-en.asp](http://www.voyage.gc.ca/consular_home-en.asp)
- Ireland Department of Foreign Affairs <http://foreignaffairs.gov.ie/home/index.aspx?id=275>
- New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs <http://www.safetravel.govt.nz/index.php>
- Foreign and Commonwealth Office of the United Kingdom. <http://www.fco.gov.uk>

### Response Plans: Local and Worldwide

#### Skidmore Program Contingency Plans

Each Skidmore program is developing contingency plans which will be activated in case there is a known local condition that requires (a) extra caution, (b) removal of the program to a different site in the same city or country or a nearby country, or (c) suspension of a program and evacuation of participants. For security reasons these local contingency plans are not available to anyone except Off-Campus Study & Exchanges and the International Emergency Response Team.

#### Protocol In the Event of a Local Emergency

1. The Resident Director contacts participants as soon as possible to ascertain participants' well-being, and to provide information, instructions, and advice.
2. The Resident Director contacts the local U.S. embassy, consulate, or Interest Section, and also confers with other study abroad providers and/or U.S. enterprises in the area.
3. Depending on the situation, the RD may or may not gather the participants together in a group.
4. Participants are advised to contact their parents, guardians, or emergency contacts as soon as possible.
5. The Resident Director reports to Off-Campus Study & Exchanges within 36 hours.
6. Off-Campus Study & Exchanges reports to any institutions with students in the program within 48 hours.
7. Off-Campus Study & Exchanges may report to participants' emergency contacts depending upon the severity of the emergency.

#### Protocol In the Event of a Worldwide Crisis Such as Armed Conflict Involving U.S. Forces

In addition to the measures in the previous section:

1. Each Resident Director consults local government, local US consulate, local professional organizations, other study abroad programs, and advises Off-Campus Study & Exchanges as to what action should be taken, if any, to modify or suspend the program.
2. The Director or Program Manager consults the U.S. State Department and other sources of information and confers with other study abroad providers.
3. The Director or Program Manager consults the Dean of Faculty to determine specific actions to be taken, both worldwide and at specific locations.
4. Off-Campus Study & Exchanges posts notices on its Web site, communicates with institutions sending students on Skidmore Programs, and communicates with participants' emergency contacts within 48 hours or as soon as accurate information is available.

#### In the Event that Skidmore College is unable to Open or Communicate

The Director and Program Manager have direct access from their homes to computer files with all critical data regarding participants, insurance provider information, worldwide staff contact information, contact information for institutions with students on Skidmore Programs, emergency contact information for participants, and other safety and crisis resources.

#### Orientation and Training for Participants

Every Skidmore student studying abroad attends a mandatory pre-departure orientation and receives a pre-departure handbook. Health and Safety issues are addressed during the orientation and are found in the handbook.

In addition, every Skidmore Program begins on-site with a comprehensive orientation to the country, city, university, and program, which includes, among other information, an explanation of any local risks that the Resident Director (RD) has identified and tips for enhancing personal safety. In addition, each RD distributes a local emergency contact information card to each participant. Finally, the RD registers the program and each participant with the local U.S. Consulate or Interest Section.

Providers of non-Skidmore Approved Programs also have comprehensive orientations that include explanations of local risks identified by their local staff. Skidmore College is in contact with those program providers. In the course of an emergency, many of those providers will contact parents directly. Students on non-Skidmore programs are advised to

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register with the United States embassy in the country where they will be studying. This can be done on-line prior to departure.

### On-Site Care and Insurance

Each RD maintains lists of recommended health and mental health providers. All students studying abroad through Skidmore College have emergency medical, repatriation, and evacuation insurance. Each RD is asked to establish an emergency phone tree to be activated in order to contact all participants quickly. Skidmore and Off-Campus Study & Exchanges is working with each Skidmore on-site director to establish protocols to be used in the event of health emergency, serious accident, political crisis, natural disaster, crime, rape, or death of a participant. For security reasons these documents are not public.

### Advice for Participants and their Families

Off-Campus Study & Exchanges will share the following advice with students and their families:

- Skidmore College strongly recommends that unless specific situations dictate otherwise, participants should designate their parents as emergency contact persons.
- Participants and their emergency contacts should keep in touch with each other throughout the participants' time out of the U.S.
- Participants should make sure their parents and/or emergency contacts have their accurate and up-to-date local contact information at all times.
- Participants should immediately notify their emergency contacts in the event of any emergency, accident, serious health problem, or other serious mishap.
- Participants are required to notify the RD in the event of any health condition that lasts longer than a day or two.

Skidmore College advises participants and their families that communication between Skidmore College and any non-Skidmore participants' sending institution is considered "internal communication" in terms of the Family Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), and that Skidmore College has the right and the obligation to communicate all relevant information concerning participants' health and safety, academic progress, behavior, etc. to appropriate officers at the home institution on a need-to-know basis. In addition, the Skidmore application to study abroad specifically authorizes Off-Campus Study & Exchanges to communicate any relevant information to participants' emergency contacts during an emergency.

The Department of State's Office of American Citizens Services and Crisis Management assists in all matters involving protective services for Americans abroad, including arrests, death cases, financial or medical emergencies, and welfare and whereabouts inquiries. If the student's family needs to contact him/her for an emergency at home or if the family needs to reach the student during a crisis because they are worried about his/her welfare they should call the State Department's Overseas Citizens Services at 1.888.407.4747. The State Department will relay the message to the consular officers in the country in which the student is located. Consular officers will attempt to locate the student, pass on urgent messages, and, consistent with the Privacy Act, report back to the family.

Participants and their families need to be aware of the fact that the U.S. Department of State Office of American Citizens Services and Crisis Management will generally not release information about specific individuals to Skidmore College or to other third parties.

### Resources

Facts and circumstances regarding health and safety in each program locale are constantly changing. To monitor the latest available information for a program location, please consult the following Web sites:

- U.S. Department of State <http://travel.state.gov/travel/warnings.html>
- Center for Disease Control <http://www.cdc.gov/travel>
- World Health Organization <http://www.who.int/en>
- SAFETI Clearinghouse <http://www.gloaled.us/safeti>
- U.S. embassy or consulate in your country of residence or visit <http://www.usembassy.gov>
- Australian Department for Foreign Affairs and Trade <http://www.dfat.gov.au/geo>
- Canadian Department for Foreign Affairs and International Trade [http://www.voyage.gc.ca/consular\\_home-en.asp](http://www.voyage.gc.ca/consular_home-en.asp)
- Ireland Department of Foreign Affairs <http://foreignaffairs.gov.ie/home/index.aspx?id=275>
- New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs <http://www.safetravel.govt.nz/index.php>
- Foreign and Commonwealth Office of the United Kingdom. <http://www.fco.gov.uk>

Off-Campus Study & Exchanges also shares risk assessment and monitoring practices with students and parents.

*This document is adapted from the Council on International Educational Exchange (CIEE) Emergency Preparedness Plan.*