



## **THE CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY OF AMERICA**

### ***Center for Global Education***

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## **CUA Overseas Crisis Management Protocol**

***as of February 27, 2015***

Crises are always a potential reality with overseas programs, both academic and co-curricular, and it is important to have a protocol in place to deal effectively with such emergency situations as they arise. For the purposes of this protocol, it is important to distinguish between real and perceived emergencies. Real emergencies include natural disasters, outbreaks of civil or political unrest, kidnappings, accidents or injuries, and similar events that pose an immediate threat to students and staff. Perceived emergencies, often viewed more seriously by those at home than those in the overseas program, result from events that may not be immediately threatening to the health and safety of students and staff.

Both types of emergencies require a response from the home institution, and that response will be most effective if it is grounded in a well-reasoned plan. Although no plan will apply to every situation, a common set of responses must be put in place in every case. These have been organized below in the form of a checklist that can be used to guide CUA's response to emergencies facing an overseas program and its participants.

The purpose of this protocol is to supplement CUA's initial response to a reported overseas crisis and manage the development and flow of information regarding the overseas crisis and its impact on our students participating on overseas programs (both education abroad and co-curricular travel programs). This plan starts with an identification of the individuals, both on campus and overseas, responsible for managing the overseas crisis and the establishment of standardized procedures to be used, making sure to incorporate adjustments for local conditions. The presence of the overseas crisis management protocol helps to prevent any initial confusion in responding to events and provides an opportunity for the responsible individuals to familiarize themselves with the procedures and psychologically prepare themselves for the stress such events impose.

How CUA handles emergencies:

Emergency occurrences, perceived or actual, are communicated or reported to the Department of Public Safety (DPS) at 202-319-5111. In an emergency situation where the campus requires an immediate response the CUA Emergency Notification Plan will be activated.

Upon receiving an emergency/crisis call, DPS will:

- Record the basic information about the crisis
- Contact the CUA “need-to-know” officials listed as contacts for the crisis
- In the case of an overseas crisis, also contact the Center for Global Education (CGE)

*Note: It is important to note that once DPS has notified CGE of an overseas crisis, CGE is then expected to follow up and handle the specific situation per its established overseas crisis management protocol described in the pages below.*

Before the overseas program departs, the Center for Global Education (CGE) at CUA will:

- Request that overseas program directors submit program proposals to CGE
- Request that overseas program directors conduct an assessment of local conditions and identify and disclose potential sources of risk to participants.
- Request that overseas program directors provide CGE with a copy of each participant's passport prior to departure.
- Request that program directors file the names of overseas program participants, itineraries, and emergency contact information with CGE and the program organizing office.
- Provide overseas program directors with contact information at the University in case of overseas emergency, including DPS which fields calls 24/7 and is the initial point of contact for the University.
- Develop and regularly review a list of campus individuals, offices and agencies that would be helpful in an overseas emergency.
- Develop a set of procedures to review and approve CUA education abroad programs.
- Provide a pre-departure orientation for all students and overseas program directors related to overseas health safety & liability issues.
- Recommend that all participants (students, overseas program directors & relatives) on CUA overseas programs obtain an International Student/Teacher Identity Card (ISIC or ITIC).  
(Note: ISIC/ITIC offers a worldwide, toll-free, emergency help line which can provide legal or medical referrals, or travel advisors, depending on one's situation and needs. The cost for the ISIC/ITIC is \$22 per person. CGE automatically includes the ISIC for students participating on CUA-affiliated education abroad programs).
- Require that all participants (students, overseas program directors & relatives) on CUA overseas program enroll in CUA's mandatory foreign travel insurance coverage through FrontierMEDEX so that overseas health emergencies are professionally handled.  
(Note: the cost for this coverage is \$18.50 per student/half month and \$33 per student/month, \$27.50 per employee/half month and \$51 per employee/month. CGE automatically covers students and faculty on CUA education abroad programs with this service, and includes the cost into the program fee).
- Recommend that individual participants (students, overseas program directors & relatives) provide the U.S. State Department with their names and program location(s) so that they can be contacted and offered information and assistance in the case of an overseas emergency.

Conditions requiring overseas crisis management:

*Overseas emergencies are those situations that pose a genuine risk to the safety and well-being of the overseas program participants. The overseas program leader(s) should contact the University by calling DPS at 202-319-5111 to report an overseas crisis under the following circumstances:*

- A medical emergency (regarding one's physical and/or psychological health), or death of a program participant.
- Student or overseas program director is the victim of a crime, such as theft, assault, rape, harassment, etc., or has been accused of committing such a crime.
- A program participant or overseas program director is missing or has been kidnapped
- A widespread emergency affecting, or potentially affecting, all program participants (i.e., a natural disaster, an act or threat of terrorism, an act of war, or political/civil unrest).

*Note: If the program director (s) becomes incapacitated, a pre-determined emergency liaison will serve to manage the on-site situation and the other program participants and contact DPS.*

Overseas program director(s)' responsibilities when an emergency occurs:

*Should one of the above described situations occur, the in-country overseas program director(s) (or the pre-determined emergency liaison) should take the following action:*

- Remove the participant(s) from danger
- Contact the appropriate local authorities (i.e., police, medical personnel, U.S. Embassy or Consulate) to begin the local action necessary to handle the situation.
- Contact DPS who will in turn contact the "need to know" CUA officials and CGE
- Contact FrontierMEDEX for assistance in evaluating the situation if there is a medical emergency involved.

*Note: The Vice President for Student Life & Dean of Students and Campus Ministry will be contacted by the Director of Education Abroad, and are the primary contacts for/to parents. The Director of Education Abroad is the primary contact with in-country officials. The Associate Vice President for Public Affairs is the official spokesperson to media sources.*

CGE's responsibilities when an overseas emergency occurs:

*Upon receiving DPS notification of a call from an on-site overseas program director, assistant director, on-site staff, etc (or pre-designated student) concerning a serious illness, injury, death, or emergency, the following actions will be taken by CGE:*

- Begin a log of all calls and activities pertaining to the incident
- Obtain the following information from DPS and/or the on-site overseas program director  
(or pre-designated student) caller:

1. Name of caller
2. Identity of injured/victim(s), if applicable
3. Brief description of accident, illness, or emergency
4. Location of caller (e.g., address, city, country)
5. Location of accident or emergency; proximity to CUA program participants
6. Phone and fax number where caller can be reached
7. Verify that calls have been placed to emergency response services, and will be placed to U.S. Embassy/Consulate if situation warrants
8. Determine what information, if any, has already been released to the media
9. If appropriate, instruct caller to call back after emergency response team and/or law enforcement have been consulted.
10. Immediately notify the following CUA officials in order of needed response: Provost, Vice President for Student Life & Dean of Students, Director of Education Abroad or Director of the overseas program, Risk Management, Counseling Center, Campus Ministry, Associate Vice President for Public Affairs, University President.

For a medical emergency (physical and/or psychological) involving a program participant, CGE will:

- Contact FrontierMEDEX to evaluate the situation
- Notify the Vice President for Student Life & Dean of Students, the Counseling Center and Campus Ministry.
- Contact parents of student or the family of faculty member(s) or their designated emergency contacts to apprise them of the situation.
- Brief the Provost
- Brief official University Public Affairs spokesperson
- Make the in-country contacts, provide for necessary medical care, emergency evacuation, etc.
- Ensure necessary funds are available to cover emergency expenses, if necessary. Such expenses are the responsibility of student/parents or the faculty member(s), but CUA will advance funds as needed to assure a timely resolution of the situation.

- Consult with CUA General Counsel as appropriate.

If a student or overseas program director is the victim of a crime, such as theft, assault, rape, harassment, etc., or has been accused of committing such a crime, CGE will:

- Contact the Vice President for Student Life & Dean of Students, Campus Ministry, and Provost
- Brief University Public Affairs spokesperson
- Contact FrontierMEDEX to evaluate the situation
- If the incident is between two students of the group, the Vice President for Student Life & Dean of Students has primary responsibility and University policy will apply.
- Consult with University General Counsel as appropriate
- Make any necessary in-country contacts, local on-site authorities will be consulted, if necessary, for appropriate action.
- Ensure that contact is made with parents of student or the family of faculty member(s), or their designated emergency contacts.

Note: If the incident is between a CUA student and a CUA faculty member, the Provost would take action regarding the faculty and Student Life would take action regarding the student. If the incident is between a member of the group and an outside party, action taken will depend on legal requirements in the host country and the wishes of the group member.

If a student or overseas program director is found missing or has been kidnapped, CGE will:

- Immediately notify the State Department, local authorities and the U.S Embassy/Consulates (if student is not a U.S citizen or permanent resident, notify embassy or consulate of citizenship).
- Inform the Vice President for Student Life & Dean of Students, Campus Ministry and Provost
- Brief University Public Affairs spokesperson
- Ensure that contact is made with parents of student or the family of faculty member(s), or their designated emergency contacts.
- Consult with University General Counsel as appropriate

Note: The U.S Embassy will involve the FBI who must coordinate all operations and obtain approval from the host government to be involved in the investigation.

For the death of a student or overseas program director, CGE will:

- Contact FrontierMEDEX to evaluate the situation
- Contact the Vice President for Student Life & Dean of Students and Campus Ministry who will coordinate contact to parents of student or their designated emergency contacts.
- Contact the Provost who will then contact the family of faculty member(s) or their designated emergency contacts as per established protocol.
- Contact the University President
- Contact the Counseling Center to begin appropriate counseling for other members of the group.
- Brief University Public Affairs spokesperson
- Consult with University General Counsel as appropriate

In case of a widespread emergency affecting, or potentially affecting, all program participants (i.e., a natural disaster, an act or threat of terrorism, an act of war, or political/civil unrest, in-country, regional or world-wide public health/pandemic situation), CGE will:

- Ask the overseas program director(s) leading the program what they know about the situation:
  1. What was the target of unrest, if event was political?
  2. What is the intensity of the emergency or political unrest?
  3. Are there military or emergency personnel at the site of the emergency?
  4. What is the advice of the nearest U.S. Embassy or Consulate?
  5. What impact, if any, did the emergency have on availability of food, water, and medical supplies?
  6. How able are our students and faculty to travel?
  7. Is continuation of classes/overseas activities in the best interests of students' health and safety?
- Contact the State Department
- Request that the CUA Emergency Council be convened to review the situation and take the following appropriate actions:
  - a. Any immediate measures needed to preserve the health and safety of students and faculty;
  - b. The appropriate course of action overseas (dealing with initial student reaction, reiterating appropriate student behaviors, developing a written course of action, and having students acknowledge in writing receipt of such information;
  - c. Developing and assisting with an evacuation plan, if necessary (considering the safety of various modes and routes of travel, the costs of evacuation and the method of meeting those

costs, the possibility of reducing the level of threat by dispersing students in small groups to reconvene later in another locale, and available in-country resources), based on advice from the U.S. State Department and CUA's in-country program leader(s). Options include evacuation, move to U.S. Embassy compound, or remaining on-site and maintaining a low-profile.

d. Developing a communication document to be utilized by all individuals involved (consistency is crucial); while keeping in mind the privacy of students and faculty involved.

e. Preparing a list of individuals to be alerted once the entire plan is in place (including the Provost, University President, Campus Ministry, CUA faculty, staff, and students, and parents and family of those students and faculty abroad).

f. Developing a crisis communication plan which factors in the people to be included, organizations to notify, and effective methods of communication to utilize

g. Providing the University's designated official Public Affairs spokesperson with a daily bulletin until the crisis is over.

h. Assessing the impact of the event, once ended, and documenting all actions taken in a written report.

i. Developing a plan to notify all parents, family members, and/or emergency contacts of those abroad, and to coordinate the response to subsequent phone calls.

k. Submitting an action plan to the University President for a final decision, and once the plan is finalized, transmitting it to the on-site overseas program directors.

When a widespread emergency occurs, on-site overseas program directors(s) assume responsibility for insuring that:

- Students are gathered and told of the emergency
- Students are reminded of behaviors that draw attention to themselves as being Americans, and agree to avoid those behaviors.
- Students are asked to report any suspicious persons or situations
- If authorized by the CUA crisis management team, students will be given the opportunity to return to the U.S. immediately with no financial penalty and with the assurance that an effort would be made to salvage the semester to the extent feasible.
- If directed by the CUA crisis management team, the overseas program director(s) takes added security precautions at the classroom/activities site (including the removal of all U.S. program identification).
- If directed by the CUA crisis management team, the overseas program director(s) maintains daily contact with CGE and provides students with daily bulletins, if appropriate. The overseas program director also should offer counseling and support to the students, to the extent possible, and get additional, local counseling assistance, if needed.

CUA Overseas Crisis Management Contacts:

CUA Department of Public Safety (DPS)

Fields emergency calls 24/7 at (202) 319-5111. Will contact CUA “need to know” officials including CGE in cases of an overseas crisis

Center for Global Education

Director of Education Abroad

Ms. Grace Schneider

During office hours: 202-319-6876, Fax: 202-319-6673

After hours: 978-846-3833 (cell)

Email: [schneiderg@cua.edu](mailto:schneiderg@cua.edu)

*\* Once notified of an overseas crisis, CGE will communicate and collaborate with the appropriate overseas contacts and CUA University officials.*