

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 9,399 study abroad participants in the 2016-17 academic year, only 15 were involved in an incident.

Over the three years of data collected to date (2014-2017), 0.27 percent of participants (80 out of 29,630 students) were involved in any type of incident. The highest number of incidents reported by a single college was 13 from 2014-2017. The rate of incidents is slightly higher (0.74%) 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 2014-2017, with 80 incidents reported, the most-frequent known causes of hospitalization were gastrointestinal illnesses (16 incidents) or bacterial/viral infections (12 incidents). 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. Twenty-three hospitalizations has no known cause reported.

Locations of Incidents

While incidents involving study abroad participants occur on every continent, the majority of incidents occurred in Europe (29 percent) and Asia (28 percent). Europe had the largest concentration of study abroad participants in 2016-17.

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/>