

## Emergency Response Protocol for Study Abroad, Exchange Programs and Global Research & Internships (GRIP)

### I. OVERVIEW

The Office of International Education deems the safety of its students, faculty and staff its highest priority. To that end, while no single plan can account for every potential scenario a traveler may encounter, the emergency response plan exists as a template to guide the response to incidents transpiring on the Institute's international programs.

### II. OPERATING PRINCIPLES

The core principles of safety, confidentiality and liability should inform any response. All decisions and action steps should be taken through the lens of safeguarding the wellbeing of students and employees. Throughout incident response and management, confidentiality of personally identifiable and other confidential information must be maintained. Similarly, legal liability of the Institute and its employees should be weighed and minimized where possible.

### III. REAL AND PERCEIVED EMERGENCIES

For purposes of this emergency response plan, 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, Institute 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.

Please be advised that 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.

The International Risk, Safety and Security Director, Dean of Students and Office of Education Abroad, working together with other campus stakeholders as necessary, will respond to any Actual or Perceived Emergencies.

#### IV. EMERGENCY RESPONSE PROTOCOL

It is strongly recommended that program leaders devise their own program-specific emergency action plan that includes considerations for where to congregate or how to connect with program participants in an emergency.

While no single emergency response protocol can account for all possible scenarios, in the event of an emergency, program leaders should take the following general steps as dictated by the circumstances at hand.

1. Determine participant safety. Assess the situation and verify the safety and well-being of program's participants, taking appropriate action as dictated by the nature of the incident. You may need to temporarily relocate or shelter in place depending on the situation. Be sure to follow the directives of local authorities and monitor trusted media. Participants will look to you for guidance and reassurance. Do your best to remain levelheaded and calm.
2. Contact the relevant entities, such as the supplemental international insurance provider, local police, or US Consulate or Embassy, if the situation calls for such assistance. You may first wish to consult with the local Embassy or Consulate regarding whether contacting the local police is appropriate should you have such concerns based on the situation, for instance in cases involving illicit drug use, misconduct, etc.
3. Call the Georgia Tech Police Department at **+1-404-894-2500**. Identify yourself as a faculty/staff member on a program abroad to speak to the Dean on Call.
4. Document the incident. Please use the Dean of Student's incident report form at [https://cm.maxient.com/reportingform.php?GeorgiaTech=&layout\\_id=4](https://cm.maxient.com/reportingform.php?GeorgiaTech=&layout_id=4).

All participants of the Institute's international programs are enrolled in the University System of Georgia's supplemental international insurance, which provides emergency medical and non-medical (political insecurity and natural disaster) coverage. For more information on benefits as well as using the insurance, please visit <https://ea.oie.gatech.edu/health-safety>.

The current international insurance policy is offered through CISI. The following methods are available to open a case and request assistance with CISI/AXA Team Assist:

- Inside the US: **1-855-327-1411** (Toll Free)
- Outside the US: **1-312-935-1703** (Collect calls accepted)
- Email: [medassist-usa@axa-assistance.us](mailto:medassist-usa@axa-assistance.us)

When opening a claim, you will be asked for some or all of the following information:

- Caller/participant's first and last name;
- Participant's date of birth;
- Contact details;
- Type of service requested;
- Brief summary of request/incident;
- Location where assistance is requested.

If possible, be prepared and have this information handy when initiating the call.

Similarly, as a program leader, you are the university's connection with what is happening on the ground. The below list contains some possible questions or actions which program leaders may be asked in reporting an emergency back to campus. Note that this is not a comprehensive list, and more information or action steps may be requested.

- What event took place?
- What is the current physical and psychological condition of the affected participant(s) and leaders?
- Have you been in contact with the affected participants? Has anyone?
- What is the location of affected participants?
- Is anyone in imminent risk? Concentrate efforts on supporting these individuals.
- Have affected participant(s) been in touch with their emergency contacts?
- Provide contact information for any local law or medical authorities who may be involved, such as names of facilities where participant(s) have been transported, names of any responding individuals or attending medical professionals, case numbers, etc.
- Communicate information regarding medical treatment, diagnosis, prognosis, etc.
- Communicate information regarding charges made against participant(s).
- Obtain copies of police reports.
- Establish a time and means to reconnect for next updates. Plan to monitor your university email for additional guidance or questions as the Institute works toward crisis resolution.

## V. CONSIDERATIONS FOR HOSPITALIZATION

HIPAA governs the collection and sharing of personal health information among covered entities (e.g. hospitals, insurers). If a participant is admitted for inpatient care, it may be necessary to obtain a HIPAA consent form for the insurance provider to release information from the hospital. Note that information shared to the program leaders by a doctor, nurse,

health care professional or by the individual is not considered HIPAA protected. As such, this information should be treated confidentially but can be shared with the relevant stakeholders on campus directly responsible for assisting in or facilitating the emergency response.

Below are some steps to assist in helping cope with a hospital stay and navigate a foreign health care system:

- Arrangements should be made for a program leader to visit on a daily basis until a determination is made otherwise. Visitation to hospitalized individuals will often be limited to specific visiting hours.
- It is ideal if program leaders can arrange visits when the hospitalized individual will be meeting with treating medical providers in order to provide assistance and be up to date on any treatment plan.
- In order to attend to the needs of the additional group, it is not required for the program leader to remain for the entire range of daily visitation hours.
- If the group is scheduled to depart a given location or if a student is hospitalized away from the group, a program leader should remain in the vicinity while the student is undergoing treatment.

## VI. SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES

**Title IX:** Any instance of sexual harassment, sexual assault, or rape must be reported to the Equity & Compliance Program's Title IX coordinator and the Dean of Students immediately, as there is a specific protocol which must be followed. You can report by calling the Georgia Tech Police Department at **+1-404-894-2500** or by submitting a Sexual Misconduct Report at [https://cm.maxient.com/reportingform.php?GeorgiaTech=&layout\\_id=1](https://cm.maxient.com/reportingform.php?GeorgiaTech=&layout_id=1). Your obligation is to report, not investigate, while supporting the students on your program.

Refrain from reaching out to appropriate local law enforcement without first obtaining the victim's permission. Medical care may be needed based on the situation.

**Missing Person:** If a participant is missing as a result of participating in an activity or is reported as out-of-touch and multiple attempts to contact the individual by various means have failed, engage the Dean of Students and involve the local authorities in a search for the missing participant. Connect with the local Embassy or Consulate to notify them of the missing person and if you have concerns regarding the reliability of local search and rescue operations.

**Political Insecurity:** In times of political insecurity or in situations where Americans or Westerners may be at heightened risk, it is prudent to avoid locations, activities or behaviors that could invite volatility. Advise participants to avoid demonstrations and protests and

take steps to plan itineraries accordingly; avoid identifying themselves as such by wearing clothing or displaying paraphernalia that provides a political or national affiliation; be cognizant of volume when in public; etc.

**Death:** In the event of the death of a participant on the program, program leaders should not notify the decedent's emergency contacts or next of kin. The Office of the Dean of Students has a protocol for such notifications. Be prepared, however, that the deceased's family members may wish to talk with you after the official notification has occurred. Similarly, other participants on the program will likely require closure. The university will work to support the family and insurance to facilitate repatriation.

## VII. INCIDENT REPORTS

Reporting is not punitive. It serves a dual purpose to not only document, information share and connect relevant stakeholders, but also provides an opportunity for learning. This benefit is passed along to future program participants as the university refines processes, trainings, and general risk mitigation best practices. Report equals support.

Following the initial emergency response and triage, program leaders will be asked to document the incident with the Dean of Students by using the incident report form at [https://cm.maxient.com/reportingform.php?GeorgiaTech=&layout\\_id=4](https://cm.maxient.com/reportingform.php?GeorgiaTech=&layout_id=4). When reporting any incident, try to be as descriptive and objective as possible. It is important to use objective rather than subjective language. Avoid making judgment calls, investigating, or assigning clinical diagnoses. Instead, record specifics such as statements made or action steps taken. Compile all information and submit any supporting documentation along with the incident report, such as witness statements, relevant images, copies of police reports, etc.

## VIII. ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

The following are on-campus and external resources that may be useful to program leaders in the event of an emergency abroad. Note that crisis response coordination should generally follow the protocol outlined in Section IV.

### On-Campus

- **Georgia Tech Police Department**

24/7: 404-894-2500

<https://police.gatech.edu/>

- **The Office of Student Integrity**

During office hours: 404-894-2566 Email: [osi@mail.gatech.edu](mailto:osi@mail.gatech.edu)

<https://osi.gatech.edu/>

- **Stamps Health Services**

During office hours: 404-894-1420

<https://health.gatech.edu/>

- **Center for Mental Health Care & Resources**

24/7: 404-894-2575

<https://mentalhealth.gatech.edu/>

- **Equity & Compliance Programs**

Email: [titleix@gatech.edu](mailto:titleix@gatech.edu)

<https://diversity.gatech.edu/>

- **Office of General Counsel**

During office hours: 404-894-4812 Email: [asklegal@gatech.edu](mailto:asklegal@gatech.edu)

<https://generalcounsel.gatech.edu/>

#### External

- **U.S. Department of State American Citizens Services**

If overseas and in need of emergency assistance, contact the nearest U.S. embassy or consulate (<https://www.usembassy.gov/>). For aid in locating this information, you can contact American Citizens Services.

From overseas: +1-202-501-4444

From the U.S. or Canada: 1-888-407-4747

- **Cultural Insurance Services International (CISI)**

Call CISI's AXA Med Assist Team to initiate care, identify resources or start a claim. It is also possible to email them, however it may delay response time.

From overseas: 1-312-935-1703 (Collect calls accepted)

From inside the U.S.: 1-855-327-1411 (Toll Free)

Email: [medassist-usa@axa-assistance.us](mailto:medassist-usa@axa-assistance.us)

- **Uwill**

Provides telecounseling support for Georgia Tech students, including those abroad. Students must set up a profile on Uwill using their student email.

<https://app.uwill.com>