

# Georgia Institute of Technology

## Emergency Response Plan for Study Abroad, Exchange Programs, and International Internships

### I. OPERATING PRINCIPLES

#### II.

The following **Operating Principles** are the overarching guidelines for these procedures:

- Safety is the number one concern.
- Confidentiality of personally identifiable and other confidential information must be maintained.
- Legal liability of the Institute and its employees should be weighed and minimized where possible.
- Predetermined procedures set forth herein must be followed.

### III. INTRODUCTION

This document outlines the specific procedures for any emergency or crisis involving participants in Georgia Institute of Technology's ("Georgia Tech") study abroad program, exchange program and international internships (collectively "International Abroad Programs"). **The primary goal of these procedures is to ensure the safety and well-being of all participants.**

For purposes of these procedures, Real and Perceived Emergencies are defined as follows:

- **Actual Emergency:** A genuine or imminent risk to participants, or a disturbance that has already occurred. Examples: Political coup, civil unrest, natural/manmade disaster, incarceration, pandemic, physical/emotional illness, accident, physical assault, disappearance for an inordinate period of time, death, kidnapping, terrorist threat and/or attack, etc.
- **Perceived Emergency:** No significant risk, but perceived as threatening by student, family, University official, or others in the U.S. Examples: Sensationalized reporting of an event abroad, distortion of information provided by a participant, and/or nervousness of a family member or participant with little or no international experience.  
**Note:** Perceived Emergencies can affect students, family members and others in the U.S. just as much as Real Emergencies. Thus, Perceived Emergencies must be treated seriously and responses to such emergencies must be timely.

#### IV.

## V. PROCEDURES

### VI. Phase I: Emergency is Reported to Key Georgia Tech International Abroad Personnel

Dean of Students (“Dean”) should be contacted as well as the Director of Education Abroad. Alternatively, if Director of Education Abroad is not available, the Executive Director of the Office of International Education or Associate Director should be contacted.

**Contact numbers and addresses for key Georgia Tech Study Abroad personnel are as follows:**

**GT Police (will contact the Dean):** (404)-894-2500

**John Stein**, Dean of Students, Office of Student Affairs  
Student Services Building  
Office: (404) 894-2564, Fax: (404) 894-9928  
Cell: (404) 431-1300 Home: (770) 979-2244  
E-Mail: [john.stein@vpss.gatech.edu](mailto:john.stein@vpss.gatech.edu)

**Lorie Johns Páulez**, Director of Education Abroad  
Office of International Education, Savant Building 211  
Office: (404)-894-7475 Cell: (404) 316-4961  
Fax: (404) 894-9682  
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**Amy Bass Henry**, Executive Director of the Office of International Education  
Office of International Education, Savant Building 211  
Office: (404) 894-7475 Cell: (770) 823-4741  
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E-Mail: [amy.henry@oie.gatech.edu](mailto:amy.henry@oie.gatech.edu)

### VII. Phase II: Key Georgia Tech International Abroad Personnel Will Determine Whether the Emergency is Real or Perceived

#### VIII.

#### IX. 1. Gather information and assess the risks

- a. The Dean, along with in-country contacts, will gather as much information as is necessary to determine the actual or potential risks, if any, to GT participants. If at all possible, appropriate people and organizations should be contacted by telephone to assess such risks.
- b. In assessing whether the emergency is real or perceived, the Dean will contact a number of sources for detailed and accurate information. These may include:

- i. The lead GT faculty member, administrative or non-GT administrator contact abroad (or in the U.S.) for the International Abroad Program (“Leader”);
- ii. The Director of Education Abroad or if the Director of Education is not available, the Executive Director of the Office of International Education, or Associate Director of Education Abroad;
- iii. The U. S. State Department Emergency Contacts – Emergency numbers for support from the US State Department: From the U.S. & Canada - 1-888-407-4747; From Overseas - +1 202-501-4444;  
<https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/international-travel/emergencies.html>
- iv. The U. S. State Department Office of Overseas Citizens Services at 202-746-5225 (24-hours a day hotline). Also, *see* <http://travel.state.gov/>;
- v. Special Task Force of the U. S. State Department (if one has been created as in the case of a long-standing crises). Or, call the Office of Crisis Management of the State Department’s Operations Center at (202) 647-0900;
- vi. US Department of State Bureau of Counterterrorism, if concerning a terrorist threat or action, <https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/international-travel/emergencies/terrorism.html>;
- vii. Local safety/crime agencies in the host country; and/or
- viii. Study abroad insurance provider.

X. 2. Summarize in writing a careful, chronological sequence of the events leading up to, during, and after the crisis.

XI.

- a. The **Checklist** used to summarize the crisis events should include, but not be limited to, the following:
  1. What event took place? Request a chronological statement of what happened from each person who was involved or who witnessed the event.
  2. What is the current physical and psychological condition of the affected participant(s) and leaders?
  3. Is the Leader in close contact now with the affected participants?
  4. If the Leader is not in contact with the affected participants, has anyone from the Institute

communicated with them?

5. What is the proximity of the event to all the International Abroad Program's participants?
6. What is the imminent risk to all the International Abroad Program's participants? Where they are?
7. Are the International Abroad Program's participants, whether directly involved or not, aware of the emergency? How are they responding?
8. Is there sufficient food, water and medical attention available?
9. Is adequate and secure housing available? If so, how long will this housing be available? What other appropriate housing options are available as a backup if needed?
10. Is *safe* transportation available locally and internationally (land and air)?
11. Have you confirmed the list of all the International Abroad Program's participants?
12. Have you prepared information for notification of families (when, where, how, by whom)?
13. Who will be the spokesperson to the media?
14. What information may and should be disbursed to the media?

### XII.3. Identify, assess and address any incident-specific issues.

- a. The following **Checklists** should be used as well as any other questions needed to identify, assess and address the applicable incident-specific issue:
  1. **SERIOUS ILLNESS:**
    - Where is the victim?
    - What medical treatment has the victim received?
    - What has the on-site response been?
    - Who is the attending physician (if any)?
    - Does the attending physician speak English?
    - How can family member(s) contact the physician and/or hospital?
    - What is the diagnosis?
    - What is the prescribed treatment?
    - What is the prognosis?
    - Can the victim be adequately treated at current location?
    - Has the student's insurance been contacted?
    - Are other participants at risk (physical or psychological)?
    - Is airlift a desirable and/or viable action?

- What are the likely academic and financial consequences of returning to the U.S.?
2. **SERIOUS INJURY:**
    - Same as **SERIOUS ILLNESS** checklist above, but also include:
    - What are the details of the accident?
    - Are rescue operations needed?
    - Have they been initiated?
    - Were there witnesses to the accident? If so, obtain signed statement from each witness.
  3. **PSYCHOLOGICAL OR PSYCHIATRIC ISSUES:**
    - Same as **SERIOUS ILLNESS** checklist above, but also include:
    - In what way(s) is the person upset and/or inappropriately behaving?
    - What has been done on site?
    - Is the person a danger to self and/or others?
    - Is there a history of previous counseling/therapy? Where? With whom?
    - Is the person prescribed medication(s) for emotional difficulties and/or any other medication(s)?
    - Are they taking the prescribed medication(s)?
    - Was there an apparent precipitant for their distress/behavior?
  4. **SEXUAL HARASSMENT:**
    - Same as **SERIOUS ILLNESS** checklist above, but also include:
    - Does victim feel physically threatened?
    - What action is necessary to remedy situation?
    - Can situation be remedied on-site?
    - Consult the Georgia Tech Sexual Misconduct Policy and the Georgia Tech Anti-Harassment Policy and comply with the applicable policy (ies) accordingly.
  5. **ASSAULT OR RAPE:**
    - Same as **SERIOUS ILLNESS** checklist above, but also include:
    - What are the major details of the incident?
    - Is counseling available? In English?
    - Has appropriate local law enforcement been notified?
    - Were there witnesses? If so, obtain signed statement from each witness.
    - Does the victim want to return to the U.S.?
    - Are the victim and the counselor aware of these consequences?
    - Is the accused person a Georgia Tech student? A local student or resident? A tourist?
  6. **MISSING PERSONS:**
    - When and where was the missing person last seen or heard from?
    - Did the person tell anyone of plans to be absent?
    - Does anyone know or have an idea about where the person went?
    - How was the person travelling? Example: Alone and by train.

- If the person left and was expected to return at a specific time, what was the date and time of the expected return?
- Are reliable search and rescue operations available on-site? Have they been initiated? Should they be initiated?
- What is the description of the missing person (e.g. height, weight, eye color, hair color, hair length, gender, race, and other distinguishing factors)?
- What is the missing person's passport number?
- Have local missing person's officials been notified?
- What is the agency and case number assigned?
- Has the U. S. State Department been contacted?
- Who is the contact at the State Department (i.e., contact name, title, phone number, etc.)?
- Has the U.S. State Department initiated a Welfare and Whereabouts check? If so, for which countries?
- Any Clergy involvement?

7. **ARRESTS:**

- Has the student been detained?
- Has the U. S. Embassy been notified?
- What was the Embassy's response and advice?
- What agency made the arrest?
- Have charges been filed?
- What are the charges?
- What are the facts?
- Were there witnesses? If so, obtain signed statement from each witness.
- What are the names, addresses and phone numbers of the arresting authorities?
- What is the case number?
- What rights have been granted?
- Is the student entitled to place a phone call?
- Does an attorney represent the student?
- What is the name, address and phone number of the attorney?
- Does Georgia Tech need to intervene? If so, when and how?

8. **HOSTAGE SITUATION:**

- Same as **MISSING PERSONS** checklist above and **POLITICAL EMERGENCY** checklist below, but also include:
- Has the U. S. Embassy been notified there?
- What is the Embassy's response and advice?
- Who is the contact person at the U. S. Embassy (i.e., contact name, title, phone number, etc.)?
- Who is the contact person at the State Department in Washington (i.e., contact name, title, phone number, etc.)?
- Have the kidnappers made contact?

- Have the kidnappers identified themselves?
- Who are they and what do they want?
- Is negotiation support available on site?
- What is Georgia Tech's policy on ransoms?

9. **POLITICAL EMERGENCY OR NATURAL/MAN-MADE DISASTER:**

- See **SERIOUS INJURY** checklist as needed.
- Has the U. S. Embassy advised participants to take appropriate action?
- Have all of the International Abroad Program participants and leaders been notified and informed of these precautions? If so, how? By phone? In writing?
- Are all of the International Abroad Program participants and leaders following these precautions?
- Have local authorities imposed a curfew?
- Is travel in or out of the country being restricted in any way?
- Is the group in danger?
- Who or what is the target of the unrest?
- Has any particular group or organization been threatened?
- What kind of military or other security or public safety personnel are present? Are they unusually visible?
- How is the military behaving with respect to the civilian population?
- Contact the U.S. Embassy to learn if airlifts are planned.
- What forms of transportation are available? What would be the estimated transportation costs?

10. **STUDENT DEATH:**

- Where is the victim?
- Has the U. S. Embassy been notified there?
- What is the Embassy's response and advice?
- Who is the contact person at the U. S. Embassy (i.e., contact name, title, phone number, etc.)?
- Who is the contact person at the State Department in Washington (i.e., contact name, title, phone number, etc.)?
- Is the family already informed and/or involved?
- Does the family need support?
- What are the circumstances of the death (e.g., illness, accident, murder, suicide, etc.)?
- Is law enforcement involved? Are there witnesses?
- Is there an attending physician or mental health professional? Do they speak English?
- Has the insurance company been contacted?
- Who will coordinate repatriation of remains?
- Has the CMT been convened?
- Determine if Georgia Tech Office of Legal Affairs (a unit within the Office of the General Counsel) needs to be consulted.
- Consult and/or notify Georgia Tech Institute Communications as needed.

XIII.

XIV. 3. Phase III: Emergency Response

XV. A. *PERCEIVED EMERGENCY*

XVI.

1. **Response Scenario A: The perceived emergency has not yet created widespread or persistent rumors:**

- a. The Dean diffuses the situation and reassures concerned parties, i.e., inquiries have been made, the International Abroad Program participants and leaders are secure, the International Abroad Program is proceeding normally, assistance has been provided for the International Abroad Program participants and leaders as needed.
- b. Staff in the Office of Student Life and the Office of International Education are informed of situation so that all may respond in a similar manner if other inquiries are received.
- c. Parents may be provided embassy phone number **upon request**.
- d. If International Abroad Program participants cannot be reassured that they are safe, the Dean will work with the Office of International Education and the Leader to determine how to handle the situation, including the financial and academic implications of returning home.

2. **Response scenario B: The perceived emergency has created widespread or persistent rumors and a strong public perception of risk:**

- a. The Dean informs the President, the Provost, the Vice Provost for International Initiatives, Institute Communications and Public Affairs and staff in the Office of Student Life and the Office of International Education.
- b. If appropriate and as applicable, the International Abroad Program participants and leader are also advised about the perceived emergency and apprised of Institute's response.

XVII. B. *ACTUAL EMERGENCY*

XVIII.

1. **General Procedures:**

- a. **Non-acute crisis** – The emergency is actual , but not acute enough to warrant convening the Crisis Management Team (*see below for acute crisis*):
  - i. The Dean will consult with the International Abroad Program Leader to determine what specific measures should be taken in responding to the crisis. All telephone conversations should be well documented.



- ii. Once the appropriate response strategy has been determined (*see below*), the Dean will send a written communication to the International Abroad Program Leader and affected International Abroad Program participants. This written communication will contain a detailed description of the course of action that they will be required to comply with in response to the crisis. The Leader will make certain that all International Abroad Program participants acknowledge receipt of this information in writing, if possible dated and signed. The Leader will send via email/fax the signed acknowledgements to the Dean as soon as is practical.
- iii. The Dean will take the following points into account in developing the written course of action:
  - ❖ Include a sufficient amount of detail in drafting the course of action so that others can later ascertain the proposed course of action taken.
  - ❖ Reassure the International Abroad Program participants that all necessary and reasonable actions are being taken to ensure their safety, security and well-being, and that Georgia Tech is counting on their cooperation in responding to the crisis.
  - ❖ Inform the International Abroad Program participants that while it is not possible to eliminate all risk, Georgia Tech International Abroad personnel has past experience dealing with emergencies and will work with them to get through the current crisis.
  - ❖ As circumstances dictate, either have the International Abroad Program participants get in touch with their in-case-of emergency (ICE) contact person or inform them that Georgia Tech has contacted their ICE contact person.
  - ❖ Instruct the International Abroad Program participants to stay in close touch with the Leader to keep the Leader apprised their precise whereabouts throughout the crisis, and to report any suspicious persons or packages to the Leader.
  - ❖ If not already done, inform the International Abroad Program participants to register with the U. S. Embassy or the nearest Consulate and maintain contact with them throughout the crisis.
  - ❖ Inform the International Abroad Program participants to exercise common sense in responding to the crisis, and avoid contact with or travel to the affected area (if they are not located in this area).
  - ❖ Instruct the Leader and International Abroad Program participants to remove all signs or any other objects at the academic center or at their homestays that would

call attention to them or to the program.

- ❖ Inform the Leader and International Abroad Program participants to keep a low profile, e.g., avoid dress and behavior that will attract attention, do not use pre-labeled luggage tags, avoid places where Americans are known to congregate, etc.
  - iv. The Dean will write a brief and accurate description of the crisis event and will distribute it with a copy of the written response strategy to the following people:
    - The President
    - The Provost
    - The Vice-Provost for International Initiatives
    - Executive Director of the Office of International Education
    - Director of Education Abroad
    - Office of Legal Affairs
    - Associate VP of GT Communications and Marketing
    - The Dean and the School Chair of the academic unit that is sponsoring the program, if applicable
  - v. Once the description has been written and delivered to the above individuals, any media inquiries will be directed to Institute Communications. In forwarding these requests, the Office of Student Life will make all reasonable efforts to cooperate, while also informing the media that the Office of Student Life must avoid providing any information that may violate a student's right to privacy as required by FERPA.
  - vi. Institute Communications will provide information to the media as contained in the Dean's description. Institute Communications will-arrange with the Dean in advance of any press requests for interviews.
  - vii. The Dean will handle all other requests for information, including those from parents, students, and other members of the Georgia Tech community as appropriate.
  - viii. The Dean may contact the emergency contacts of the Leader and International Abroad Program participants to provide accurate information about the emergency and about Georgia Tech's response.
- b. **An acute crisis**—The emergency is real and warrants convening the Crisis Management Team (CMT):
- i. The Dean will:

- ❖ Contact the Leader and other appropriate people abroad and in the U.S. to discuss the crisis and response to the crisis. The Dean will make certain that all appropriate steps are being taken at this point to assure the immediate safety and welfare of the Leader and International Abroad Program participants. The Dean will inform the Georgia Tech faculty and staff abroad that the Crisis Management Team (CMT) is being convened to consider what other responses are needed.
- ❖ Reassure International Abroad Program participants that all necessary and reasonable actions are being taken to ensure their safety, security and well-being, and that Georgia Tech is counting on their cooperation in responding to the crisis..
- ❖ Inform the International Abroad Program participants that while it is not possible to eliminate all risk, Georgia Tech International Abroad personnel has past experience dealing with emergencies and will work with them to get through the current crisis.
- ❖ As circumstances dictate, either have the International Abroad Program participants get in touch with their in-case-of emergency (ICE) contact person or inform them that Georgia Tech has contacted their ICE contact person.
- ❖ Instruct the International Abroad Program participants to stay in close touch with the Leader to keep the Leader apprised their precise whereabouts throughout the crisis, and to report any suspicious persons or packages to the Leader.
- ❖ If not already done, inform the International Abroad Program participants to register with the U. S. Embassy or the nearest Consulate and maintain contact with them throughout the crisis..
- ❖ Inform the International Abroad Program participants to exercise common sense in responding to the crisis, and avoid contact with or travel to the affected area (if they are not located in this area).
- ❖ Instruct the Leader and International Abroad Program participants to remove all signs or any other objects at the academic center or at their homestays that would call attention to them or to the program.
- ❖ Inform the Leader and International Abroad Program participants to keep a low profile, e.g., avoid dress and behavior that will attract attention, do not use pre-labeled luggage tags, avoid places where Americans are known to congregate, etc.
- ❖ If appropriate, the Dean will provide description of an event and response strategy to the ICE contact persons of each International Abroad Program

participant and leader.

- ii. The Dean will convene the CMT as soon as the Dean has collected enough information to write an effective summary of the crisis and the initial response to it. Under certain circumstances, OIE may convene the CMT as a crisis develops to review Georgia Tech response, or possible suspension or cancellation of International Abroad Programs depending on the crisis, such as pandemics, developing political unrest, natural disasters, etc. The CMT will include the following persons or their designees:
  - Dean of Students
  - Executive Director of the Office of International Education
  - Director of Education Abroad
  - President/Provost's designee, such as the Vice Provost of International Initiatives (VP II)
  - Dean(s) and/or School Chair(s) of the International Abroad Program's sponsoring academic unit(s), if appropriate
  - Director of Counseling Office, if appropriate
  - Director of Health Services, if appropriate
  - Associate VP of Institute Communications
  - Chief of Georgia Tech Police Department
  - Director of Emergency Preparedness
  - Georgia Tech General Counsel
  - Georgia Tech Risk Manager
  - Faculty member(s) in area studies, if appropriate
- iii. CMT reviews issues related to the crisis. The Dean then sends an electronic communication or a fax to the Leader and International Abroad Program participants using the same guidelines used for the non-acute crisis (See iii, Page 8, above).

***Issues for the CMT to discuss and address:***

- a) Nature and extent of crisis
- b) Imminent danger to participants
- c) Steps already taken to assure safety and well being
- d) Additional considerations for next potential steps to be taken:
  - Review of Dean's written summary of the emergency
  - Recommendations about student behavior
  - Evacuation considerations
  - Reliability of communication with the Leader and International Abroad Program participants
  - Communication with emergency contacts of the Leader and International Abroad Program participants
  - Communication with others (family members at other sites, students and

- colleagues on campus)
  - Media response measures
  - Counseling of students on campus and off campus, as appropriate
  - Implications of a return to US
  - Refund policy
  - Financial impact on the International Abroad Program participants, employers and Georgia Tech, including legal liability and financial aid policies
- e) If evacuation is necessary, CMT will develop a detailed evacuation plan and the Dean will send the evacuation place in confidence to the Leader.

***Evacuation plan considerations:***

- ✓ Insurance Provider has been contacted and coverage and support confirmed.
  - ✓ Safety of routes and mode of transportation
  - ✓ Advisability of separating into smaller groups
  - ✓ Availability of in-country resources
  - ✓ Ground and air transportation to be scheduled
  - ✓ Costs of evacuation.
- f) The Dean writes a brief, accurate description of the emergency crisis, distributes it with the response strategy to all members of CMT.
- g) All media requests are then to be directed to Institute Communications with the overarching message that the Office of Student Life and the Office of International Education are cooperating with the media request but must also maintain confidentiality of International Abroad Program student participants in accordance with FERPA.
- i) The Dean will accept requests for information from parents, students, and members of the Georgia Tech community
- j) If appropriate, the Dean will provide description of an event and response strategy to the ICE contact persons of each International Abroad Program participant and leader.

#### **XIX. 4.Special case: Death of an International Abroad Program Participant (see Acute Crisis above).**

1. The Dean must get full details of the incident from the Leader. The Dean must also confirm

that the Georgia Tech study abroad insurance provider, or private insurance will handle repatriation of remains, information on burial and/or repatriation, including police or immigration procedures. The Dean will inform the Leader that family may contact the Leader. The Dean must check the Georgia Tech Registrar's records to assure that no other student has the same name.

2. The Dean will write summary of the circumstances surrounding the death and send it to the following individuals:
  - a. President
  - b. Provost
  - c. Vice Provost for International Initiatives
  - d. Members of the CMT
3. The Dean will determine who should notify the next of kin of the decedent.
4. The Dean will contact the decedent's family to offer condolences and connect the family with GT education abroad insurance provider (if appropriate), and offer to work with family in contacting Leader for specific arrangements.

Additional contacts may need to be made with:

- The International Abroad Program participants
- Attending physician(s), clinics, health care professionals
- Translators
- U. S. Embassy and State Department
- Local law enforcement or public security officials, particularly English-speaking local officials.

This document was modeled after University of Akron's "Emergency Response Plan for Study, Work, Travel Abroad"

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