

Guidelines for study trips to risk areas for Maastricht University students

Introduction: what is the purpose of these guidelines?

In countries or regions where employees and students of Maastricht University (UM) are conducting work or education-related activities as part of a work-related trip or a study trip, it is possible that safety risks or calamities (such as a terrorist attacks or natural disasters) may occur. In such instances, the country or region in question may be designated a risk area. As an employer and educational institution, UM has a responsibility of care towards its employees and students and is obligated to safeguard their safety, health and well-being. In the case of work-related trips and study trips to risk areas, however, UM is unable (at times) to guarantee the safety of its employees and students.

As an employer and educational institution, UM is also obligated to support those employees and students who travel to risk areas for their work or studies by providing them with guidelines and recommendations. UM will also advise the employees or students in question with regard to any additional or alternate travel insurance that may be necessary. This memorandum will provide guidelines for work-related trips and study trips to risk areas that UM employees and students are taking or intend to take in future.

The HR department (including ARBO, KCIS and the labour lawyers), Marketing & Communication, the Finance department, Academic Affairs and the SCC were all involved in drafting this document.

What is a risk area?

In identifying risk areas and determining the accompanying recommendations pertaining to travel, UM strives to be consistent with the travel advisories issued by the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs uses colour codes to differentiate its travel advisory categories. The colour code indicates how safe a particular country or region is, and for each colour, the Ministry issues different recommendations. These travel advisories are not binding. The colour codes are:

Green: Safe to travel. No unusual safety risks. The risks to safety in this country or region are comparable to the safety risks in the Netherlands.

Yellow: Safety risks are present. The risks to safety in this country or region differ from those in the Netherlands.

Orange: Essential travel only. Travellers may be exposed to dangerous situations resulting from grave risks to safety in this country or region. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs therefore recommends travelling to this area only if absolutely necessary.

Red: Avoid travel. Extremely grave risks to safety are present, which may result in life-threatening situations for travellers, such as in the event of war. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs therefore recommends avoiding all travel to this area.

For more information, please refer to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs' website, where there is a page on travel advisories (<https://www.rijksoverheid.nl/onderwerpen/reisadviezen>). This website offers travel recommendations for the country or region to which the employee/student is travelling, as well as other tips on travelling abroad or to risk areas. In addition, the employee/student can register via this website if he/she wishes to receive updates on travel advisories. The employee/student may also use the 'BZ Reisadvies' app (in Dutch), which provides travel-advisory updates. UM recommends consulting this website and the BZ Reisadvies app prior to travel as well as at regular intervals during the trip.

Guidelines for study-related trips to risk areas – students

When planning a study-related trip to a risk area, students will consult the Education Desk, IRO or Internship Office in a timely fashion in order to establish matters such as the destination and duration of the trip and to provide/update contact information.

Permission not required, study-related travel is permitted (code green or yellow)

For study-related travel to a country or region with the code green or yellow, students are not required to request specific written permission from the Executive Board. Students will, however, be expected to observe the general procedure for work-related travel, and to familiarise themselves thoroughly with the safety risks and developments in the country or region to which they are travelling. To do so, they can refer to the relevant pages on the UM site and the website of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, or the BZ Reisadvies app. During the study-related trip, students will avoid taking careless decisions or risks with regard to their own safety and health or that of others. Students must coordinate the travel in advance with their Education Desk, IRO or Internship Office by reporting the duration and destination of the study-related trip, along with their contact details. Prior to their study-related trip abroad, students must also sign a document by which they declare that they are familiar with the guidelines for work and study-related trips to risk areas, as well as indicating their intention to properly insure against certain risks.

Study-related travel not permitted (code orange or red)

In principle, when a country or region has a travel advisory with the colour code orange or red, the Executive Board will not issue approval for students to travel to that destination. The study-related travel is then not permitted. This applies to risk areas where grave risks to safety are present. Moreover, such trips are not covered under UM's travel insurance.

Travel insurance

UM has purchased a legal liability policy for students that will provide coverage if students causes damage to third parties in the course of their internship or educational activities. Students are in all cases responsible for insuring certain risks, including obtaining healthcare insurance (healthcare policy with worldwide coverage), liability insurance for private persons, travel insurance (baggage, repatriation and assistance, supplementary healthcare policy with worldwide coverage, travel documents), personal accident and professional liability in the event this is not covered by the internship host.

Study-related travel to a country subject to economic sanctions by the Netherlands

Some travel insurance policies contain a reservation with regard to travel to countries (or regions) against which the Netherlands has levied economic sanctions. This means that the travel insurance will not reimburse all damage incurred in such areas. Insurers with offices in the Netherlands are bound by sanctions issued by UN, the EU and the Dutch government. In general, it is impossible to predict what limitations in terms of insurance coverage may result from these sanctions. Students should discuss this matter thoroughly with their own travel insurance provider prior to travel.

Instructions from UM

When students travel to a foreign country and take up temporary residence there in connection with study-related travel abroad, they are obligated to follow any and all directives and/or instructions from UM. If students neglect to comply with this obligation, there may be consequences with regard to awarding credits for the study component that they have attended while abroad.

Changes to colour code¹

If, in the course of study-related travel, students find themselves in a country or region for which the colour code of the travel advisory has been changed from green or yellow to code orange or red, they must immediately contact the Education Desk, IRO or Internship Office and follow the instructions they are given. If students find themselves in a country or region for which the colour code of the travel advisory has been changed to code orange or red, they must immediately contact the Education Desk, IRO or Internship Office and, if possible, evacuate the country or region without further delay.

Travel at own risk

In the event that, during a study-related trip, a student elects to leave the country or region with code green or yellow and travel to a risk area with colour code orange or red, this travel will be considered a personal trip taken by the student and the student in question will in such case bear full responsibility for their own safety.

Registration with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs

For study-related trips to a country or region with colour code green or yellow, it is important that students register themselves with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.² This will allow the Dutch embassy or consulate to reach the students in case of an emergency in the foreign country and to offer them assistance.³ Should the Ministry of Foreign Affairs issue any instructions relating to the country or region in which the students are travelling, the students are required to follow these instructions. Students with a nationality other than Dutch should report to the applicable authority of their home countries and follow any instructions issued by this authority. These students may register with their country's embassy in the Netherlands.

¹ You will be sent updates via the BZ Reisapp in order to keep you informed of any changes to the travel advisories issued by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. These changes will also be reflected on the Ministry's website; you can also register there to receive e-mail updates.
(<https://abonneren.rijksoverheid.nl/rijksoverheid/e-mailattendingen/aanmelden/onderwerpen/reisadviezen>).

² <https://www.kompas.buzaservices.nl/registration> .

³ Via the 24/7 BZ Information service you can also register to receive e-mail updates regarding changes in colour code. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs will also send you a text message in case of a crisis situation
<https://informatieservice.nederlandwereldwijd.nl>

Schematic summary

Colour code	Permission (form)	Registration at Min. Foreign Affairs	Checklist	Registration UM
GREEN	Students: No; travel is permitted	ü	ü	BO, IRO, IO
YELLOW	Students: No; travel is permitted	ü	ü	BO, IRO, IO
ORANGE	Students: N/A; travel is not permitted	N/A; travel is not permitted	N/A; travel is not permitted	N/A; travel is not permitted
RED	Students: N/A; travel is not permitted	N/A; travel is not permitted	N/A; travel is not permitted	N/A; travel is not permitted