The health and safety of all cultural exchange students in the BSIB program is of primary concern to all parties involved. These guidelines have been developed to provide useful and practical guidance to institutions, participants, and parents/guardians/families. Though no set of guidelines can guarantee the health and safety needs of each individual involved in an overseas exchange, these guidelines address issues that merit attention and thoughtful judgment. Although they address general considerations, they cannot possibly account for all the inevitable variations in actual cases that arise. Therefore, as specific situations arise, those involved must also rely upon their collective experience and judgment while considering the unique circumstances of each situation. The BSIB program pledges to follow the emergency preparedness processes and crisis response plan to the best of our abilities as situations arise.

Guidelines for Program Sponsors

To the extent reasonably possible, all program sponsors should endeavor to implement these guidelines as applicable. At the same time, it must be noted that the structure of exchange programs varies widely. The term “sponsors” refers to all the entities that together develop, offer, and administer programs. Sponsors include sending institutions, host institutions, and program administrators. The role of an organization in an exchange program varies considerably from case to case, and it is not possible to specify a division of efforts that will be applicable to all cases. All entities should apply the guidelines in ways consistent with their respective roles.

Program sponsors that rely heavily on collaboration of overseas institutions may exercise less direct control over specific program components. In such cases, sponsors are urged to work with their overseas partners to develop plans and procedures for operating consistently with these guidelines.

Program Sponsors will:

- Conduct periodic assessments of health and safety conditions for the program, and develop and maintain emergency preparedness processes and a crisis response plan.

- Provide health and safety information for prospective participants so that they and their parents/guardians/families can make informed decisions concerning preparation, participation and behavior while on the program.

- Provide clear information concerning aspects of home campus services and conditions that cannot be replicated at overseas locations.

- Provide orientation to participants prior to the program and as needed on site, which includes information on safety, health, legal, environmental, political, cultural, and religious conditions in the host country, dealing with health and safety issues, potential health and safety risks, and appropriate emergency response measures.

- Consider health and safety issues in evaluation the appropriateness of an individual's participation in a program.

- Either provide appropriate health and travel accident (emergency evacuation, repatriation) insurance to participants, or provide information about how to obtain appropriate coverage. Require participants to show evidence of appropriate coverage.
▪ Conduct appropriate inquiry regarding the potential health and safety risks of the local environment of the program, including program-sponsored accommodation, events, excursions and other activities, on an ongoing basis and provide information and assistance to participants and their parents / guardians / families as needed.

▪ Conduct appropriate inquiry regarding available medical and professional services, provide information for participants and their parents / guardians / families, and help participants to obtain the services they may need.

▪ Provide appropriate and ongoing health and safety training for program directors and staff, including guidelines with respect to intervention and referral, and working within the limitations of their own competencies.

▪ Communicate applicable codes of conduct and the consequences of noncompliance to participants. Take appropriate action when aware that participants are in violation.

▪ Obtain current and reliable information concerning health and safety risks, and provide that information to program administrators and participants.

▪ In cases of serious health problems, injury, or other significant health and safety circumstances, maintain good communication among all program sponsors and others who need to know.

▪ In the participant screening process, consider factors, such as disciplinary history, that may impact on the safety of the individual or group.

▪ Provide information for participants and their parents / guardians / families regarding when and where the sponsor’s responsibility ends, and the range of aspects of participants’ overseas experiences that are beyond the sponsor’s control.

Factors Beyond our Control

Please be aware that there is a point at which Northeastern University’s responsibility ends. Many aspects of your overseas experiences are beyond our control. Among other things we cannot:

▪ Guarantee or assure the safety of participants or eliminate all risks from the overseas environments.

▪ Monitor or control all of the daily personal decisions, choices, and activities of individual participants.

▪ Prevent participants from engaging in illegal, dangerous, or unwise activities.

▪ Assure that U.S. standards of due process apply in overseas legal proceedings or provide or pay for legal representation for participants.

▪ Assume responsibility for the actions of persons not employed or otherwise engaged by the program sponsor, for events that are not part of the program, or that are beyond the control of the sponsor and its subcontractors, or for situations that may arise due to the failure of a participant to disclose pertinent information.
Assure that home-country cultural values and norms will apply in the host country.

Guidelines for Participants

While overseas, you can have a major impact on your own health and safety through the decision you make before and during the program and by your day-to-day choices and behaviors.

You should:

- Read and carefully consider all materials issued by the sponsor that relate to safety, health, legal, environmental, political, cultural and religious conditions in host countries.
- Consider your physical and mental health and other personal circumstances when applying for or accepting a place in a program.
- Make available to the sponsor, subject to all applicable legal limitations and restrictions, accurate and complete physical and mental health information and any other personal data that is necessary in planning for a safe and healthy overseas experience.
- Assume responsibility for all the elements necessary for your personal preparation for the program and participate fully in orientations.
- Obtain and maintain appropriate insurance coverage and abide by any conditions imposed by the carriers.
- Inform parents / guardians / families, and any others who may need to know, about your 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.
- Be aware of local conditions and customs that may present health or safety risks when making daily choices and decisions. Promptly express any health or safety concerns to the program staff or other appropriate individuals before and/or during the program.
- Behave in a manner that is respectful of the rights and well being of others, and encourage others to behave in a similar manner.
- Accept responsibility for your own decisions and actions.
- Avoid illegal drugs and excessive and irresponsible consumption of alcohol.
- Obey host country laws and be respectful of customs.
- Become familiar with the procedures for obtaining emergency health and law enforcements services in the host country.
- Follow the program policies for keeping program staff informed of your whereabouts and well being.
Guidelines for Parents / Guardians / Families

Parents, guardians, and families can play an important role in the health and safety of participants by helping them make decisions and by influencing their behavior overseas.

When appropriate, parents / guardians / families should:

- Be informed about and involved in the decision of the participant to enroll in a particular program.

- Obtain and carefully evaluate participant program materials as well as health and safety information related to the program, as provided by the sponsor, the Centers for Disease Control, the U.S. Department of State, and other sources.

- Engaged the participant in a thorough discussion of safety and behavior issues, insurance needs, and emergency procedures related to living abroad. Safety issues you may want to mention: care against being the victim of pickpockets, the danger of late-night drinking.

- Be responsive to requests from the program sponsor for information regarding the participant.

- Keep in touch with the participant.

- Be aware that privacy laws and other constraints may place restrictions on our ability to provide information to you.