

# Study Abroad and International Field Study Emergency Preparedness and Response

Policy # SS001

Volume: 13, Safety and Security

Responsible Administrator: Vice President for Academic Affairs

Responsible Office: Office of International Programs

Issued: April 2018

## Policy Statement

The Fashion Institute of Technology (the “college” or “FIT”) is committed to prepare and respond effectively to emergencies abroad that may affect FIT programs abroad, including the semester-long programs in Italy. The policy has been developed to provide useful, practical guidance on safety and well-being for all participants, including students and their parents or guardians, faculty, resident directors, and administrative staff. This policy is to be followed by the study abroad program directors and college administrators, as well as staff, faculty, and students participating in study abroad and international field study.

## Reason for the Policy

Having an emergency process for study abroad programs is an essential business process for the college and is critical for operational and financial planning of study abroad programs and international field study. This policy is in keeping with best practices in study abroad and is recommended by SUNY and national professional organizations. In addition, legal and regulatory adherence to the Clery Act and Title IX necessitate that a reporting mechanism and procedure for emergencies abroad is in place.

## Who is Responsible for this Policy

- The Office of International Programs (OIP)
- FIT Emergency Preparedness and Response Group (EPRG)
- The Dean of Students (DOS)

## Who is Affected by this Policy

- Resident Directors of FIT International Programs
- Faculty leading academic and field study programs abroad
- Employees accompanying students abroad
- Study abroad students, and their parents or guardians
- International field study program students and employees
- Program partners and partner institutions

## Definitions

N/A

## Principles

- **Incident Categories and Definitions:**

- **Disciplinary: A Violation of the FIT Student Code of Conduct**

Students are expected to conduct themselves in a manner consistent with their respective positions within the academic community and to comply with the directions of administrators, faculty, and staff who are acting in the performance of their duties.

- **Emergencies**

An emergency is any circumstance that poses a genuine risk or disturbance to the safety and well-being of program and college business participants. Emergencies include, but are not limited, the following types of events and incidents:

- Political/social turmoil or war;
- Imminent terrorist threat or attack;
- Natural or man-made disasters;
- Serious physical illness or injury;
- Pandemic outbreak;
- Mental/emotional illness;
- Accidents or assault;
- Sexual misconduct (Title IX or VAWA)<sup>1</sup>;
- Missing students and employees; and
- Student or employee death crisis at home such as family death or emergency, natural disasters, etc.

Sometimes emergencies are perceived rather than real. Perceived emergencies are situations in which there are no direct threats or harm to anyone associated with the programs or college business, but circumstances are perceived as threatening by students, families, college officials, or others. These types of emergencies must be addressed as they can affect people as strongly as real emergencies.

- **Levels of Emergency**

**Level 1: Non-acute Emergency** is an occurrence or the potential for an occurrence that requires a response beyond a routine capacity. It is an incident that requires the involvement/response of the OIP. Non-acute emergencies include, but are not limited to the following:

- Single, non-life-threatening illness or injury requiring hospitalization;
- Change of transportation modes/routes in cases where the new mode/route may pose a safety risk; and
- Significant change in itinerary when travel is within/to an area cautioned against by the U.S. Department of State's Country Specific Travel Advisories Information.

**Level 2: Acute Emergency** is an extraordinary event or the potential for an extraordinary event that requires a response beyond a routine capacity. It is a real emergency that

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<sup>1</sup> Title IX (a comprehensive federal law that protects people from discrimination based on sex), New York State Education Law Article 129-B "Enough is Enough" legislation, and Violence Against Women Act (VAWA).

warrants convening the Study Abroad and International Field Studies Emergency Response Team (ERT-Study Abroad), which will coordinate and report to the Emergency Preparedness and Response Group (EPRG), as needed. The ERT-Study Abroad will coordinate with the Emergency Communication Team when appropriate. These groups are described below. Acute emergencies include but are not limited to the following:

- Arrest or impending arrest;
- multiple illnesses or injuries which require hospitalization;
- sexual misconduct (Title IX or VAWA)<sup>2</sup>;
- death;
- natural or man-made catastrophe;
- threat to public welfare including bomb threats, protests/riots, hostage situation, individual violence, violent crimes, etc.;
- community health issues including infectious disease outbreaks; and
- terrorist threats or possibility of war in the proximity of the study abroad site.

- **Emergency Preparedness and Response Group (EPRG) and Emergency Response Team for Study Abroad and International Field Studies (ERT-Study Abroad)**

The EPRG, a standing committee at FIT, sets policy, and oversees planning and implementation of emergency measures that affect the whole FIT community the ERT-Study Abroad responds to the emergency, reports actions taken to the EPRG, and consults the EPRG on policy and procedures. The ERT-Study Abroad is comprised of representatives from Finance and Administration, Public Safety, EMSS, CER, Academic Affairs, the Office of the President, and the Office of International Programs. The ERT-Study Abroad consults with the Title IX or VAWA Coordinator, when appropriate. The ERT-Study Abroad provides ongoing support and general oversight during an emergency and decides the actions to be taken. The ERT-Study Abroad facilitates coordination and communication of response activities, monitors progress, consults, and reports to the ERPG. The ERT-Study Abroad keeps the President informed about an emergency situation via the Vice President for Academic Affairs. The Dean for International Education is the spokesperson for the ERT-Study Abroad.

## Responsibilities

- **Responsibilities of Participants**

Participants in FIT International Programs can have an important impact on their own health and safety through decisions they make before and during the program, and their day-to-day choices and behaviors. Participants should:

- Read and carefully consider all materials issued by program staff that relate to safety, health, legal, environmental, political, cultural and religious conditions in host countries;
- Consider their health and personal circumstances when applying for or accepting a place in a program;
- Make available to FIT accurate and complete physical and mental health information and any other personal data that is necessary in planning for a safe and healthy study-abroad experience;
- Assume responsibility for all the elements necessary for their personal preparation for the program and attend all program pre-travel and in-country orientation sessions;
- Sign up to receive U.S. embassy and State Department travel alerts for the host country;

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<sup>2</sup> Title IX/VAWA incidents will not be handled by the Emergency Response Team. These types of incidents are handled by the Title IX Coordinator/Affirmative Action Officer – see Sexual Misconduct and Response policy.

- Maintain appropriate insurance coverage and abide by any conditions imposed by the insurance carriers;
- Inform parents or guardians and families, and any others who may need to know, about their participation in the program, provide them with emergency contact information, and keep them informed on an ongoing basis;
- Understand and comply with the terms of participation, codes of conduct, and emergency procedures of the program;
- Obey host-country laws and be aware of local conditions and customs that may present health or safety risks when making daily choices and decisions;
- Behave in a manner that is respectful of the rights and well-being of others, and encourage others to behave in the same way as well;
- Accept responsibility for their own decisions and actions;
- Become familiar with the procedures for obtaining emergency healthcare under the FIT international policy or law enforcement services in the host country; and
- Follow all program policies for keeping program staff informed of their whereabouts and well-being

## Procedures

- **The Emergency Response Plan and Protocol**

The Emergency Response Plan and Protocol will be activated based on the incident categories as noted in section V., A. and B., of this policy. Items to be considered by the ERT are:

- Immediate measures to be taken to secure the safety of the program participants and on-site director/coordinator;
- Identification of other issues that may be consequences of the emergency;
- Appropriate steps to be taken on-site overseas and on campus;
- Necessary correspondence with program participants, staff members, host institutions, program providers, parents, media, and other constituencies;
- Lockdown plans until evacuation, if needed; and
- Suspension or cancellation of the on-going and/or future programs.

- **Emergency Preparedness Training and Orientation**

The Office of International Programs trains short-term program faculty leaders on appropriate responses including precautionary safety information, emergency procedures and contacts, the study abroad health insurance policy, and FIT protocol. The Dean of Students or his/her designee, Title IX Coordinator/Affirmative Action Officer, Health Services, and Counseling Center staff presents the training. OIP and faculty leaders also cover emergency readiness with students at pre-departure meeting for short-term faculty lead and exchange programs. Topics include emergency procedures, health insurance coverage, and culturally sensitive behavior. These topics are repeated after students arrive at their study abroad destinations.

## Violations

N/A

## Related Policies

- [Code of Student Conduct](#)
- [Sexual Misconduct Response](#)

## Related Documents

- [SUNY Clery and Title IX Procedures for Study Abroad](#)
- [Roles and Responsibilities for FIT in Italy and Faculty-Led/International Field Study Programs](#)
- [Roles and Responsibilities for FIT Exchange and Study Abroad Programs](#)
- [Step-by-Step Preparedness and Emergency Procedural Plan](#)
- [FIT Emergency Management Plan](#)
- [Response Checklist and Incident-Specific Questions](#)
- [Student Rights and Responsibilities](#)

## Contacts

- **FIT Contacts:**
  - **During Office Hours (9:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. Eastern Standard Time):**  
Office of International Programs (OIP)  
+1 (212) 217-5380  
  
If an urgent situation arises *outside of OIP office hours* and OIP needs to be contacted urgently, **please call the Dean for International Education or the designated OIP staff on call using the mobile emergency number: 646-957-1907.**
  - If a Level 2 Emergency occurs and the above are not reachable:  
Call FIT Security at **+1 (212) 217-7777**, and tell them that you have an emergency and need to speak to the FIT officer in charge.
- **Outside Contacts:**
  - [U.S. Dept. of State Overseas Citizens Services](#)  
Serious illness; death; financial crises; theft; or arrest  
1-888-407-4747  
1-202-501-4444
  - [U.S. Embassy or Consular Affairs for Appropriate Country](#)  
Public announcement; travel warning, etc.
  - [U.S. Dept. of State Office of Coordinator for Counterterrorism](#)  
Info concerning terrorist threat or action  
1-202-647-9892
  - [Center for Disease Control](#)  
Medical emergency; disease outbreak  
1-800-311-3435