

Health and Safety Incidents of Minnesota Students Studying Abroad

The Study Abroad Health and Safety data informs students and parents about the health and safety incidents during studying abroad. Minnesota legislation passed in 2015 aims to strengthen student safety by asking Minnesota colleges and universities with Study Abroad programs to report annually on:

- Deaths, accidents and illnesses of students as a result of and during program participation
- Country, primary program host and program type of each incident
- Whether the program complied with health and safety standards set by the nationally recognized Forum on Education Abroad or a similar standard



The Data

Data reported shows that studying abroad is safe for the overwhelming majority of Minnesota students. As both a percentage and count, very few study abroad participants experience a health or safety incident. Out of 9,314 study abroad participants in the 2018-19 academic year, only 43 were involved in an incident.

Over the five years of data collected to date (2015-2019), 0.32 percent of participants (123 out of 38,377 students) were involved in any type of incident. Over the same time period the highest number of incidents (hospitalizations) reported by a single college is 20. The rate of incidents is slightly higher (78 %) among participants in programs not taught by faculty of the home university.

Details of Incidents

All reported incidents to date were hospitalizations; no deaths were reported. For the period 2015-2019, with 123 incidents reported, the most-frequent known causes of hospitalization were gastrointestinal illnesses or bacterial/viral infections. Other hospitalizations with a known cause were the result of physical injury, rashes, animal bites, psychological illness, parasitic infections, urological conditions, respiratory illness, seizures, and dental conditions.

Locations of Incidents

While incidents involving study abroad participants occur on every continent, the majority of incidents occurred in Europe (43 percent) and South America (18 percent). Europe had the largest concentration of study abroad participants in 2018-19.

Study Abroad Health and Safety Resources for Students and Parents

The Office of Higher Education provides several resources to inform the public of conditions abroad that may affect their safety and security while studying abroad, including:

- Minnesota Secretary of State Study Abroad Safety Resources <http://www.sos.state.mn.us/study-abroad/>
- US State Department's Bureau of Consular Affairs: country-specific travel information <http://travel.state.gov/content/passports/en/country.html>
- Center for Disease Control's Traveler's Health country-specific safety reports <http://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/>

Study Abroad Standards

- Beginning October 11, 2018, The Forum on Education Abroad has convened a [Standards Update Working Group](#) with the intent of revising the *Standards of Good Practice for Education Abroad* in preparation for a 6th edition.
- On October 18, 2019, the consensus was reached on the 6th edition of the *Standards of Good Practice for Education Abroad*.
- The 6th edition of the *Standards of Good Practice*, will be officially released at the **16th Annual Conference** in Kansas City, Missouri, March 25-27, 2020. After their release, the 30-day appeals period will begin on April 1. Any individual materially and negatively affected by the 6th edition of the *Standards* will have the opportunity to appeal to the Standards Manager in writing during that time.
- For more information you can visit: <https://forumea.org/standards-development/>