Special Release and Hold Harmless Acknowledgment and Agreement for Students Whose Study Abroad Program is Impacted by COVID-19

Due to the unprecedented, widespread, and sustained transmission of a respiratory illness caused by COVID-19 (commonly known as the “coronavirus”), the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (“CDC”) issued a Global COVID-19 Outbreak Notice at an Alert-Level 2, Special Precautions for High-Risk Travelers--Ongoing Community Transmission, a Warning-Level 3, Avoid Nonessential Travel--Widespread Community Transmission for China, Iran, most European countries, the United Kingdom and Ireland, and the U.S. Department of State (“State Department”) issued a Global Level 4 Health Advisory - Do Not Travel urging all U.S. residents to arrange for an immediate return to the United States or to prepare to remain abroad for an indefinite period of time.

Accordingly, the University of North Carolina System Office directed all UNC System institutions to suspend all study abroad programs and recall our students studying abroad. As a result of the risks to the health and safety of our participants and other members of our community, and in accordance with the UNC System Office directive and the University Restricted Travel Policy, on March 17, 2020, North Carolina State University (“University”) suspended all University-affiliated international travel around the world for students, faculty, and staff and strongly advised all students participating in any Study Abroad program or university-affiliated activity anywhere in the world, to return to the United States (or your home country) and, for the safety of our communities, to take certain post-travel precautions (including self-quarantining).

We understand from you that after carefully considering the warnings and significant risks associated with COVID-19 and travel and study abroad, you have decided not to return home at this time. In making this decision, you acknowledge and agree as follows:

1. There are significant risks associated with COVID-19 throughout the world. Those risks include, but are not limited to, the following:

   - Potentially increased exposure to COVID-19.
   - Medical facilities may become significantly strained and you may only have limited access to healthcare or none at all.
   - You may face mandatory quarantine in the country you are visiting. Quarantines may impact your access to food and other essentials, and of course, your ability to return home.
   - Airlines are reducing and cancelling flights.
   - Governments are closing borders and not allowing entry or re-entry.
1. The United States may delay or restrict your re-entry.
   - You may lose access to the host institution’s housing and health and safety supports, and you will be responsible for providing and caring for yourself, including possibly securing new accommodations, meals, and new international health insurance coverage. Even if your program continues, your host institution may also have to reduce or eliminate its operations and be unable to provide the same or any level of support.
   - You may encounter issues with your visa or residency permit if you cannot return to the U.S. before its expiration.

2. You have read the current Travel Advisories from the United States Department of State (“State Department”) (https://www.state.gov/coronavirus/) and the Travel Notices from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (“CDC”) (https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-nCoV/index.html) related to COVID-19, as well as communications provided by the University (https://www.ncsu.edu/coronavirus/), and you have carefully considered the risks of remaining in your current country location at this time. **You understand that the State Department has issued a Global Level 4 Health Advisory - Do Not Travel, that a Level 4 advisory is the highest and most severe level issued by the State Department, and that the State Department has advised that you should arrange for an immediate return to the United States, unless you are prepared to remain abroad for an indefinite period of time.**

3. You will continue to check the above-referenced resources and any other guidance from relevant authorities for further developments and any changes in the country location’s travel warnings as the risks continue to evolve, and new guidelines and recommendations are frequently issued.

4. You have represented to the University that you are fully aware of the significant risks in remaining in and traveling within and outside your country location, and that conditions around the world may rapidly change for the worse.

5. The health care systems of countries where the COVID-19 outbreak is currently occurring are becoming increasingly strained as the outbreak grows. You acknowledge that in the event you require medical care for any reason, access to medical care and supplies may be severely reduced or inaccessible, therefore placing you at additional risk. **You acknowledge that there is currently no cure or immunization for COVID-19 and that infection with COVID-19 may cause serious illness and, in some cases, death.** You acknowledge that claims submitted under personal insurance policies may be denied, and the University cannot guarantee insurance company coverage of a claim.

6. The University has been informed that evacuation from countries with COVID-19 outbreaks is not currently possible through its international travel insurance provider (GeoBlue) and may not be available through other providers, whether you are exhibiting COVID-19 symptoms or not. The University cannot assure you that timely emergency evacuation will be possible.

7. The United States and other countries have taken formal measures to protect their citizens
and residents to prevent the spread of an outbreak by requiring quarantine, isolation, or screening of people entering or exiting the country or by closing their borders. It is possible that departure from the country could be delayed and may even be barred, and that the United States may delay or restrict your re-entry. You understand that if you become infected with COVID-19 and are evacuated, you may be sent to a hospital or other facility specifically designated and equipped to treat COVID-19 cases that could be outside of North Carolina.

8. Many of our partner institutions have offered alternative arrangements to allow for the remainder of the coursework to be completed online. You understand that you are not required to study abroad right now and that the University offers other options for study abroad at other times.

9. You confirm that your decision to remain outside the United States is wholly voluntary. You understand that the University cannot guarantee that your academic credit, housing arrangements, financial aid, timely graduation, travel plans, and other academic and financial considerations will not be adversely impacted as a result of that decision.

10. You agree to follow current CDC guidance instructing travelers to stay home for a period of 14 days from departure of a CDC Level 2 or 3 country or if you believe you are ill with the most common symptoms (fever and cough or shortness of breath) of COVID-19 or if you have been exposed to someone with COVID-19. These guidelines are revised regularly, and you agree to stay abreast of updates and follow all guidance from the CDC. You agree that, upon your return from a country outside the United States, you will not return to campus or engage in any campus in-person activities for at least 14 days during your self-quarantine. Additionally, you will follow all campus instructions regarding when students are allowed to return to campus.

11. You understand that the University may issue additional protocols and requirements from time to time which are designed to address health risks to you and other members of the NC State community, and if issued, you agree to take all reasonable measures to comply with these requirements.

12. You agree to remain in frequent contact with your home department at NC State and via email with the NC State University Study Abroad Office, and you will reassess your stay outside of the United States if the security risk increases.

13. You agree to use good personal judgment and exercise caution throughout your travel.

14. You understand that the University has established resources available at https://www.ncsu.edu/coronavirus/ to inform and update you regarding COVID-19.

To the fullest extent permissible by law, you hereby assume, knowingly and voluntarily, all risks of your remaining in your county location. You (including your heirs or assigns and personal representatives) hereby release, hold harmless, and forever discharge the University (here and hereinafter defined to include any current or former trustee, faculty member, officer, employee, agent, or student, whether in their professional or personal capacity or otherwise) from any and all liabilities, damages, expenses, claims, demands, actions, and causes of action whatsoever arising
out of or related to any loss, property damage, or personal injury, including death, that may be sustained by you or to any property belonging to you while you remain in the country.

Acknowledgement: On behalf of myself, and my heirs, assigns, and legal representatives, I have read, understand, and entered into this document. I acknowledge that I am at least eighteen (18) years of age. I consent to the application of the laws of North Carolina to govern, interpret, and enforce this document including all rights and obligations arising from or related to this document, without regard to conflict of law principles.

Acknowledged by:

___________________________________  __________________________________
Student Signature                  Parent/Guardian Signature
(not required for graduate or financially independent students)

___________________________________  __________________________________
Printed Name                        Date

___________________________________  __________________________________
Date                                Date