Travel Abroad Information Session

April 2024
Introduction

Presentation covers top travel abroad tips for faculty and PIs.
  • Not comprehensive but highlights of topics that we’ve heard may be of interest

We have experts from various offices to present lightning talks and answer questions
  • There will be contact information for each of the topics/offices
  • If unsure, please reach out to internationalhelp@mit.edu
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Research Security and Export Control

Greg Moffatt
Chief Research Compliance Officer
Office of the VP for Research
Background - Export Control and Other Restrictions

Export Control

• Due to foreign policy and national security concerns, U.S. government has export control regulations in place. Controls vary by country, institutions, etc. and can restrict what is exported. Restrictions can be non-obvious.

• Engagements with colleagues outside the U.S. are subject to export control laws. Everything that crosses the U.S. border is considered an export: Products, equipment, materials, software, technology, information, and “services.”*

• However, publicly available information and results of fundamental research are generally not covered by export control regulations.

* Services are broadly defined. Examples include instruction, advice, giving a keynote speech, accepting an award, etc.

Other Restrictions

Interactions with certain international entities and persons are restricted

Sanctions by Statute or Executive Order:

• Iran, N. Korea, Syria, Russia-controlled Crimea, Cuba
• Other countries of concern: Russia, Belarus, Russia-occupied Ukraine areas, and Venezuela (government-connected entities)

Denied/restricted party restrictions:

• Prohibitions are specific to persons or institutions—Entity and Unverified Lists, SDNs (Specially Designated Nationals), etc.

Entity/Unverified Lists:

• Imposes individual export licensing requirements that are not otherwise in place. Practical impact - cannot receive items that others in the same country can without a license being obtained.
We Can Help – Please Contact Us

Why:
• Some institutions (and individuals) are restricted for export control or other risks associated with them. These are not always obvious, but MIT’s export control office can help.

When:
• Traveling to a high-risk country (Check U.S. State Department Travel Advisories and/or the export control office)
• Considering an informal collaboration* with person or entity in high-risk country
• Taking technology (physical item or prototype) with you anywhere out of the country
• Anytime you have concerns or questions

How:
• Contact the export control office
  • Janet C. Johnston (978 590 0974); Kate Donovan (617 715 2886)
  • https://research.mit.edu/integrity-and-compliance/export-control
• Use the Informal International Collaborations tool https://iic.mit.edu/iic/#/home

*Please note: for formal collaborations where MIT is a signatory to an agreement, assessment of these collaborations is addressed through normal MIT processes
General Travel Advice

Laptops/Mobile Phones
• Don’t take anything controlled with you
• In presenting, stick to previously published material
• Be aware of what kind of data you receive through your mobile phone
• Retain “effective control” over phones, laptops, etc. (on your person, in hotel safe, etc. Checked baggage is NOT deemed to constitute effective control.)

Other Equipment
• It is strongly advised to ship material --through third-party carriers to ensure proper compliance with EHS regulations, export control clearances, liability if items are damaged, and other procedures.
• Shipping with intermediate stops can be an export to those countries!

Field Work
• University research activity done outside the U.S. may not qualify for the Fundamental Research Exclusion. Any physical items or prototype deployed in a foreign country is an export – please contact export control for assistance.

For more details:
https://research.mit.edu/integrity-and-compliance/export-control/scholarly-activities/international-travel
Interactions at Airports and International Borders

Matthew Fucci
Counsel
Office of the General Counsel
Researchers Are Getting Stopped at Airports and Borders

We observe that the majority of prolonged border stoppages for researchers and students are a result of U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) agents questioning either:

(1) **Data** or other information related to the traveler’s area of research contained on electronic devices or

(2) **Research materials or specialized equipment** being carried by the traveler
How to Reduce Your Risk at the Border

Carry only what you need

(1) Contact your local IT support provider or IS&T to ask for a **loaner laptop and/or mobile device** that can be configured with minimum software and data needed.

(2) Instead of hand-carrying research materials or specialized equipment, you should **ship research materials and equipment separately to your destination**.
Additional Documentation

• You may also choose to secure and carry with you a letter from your supervisor or department head noting the data you may be traveling with and the purpose of taking it abroad

• This letter helps answer questions a CBP agent or other border agent may ask and gives them a contact person at MIT to verify the information

• A sample letter is available on the OGC website: https://ogc.mit.edu/template-travel-authorization-letter
If You Get Stopped and Questioned in the U.S. (Laws Elsewhere Vary)

- CBP agents do not need a special reason to search or question you at the border.
- Not a criminal detention, so **you do not have the right to contact an attorney** (unless you are being placed under arrest).
- **You do not have to assist in a search** by giving device passwords (although CBP may seize your devices); You have right to remain silent.
- **Ask for a receipt** if CBP seizes a device (which they may retain for weeks or months).
- Failure to cooperate may affect immigration or visa process for non-U.S. persons.
More Details Available on OGC Website

https://ogc.mit.edu/latest/international-travel-preparation

• PDF “pocket reference cards” available with key points that can be carried when traveling

https://ogc.mit.edu/template-travel-authorization-letter
Device Security and Loaner Program

Kyle Filipe
Director of IT Support Services
IS&T
Secure Data Travel Recommendations - Highlights

Before Travel:
• Backup your data. IS&T makes CrashPlan available for free to the community
• If don’t have currently: encrypt your devices; install security applications (Crowdstrike, Sophos, VPN client)
• Bring the least amount of information and data on the fewest devices possible. Store potentially sensitive material on an encrypted flash drive
• Consider new loaner device program (more to come)

During Travel:
• Use MIT’s VPN (if not prohibited) to create a more secure connection between your devices and the resources you need to access
• Do not use unknown USB drives
• Avoid downloading and using apps that sync data, and instead use outlook.com or owa.mit.edu for email, Dropbox on the web, etc.

After Travel:
• If you traveled with a loaner device, or wiped your devices before traveling:
  • Copy any data you’ve modified onto an external drive
  • Scan the data for viruses. IS&T makes Sophos anti-virus software available for free for the community
• Reset passwords
A New, FREE Loaner Device Program

Why should I borrow loaner devices?
• Using loaner device is more straight forward than the complex process of configuring your personal device
• Devices are already configured with settings to achieve a more secure computing experience
• Less risk with loss/loss/theft or confiscation. IS&T can lock or wipe the devices to protect the data they contain under certain scenarios.

What devices are being offered?
• Travelers may request up to one laptop, one tablet, and one phone (free cellular data plans available if needed).
• A base suite of apps are currently installed on all issued devices. Additional apps may be added to devices upon request; we are flexible and will review all app requests to ensure the devices are able to support your work

Who can borrow devices?
• Faculty, staff, and students

When should I borrow devices?
• Can borrow anytime you are traveling abroad (business or personal) and encourage this
• MIT strongly recommends borrowing devices when traveling to any destination with a Level 3 or higher travel advisory designated by the US Department of State.

How do I submit a request?
• Visit IS&T’s Secure Devices for International Travel website to learn more and submit your request.
Additional IT Guidance

- Travel and Technology guidance in the Knowledge Base
- Secure Travel Recommendations for “High Risk” destinations
- Secure Devices for International Travel IS&T loaner program
- Protecting Information at MIT

Questions? Email ist-loaners@mit.edu
Personal Travel Safety and Security

Todd Holmes
Program Manager, International Safety and Security
MIT Emergency Management
Top Things to Know for International Travel Safety

Key Resource: International SOS (ISOS)

- A global medical and security assistance company that provides support services to the MIT community while abroad. Examples:
  - Appropriate medical care recommendations
  - Over the phone interpretation services
  - Medical or other evacuations if needed
  - Not insurance – check with your medical insurance provider on overseas coverage
- Provides pre-trip or in-trip risk preparedness advice
- Contact 24 hours a day, year-round by phone (+1 215 942 8478) or through ISOS app
Top Things to Know for International Travel Safety cont

- Pre-trip travel risk planning
  - Review the U.S. State Department [Destination guide](#) and [Travel Advisories](#).
  - MIT [high-risk travel destination list](#) is also available.
  - Download the International SOS assistance app ([app.internationalsos.com](http://app.internationalsos.com)).
  - Reach out to [Todd Holmes](#) for consultation, advice, and planning.

- Incident response
  - After addressing immediate emergency, **contact ISOS**. They will facilitate and activate resources needed for the situation and assist with questions.

- Additional information available:
  - Guide on “[Preparing to Travel Safely](#)”
  - [gsr.mit.edu/travel-safety-abroad](http://gsr.mit.edu/travel-safety-abroad)
Other Resources

Magdalene Lee
Director Global Support
Office of the Vice Provost for International Activities
## Other Resources

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<td>Field research or work</td>
<td>EHS can assist in determining your field activity safety needs. Planning information and factsheets available</td>
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<tr>
<td>Travel health</td>
<td>MIT Travel Health Clinic can provide advice, immunizations and specialized medications for travel abroad</td>
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<td>Cultural resources</td>
<td>MIT has licensed Aperian’s GlobeSmart, an online resource containing culture guides for over 100 countries</td>
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<td>Trip leader</td>
<td>Taking students abroad? MISTI can provide support and advice. Students can participate in their health and safety training (<a href="mailto:misti@mit.edu">misti@mit.edu</a>)</td>
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Key Takeaways

Research Security and Export Control
• Export control regulations vary by country and institution. Interactions with certain international entities and persons are restricted.
• When in doubt, contact Export Control Office or use Informal International Collaboration tools

Interactions at Airports and International Borders
• To reduce the chance of a prolonged border stoppage, carry only what you need when traveling internationally and obtain a department head or supervisor letter to take with you

Device Security and Loaner Program
• Secure your data and devices before your trip
• Get free loaner devices when traveling internationally and especially to destinations with a Level 2+ travel advisory designated by DoS

Personal Travel Safety and Security
• Download ISOS App prior to your trip. Contact International SOS during emergencies while traveling internationally.
• Contact Todd Holmes for pre-trip advice and consultation
Conclusion

Thank you for your time!

All information, including slides, can be found at the MIT Global Support Resources Website ( aggregator of international topics and information at MIT)

Website: gsr.mit.edu

Email: Internationalhelp@mit.edu

We would like your feedback to improve this program