

Guidelines for work-related trips and study trips to risk areas for Maastricht University employees and students

Introduction: what is the purpose of these guidelines?

In countries or regions where employees and students of Maastricht University (UM) conduct work or education-related activities as part of a work-related trip or study trip, it is possible that safety risks or calamities (such as 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 the 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 work-related trips to risk areas – employees

When planning a work-related trip to a risk area, employees will consult their direct supervisors in a timely manner. Depending on the colour code (orange/red), written permission must be requested from the Executive Board using the form intended for that purpose. The Board will decide whether or not this permission may be granted by, for instance, conducting a risk inventory and evaluation (RI&E)¹, with consideration given to information from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the relevant employee's assessment of the situation. The Executive Board may rescind previously granted permission when changes to circumstances warrant such action. Situations in which permission must be obtained are outlined below. The authority to grant permission in writing may be delegated by the Executive Board to the directors of faculties/service.

For specific research projects, where work-related trips to risk areas are an important part of the research proposal, permission for all work-related travel included in the research proposal – which will apply for the duration of the project – may be requested in the preparatory phase of the project. All other provisions established for the colour code will remain in force for these work-related trips.

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

For work-related travel to a country or region with the code green or yellow, employees are not required to request specific written permission from the Executive Board. Employees 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 work-related trip, employees will avoid taking careless decisions or risks with regard to their own safety and health or that of others. Employees must report the work-related travel to their own units, including the destination, duration and contact information for the work-related trip. In most cases, this means communicating this information to the secretariat of the unit in question.

Permission required, along with substantiating arguments (code orange)

Work-related trips to a country or region with code orange must be essential in nature. Essential means that employees will be unable to perform their work without taking the trip in question and that it is impossible to delay the trip. For code orange, employees who intend to travel for work purposes must request written permission from the Executive Board using the 'Permission form for work-related travel to risk area abroad with code orange/red'. The form must also be signed by the director of the relevant faculty or service unit.

Employees must provide arguments substantiating the necessity of the trip on the form as well. The form also includes a checklist. This checklist must be completed in full. If an employee obtains

¹ A risk inventory and evaluation (RI&E) can be used to determine which concrete risks to safety (such as crime, threat of terrorism, health risks, etc.) are present in a particular country or region. On the basis of this information, it is possible to identify the measures that can/should be taken by UM and the employee in question, in order to avoid or reduce these risks. These measures may include avoiding certain foods or beverages or using the means of transport recommended by UM.

permission to travel to the risk area for the purposes of a work-related trip, an employee of MUO-HRM and Finance will provide said employee with advice on safety risks, precautionary measures to be taken, etc. Regardless of the information and advice that the employee will receive, employees will at all times retain personal responsibility for avoiding unnecessary, life-threatening risks and for taking careful and considered decisions.

Work-related travel not permitted, unless there is strong justification (code red)

In principle, when a country or region has a travel advisory with the colour code red, the Executive Board will not issue approval for work-related travel to that destination. The work-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.

In some cases, it may be essential to conduct work-related travel to a country or region with the colour code red. In such instances, the Executive Board will grant permission **solely and exclusively** in the event that **strong justification** for the necessity of travel to that country or region is present. UM (specifically the unit for which the employee in question works) bears full responsibility for any damage incurred by employees in the course of work-related travel. Employees will fill in the 'Permission form for work-related travel to risk area abroad with code orange/red' and create a Field safety plan² in cooperation with their direct supervisor. For other obligations on the part of employees and managers/supervisors, please refer to the section of this memo entitled 'Permission required, along with substantiating arguments (code orange)'.

By completing the Permission form, employees also indicate that they are undertaking the work-related travel voluntarily.

Travel insurance for employees

The UM has procured travel/cancellation insurance for employees who travel for the purpose of work or study. This coverage applies worldwide. The policies covers risks associated with liability, accidents, injury to persons and property damage and cancellation/early return. UM's travel and cancellation insurance for employees is either invalid in risk areas, or there is a good chance that the insurer will not pay out for any claims involving damage resulting from armed conflict, civil war, revolt and domestic unrest. What's more, damage resulting from an 'ordinary' accident in a risk area will not be reimbursed by the UM travel and cancellation insurance either.

In instances of work-related travel to a country or region with code orange or red, the Finance/Insurance⁴ department will confer with employees to determine if the purchase of an additional travel insurance policy is in order.

Insurance company OOM can provide an opportunity for risk-sharing with regard to risk areas when certain criteria are met. This insurance company offers supplementary war risk policies that can be purchased for individual countries. Whether OOM will be able to provide such war risk policies depends

² In the Field safety plan, employees and their direct supervisors will together establish a set of rules with which employees must comply for the duration of the work-related trip to a risk area abroad. Matters such as emergency contact information, local contacts, registering with the applicable embassy and the details of local transportation and housing will also be mapped out at this time. Employees and supervisors will also discuss what UM (or its contact) should do in the event they are no longer able to reach the employee.

on the situation at a given moment. If there was no previous indication of the threat of danger, the UM employee is entitled to an insurance payout when damage is incurred.

In the event it proves impossible to obtain alternate insurance coverage, permission for the work-related travel will be denied.

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

The UM travel insurance policy contains a reservation with regard to work-related travel to countries (or regions) against which the Netherlands has levied economic sanctions.³ This means that the travel insurance will not reimburse all damage incurred in such areas. The travel and cancellation insurance carried by UM is subject to certain rules governing sanctions. 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. What is and is not covered under the policy must be coordinated with the UM insurer on a case-by-case basis. Limitations might include, for example, the insurer's refusal to remit damages to persons or entities on a sanctions list. Further explanation of the sanctions policy is available on the UM website.

The UM insurer is under no obligation to provide coverage or to reimburse any damage whatsoever in the event the coverage, payment of the damage claim or conferral of benefit could expose the insurer, its parent company or the entity possessing final authority to any sanction, restriction or limitation on the grounds of resolutions by the United Nations, or trade or economic sanctions and/or legislation of the European Union, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom or the United States of America.

If the employee is travelling to such a country at the behest of UM, the employee must contact the insurance coordinator to discuss the matter with the UM insurer.

The UM travel and cancellation insurance provides no further coverage with regard to loss, injury, damage, liability, benefits or services that result, directly or indirectly, from or exist in connection with scheduled or actual travel to Cuba, Iran, Syria, the Sudan or the Crimean Peninsula, in connection with sanction policy of the United States.

Finally, this policy provides no coverage with regard to loss, injury, damage or liability that is suffered, directly or indirectly, by a person or entity listed in an applicable government registry in connection with or due to terrorism, narcotic trade, human trafficking, piracy, possession or dissemination of weapons of mass destruction, organised crime, malicious cyber-activity or violation of human rights.

Instructions from UM

When employees travel to a foreign country in connection with work-related travel abroad, they are required to follow any and all directives and/or instructions from UM. In the event an employee fails to comply with this obligation, UM is not liable for any loss or damage incurred by the employee in the country or region of their destination, even if said employee has obtained permission from the Executive Board for the work-related trip to that particular country or region (to which code orange/red applies).

³ For more information, please contact Mr S. Groeneveld, FIN/Insurance.

Changes to colour code⁴

If, in the course of work-related travel, employees 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, they must immediately contact their supervisor and follow the instructions issued by the supervisor. If employees find themselves in a country or region for which the colour code of the travel advisory has been changed from green/yellow/orange with permission to code red, they must immediately contact their supervisor and, if possible, evacuate the country or region without further delay.

Travel at own risk

In all cases, UM employees are prohibited from travelling to a risk area with a code orange or red for work-related purposes without having obtained permission in advance. If an employee embarks on such a trip without permission, UM is not liable for any loss or damage incurred by the employee and the trip will be considered a personal trip taken by the employee. The individual employee will then bear full responsibility for their own safety. In the event that, having been denied permission, an employee elects to travel or take up temporary residence in a risk area with colour code orange or red anyway, the employee will be responsible for purchasing any necessary travel insurance and may do so independently if they so desire.

Registration with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs

For work-related trips to a country or region with colour code orange or red, it is important that the employee register with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. This will allow the Dutch embassy or consulate to reach the employee in case of an emergency in the foreign country and to offer them assistance.⁵ Should the Ministry of Foreign Affairs issue any instructions relating to the country or region in which the employee is travelling, the employee is required to follow these instructions. Employees 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 employees may register with their country's embassy in the Netherlands.

⁴ 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 email updates.

(<https://abonneren.rijksoverheid.nl/rijksoverheid/e-mailattendingen/aanmelden/onderwerpen/reisadviezen>).

⁵ 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>

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 code⁶

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.⁷ 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.⁸ 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.

⁶ 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>).

⁷ <https://www.kompas.buzaservices.nl/registration> .

⁸ 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	Employees: No; travel is permitted	N/A	N/A	secretariat
	Students: No; travel is permitted	✓	✓	BO, IRO, IO
YELLOW	Employees: No; travel is permitted	N/A	N/A	secretariat
	Students: No; travel is permitted	✓	✓	BO, IRO, IO
ORANGE	Employees: Yes, must include substantiation and signature of director of faculty/service/SSC and Exec. Board	✓	✓	central
	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	Employees: No, unless there is strong justification, must include substantiation and signature of director of faculty/service/SSC and Exec. Board	✓	✓	central
	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