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Risk Assessment Inventory List

SOUTH AFRICA

Safety/Security and Health While Abroad Is Everyone's Responsibility

Introduction

This document highlights several risks associated with studying and living in South Africa. The review of risks in this document is limited in scope and reflects EAP's current information; circumstances may change over time.

Parents and students have a role to play in minimizing potential dangers. Please share this list with your parents and discuss a personal safety plan for your time abroad.

EAP cannot guarantee the safety of participants or ensure that risk will not, at times, be significantly greater than on a UC campus. EAP cannot monitor the daily personal decisions, choices, and activities of individual participants any more than is the case on the home campus. This list identifies some of the most common hazards associated with particular activities or the environment (e.g., extreme heat or cold, endemic disease, transportation, crime, violence, political instability, lack of electricity, lack of water, etc.). Voluntary risks are those associated with activities that students may decide to undertake (e.g., driving a car, riding a motorcycle, smoking, taking public transportation, abusing drugs/alcohol, etc.). Involuntary risks are those associated with activities that happen to students that are out of their control. (e.g., acts of nature such as being struck by lightning, fires, floods, tornados, etc., and exposure to contaminants, etc.)

United States Department of State (DOS), Overseas Security Advisory Council (OSAC), World Health Organization (WHO), U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), South African Department of Health, Australian Trade Commission, U.K. Foreign and Commonwealth Office, EAP Annual Reports, UCT, UKZN, UC-Berkeley Campus Police Department, United Nations, iJET Intelligent Risk Systems, and World Bank were used as sources for the following risk assessment.

Consider the following hazards and take preventive measures according to the hazards that have been identified.

Health

All students are required to get a health clearance and a travel clinic consultation for South Africa. The [U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#) advice for travelers recommends the following:

Vaccine-Preventable Diseases

Vaccination or Disease	Recommendations or Requirements for Vaccine-Preventable Diseases
Routine	Recommended if you are not up-to-date with routine shots such as, measles/mumps/rubella (MMR) vaccine, diphtheria/pertussis/tetanus (DPT) vaccine, etc.
Hepatitis A or immune globulin (IG)	Recommended for all unvaccinated people traveling to or working in countries with an intermediate or high level of hepatitis A virus infection (see map) where exposure might occur through food or water. Cases of travel-related hepatitis A can also occur in travelers to developing countries with “standard” tourist itineraries, accommodations, and food consumption behaviors.
Hepatitis B	Recommended for all unvaccinated persons traveling to or working in countries with intermediate to high levels of endemic HBV transmission (see map) and who might be exposed to blood or body fluids, have sexual contact with the local population, or be exposed through medical treatment, such as for an accident, and for all adults requesting protection from HBV infection.
Typhoid	Recommended for all unvaccinated people traveling to or working in Southern Africa, especially if visiting smaller cities, villages, or rural areas and staying with friends or relatives where exposure might occur through food or water.
Rabies	Recommended for travelers spending a lot of time outdoors, especially in rural areas, involved in activities such as bicycling, camping, hiking, or work. Also, children are considered at higher risk because they tend to play with animals and may not report bites.
Polio	Recommended for adult travelers who have received a primary series with either inactivated poliovirus vaccine (IPV) or oral polio vaccine (OPV). They should receive another dose of IPV before departure.

MULTI-DRUG RESISTANT TB (MDR-TB) AND EXTREME-DRUG RESISTANT TB (XDR-TB)

The World Health Organisation (WHO) has reported that the world is currently experiencing the highest rates of drug-resistant Tuberculosis (TB) to date.

Multi-drug resistant tuberculosis (MDR-TB) is present in all parts of South Africa. In 2006, the World Health Organization ranked South Africa fifth among the world’s 22 high-burden TB countries. Tuberculosis (TB) is an infectious disease caused by bacteria whose scientific name is *Mycobacterium tuberculosis*. TB most commonly affects the lungs but also can involve almost any organ of the body. In the United States, it is estimated that 10-15 million people are infected with the TB bacteria and 22,000 new cases of TB occur each year.

XDR-TB, or Extensive Drug Resistant TB (also referred to as Extreme Drug Resistance) is MDR-TB that is also resistant to three or more of the six classes of second-line drugs. Recent findings from a survey conducted by WHO and CDC on data from 2000-2004 found that XDR-TB has been identified in all regions of the world but is most frequent in the countries of the former Soviet Union and in Asia. In the United States, 4% of MDR-TB cases met the criteria for XDR-TB. Separate data on a recent outbreak of XDR-TB in an HIV-positive population in Kwazulu-Natal in South Africa was characterized by alarmingly high mortality rates.

Risk Assessment

- In general, TB is a preventable disease.
- Anyone who shares air with a person with infectious TB disease of the lungs or larynx is at risk, although TB is not usually spread by brief contact. TB is spread when another person inhales one or more of these particles and becomes infected with TB. Usually, to become infected, a person has to spend a relatively long time in a closed environment where the air was contaminated by a person with untreated tuberculosis who was coughing and who had numerous *M. tuberculosis* organisms (or tubercle bacilli) in secretions from the lungs or larynx.
- With rare exceptions, TB is infectious only when it occurs in the lungs or larynx.
- Infection is generally transmitted through the air; therefore, there is virtually no danger of its being spread by dishes, linens, and other items that are touched, or by most food products. However, it can be transmitted through unpasteurized milk or milk products (e.g., some cheeses) obtained from infected cattle (1).
- Drug-susceptible TB and MDR TB are spread the same way. TB germs are put into the air when a person with TB disease of the lungs or throat coughs, sneezes, and speaks. Transmission of tuberculosis is a recognized risk to patients in health-care facilities; in particular for health care workers. The magnitude of the risk varies considerably by the type of health-care facility, the prevalence of TB in the community, the patient population served, the health-care worker's occupational group, and the effectiveness of TB infection-control interventions.
- The risk factors for acquiring TB include close-contact situations, international travel, alcohol and IV drug abuse, and certain diseases (e.g., diabetes, cancer, HIV, etc.) and occupations (e.g., health care workers).
- Documented sites of XDR-TB include crowded hospitals, prisons, homeless shelters, and other settings where susceptible persons are exposed to infected persons with TB disease.
- There is little danger in getting TB from the TB patient who is being treated, is taking his or her medication continuously, and is responding well. The drugs usually make the patient noninfectious within weeks.

Risk Mitigation for Students

- If you are immunocompromised, talk to your doctor before departure.
- Avoid exposure to known MDR TB patients in closed or crowded places such as hospitals, prisons, or homeless shelters.
- Keep your immune system healthy.
- Experts advise getting a skin test annually if you have HIV or another disease that weakens your immune system, live or work in a prison or nursing home, are a health care worker, or have a substantially increased risk of exposure to the disease.

HIV/AIDS

AIDS and HIV infection occur worldwide. However, South Africa is currently experiencing one of the most severe AIDS epidemics in the world. At the end of 2007, there were approximately 5.7 million people living with HIV in South Africa, and almost 1,000 AIDS deaths occurring every day. With statistics showing that almost one in five adults are infected, HIV is widespread in a sense that can be difficult to imagine for those living in less-affected countries. HIV is sometimes seen as being a disease of the poor. In South Africa, there is some correlation between extreme poverty and high HIV prevalence, although HIV is prevalent across all sectors of society.

Risk Assessment

- Both men and women can become infected and can give the virus to someone else. HIV is passed from one person to another through blood-to-blood and sexual contact with someone who is infected with HIV. Also, an HIV-infected woman can pass the virus to her baby during pregnancy or during birth as well as through breastfeeding. Refer to [CDC](#) for more information.

- Rape plays a significant role in the high prevalence of HIV among women in South Africa. Although HIV prevention campaigns encourage people to use condoms and have fewer sexual partners, women and girls in South Africa are often unable to negotiate safer sex.
- Factors to consider in assessing risk include the extent of direct contact with blood or other potentially infectious secretions (blood, semen and/or vaginal fluid, breast milk) and the extent of sexual contact with potentially infected persons or with persons whose HIV infection status is unknown.
- Many persons may be infected and be unaware of their status. Therefore, if you engage in sexual contact, you may be unknowingly at risk from an infected sex partner.
- Assess and take ownership of your personal behaviors; do not choose high-risk behaviors,
- The South African government safety measures to protect the blood supply are increasing, but at this time, the blood supply is not considered to be reliably safe.
- HIV cannot be spread in the following ways:
 - ▶ Shaking hands, hugging, or casual kissing
 - ▶ Coughs or sneezes, sweat or tears
 - ▶ Mosquitoes, toilet seats, door knob, drinking fountain
 - ▶ Eating food prepared or handled by an infected person
 - ▶ Everyday contact with HIV-infected persons at school, work, home or anywhere else

Risk Mitigation for Students

- Discuss non-blood alternatives with your physician before departure during the EAP health clearance appointment.
- Students should (when medically prudent) avoid use of unscreened blood-clotting factor concentrates or concentrates of uncertain purity. If transfusion is necessary, the blood should be tested, if possible, for HIV antibody by appropriately trained laboratory technicians using a reliable test.
- Students with insulin-dependent diabetes, hemophilia, or other conditions that necessitate routine or frequent injections are advised to carry a supply of syringes, needles, and disinfectant swabs (e.g., alcohol wipes) sufficient to last their entire stay abroad. Before traveling, students must request documentation of the medical necessity for traveling with these items (e.g., a doctor's letter) in case official inspection personnel at ports of departure/entry question their need.
- Exercise caution at all times to avoid serious accidents or injuries that could require a blood transfusion.
- Do not have unprotected sex under any circumstance.
- To avoid infection through sex, the only sure way is not to have anal, vaginal or oral sexual intercourse or to have sex only with someone who is not infected and who has sex only with you. Latex condoms, when used consistently and correctly, are highly effective in preventing heterosexual sexual transmission of HIV.
- Exercise appropriate precautions if engaging in activities that expose you to risk of infection
- Do not impair your judgment with drugs or alcohol.
- Should an incident occur in which you suspect you were exposed to HIV, you should immediately seek immediate medical assistance, and notify the EAP Academic Liaison Officer and the local university clinic. Do not delay as the first 72 hours are critical.
- Even though a vaccine is not available to prevent infection with HIV, all South African universities have thorough protocols for handling possible HIV exposure or infection.

MALARIA

While most of South Africa is malaria free, malaria risk exists throughout the year in rural low-altitude areas of Northern (Limpopo) and Mpumalanga provinces, including Kruger National Park and neighboring game reserves. Risk also exists in the coastal lowlands of KwaZulu-Natal north of the Tugela River (including in Zululand, but excluding urban areas of Richards Bay). In all risk areas, risk is much lower from June to September. Visitors should prepare accordingly and use malaria prophylaxis. For information on malaria, its prevention, protection from insect bites, and anti-malarial drugs, please visit the [CDC travelers' health web site](#).

Risk assessment

- Students could get sick, temporarily or permanently.
- Malaria is characterized by fever and influenza-like symptoms, including chills, headache, muscle pain, and malaise; these symptoms can occur at intervals.
- Medical complications are a possibility.
- Students who have had malaria before, can get it again and so preventive measures are still necessary.
- No vaccine is currently available.
- No method can protect completely against the risk for contracting malaria.

Risk mitigation for students

- Students are required to attend pre-departure Travel Health Clinics at their campus Student Health Center to understand about the health risks of this disease, get necessary immunizations, and learn how diseases are transmitted. During a travel clinic, students are advised to avoid areas and behaviors that would expose them to greater risk of infection.
- Malaria transmission occurs primarily between dusk and dawn because of the nocturnal feeding habits of Anopheles mosquitoes. Students must follow protective measures to reduce contact with mosquitoes, especially during these hours. Such measures include remaining in well-screened areas, using mosquito bed nets (preferably insecticide-treated nets), and wearing clothes that cover most of the body. Additionally, students should be advised to purchase insect repellent for use on exposed skin. The most effective repellent against a wide range of vectors is DEET (N, N-diethylmetatoluamide), an ingredient in many commercially available insect repellents. The actual concentration of DEET varies widely among repellents. DEET formulations as high as 50% are recommended for adults.
- Students not staying in well-screened or air-conditioned rooms are advised to use a pyrethroid-containing flying-insect spray in living and sleeping areas during evening and nighttime hours.
- Students should understand behaviors to minimize exposure to disease-causing vectors. Taking an appropriate drug regimen and carefully following anti-mosquito measures will help prevent malaria.
- EAP student health insurance provides adequate coverage and medical evacuation coverage, if medically necessary.

RABIES

Rabies is found on all continents except Antarctica and is endemic in most African countries. Rabies is a preventable viral disease of mammals most often transmitted through the bite of a rabid animal.

Risk assessment

- People usually get rabies from the bite of a rabid animal. It is also possible, but quite rare, that people may get rabies if infectious material from a rabid animal, such as saliva, gets directly into their eyes, nose, mouth, or a wound.
- The risk of rabies in an encounter with an animal and the precautions necessary to prevent rabies are the same as they are in the United States.

Risk mitigation for students

- Consult with a health care professional during the required EAP travel consultation.
- Consider getting a rabies vaccine if your activities will put you in contact with animals (approximately \$160 at UC Student Health Services)
- It is always prudent to avoid approaching any wild or domestic animals
- Do not handle or pet animals, especially stray dogs and cats
- If you are bitten or scratched, wash the wound immediately with soap and water (and povidone iodine, if available), and seek medical attention immediately to determine if mediation or anti-rabies vaccine is needed. Immediate local treatment will substantially reduce the risk of rabies.

MEDICAL FACILITIES

Risk assessment

- The standard of medical facilities throughout South Africa varies. Private medical facilities are very good in urban areas and in the vicinity of some game parks, but may be limited elsewhere.
- Most doctors and hospitals will expect payment in cash, regardless of whether students have travel health insurance.
- 24-hour emergency wards and helicopter emergency assist services are available.

Risk mitigation for students

- The EAP student health insurance adequately covers medical evacuation from South Africa to the U.S. or to a country with suitable facilities, if medically necessary.
- The EAP Liaison Officer and host institution International Office have a list of medical professionals.
- Students need to be prepared for the inevitable cultural differences in medical services.
- Students who need a particular type of medical care should find out in advance whether such care is available.
- Does the student take any medications or have any pre-existing medical conditions? Students must understand that laws governing availability of medications vary widely. Prescription medications are often not available in the needed formulations or strengths. Students may want to consider bringing a supply sufficient for their stay abroad.
- Students and parents should inform themselves about health management while in South Africa. Students should discuss options with their physician or health care provider. For example, does student have any allergies, such as to eggs, milk or to antibiotics that could cause problems during the trip?
- Students with diabetes, or other chronic conditions, need to consult carefully with a physician in the U.S. before departure. For example, some medical devices, such as insulin pumps, may not be available. Students requiring these devices should take extras. In addition, certain formulations of drugs, such as insulin, may not be available. Be aware of alternative substitute formulations. There are instances where “type A” of insulin is available locally, but, not “type B” or “type C,” which may include the kind that a student may currently be taking.
- If the student needs to keep medicine/medical equipment refrigerated, access to a freezer/refrigerator for some medical equipment/medication may be difficult. The student dorms are not equipped with fridges or freezers. Summer months are quite warm and humid in South Africa and there is no air conditioning in the classrooms or dormitories.
- The UC Study Center Liaison Officer or host institution International Office will be present to assist students if they get sick or injured.
- Students should complete all routine and required medical exams before coming to South Africa and obtain all required and recommended immunization.
- Students should follow advice from UC Student Health Center Travel Clinic consultations.

The U.S. Department of State includes the following information in the [South Africa Consular Information Sheet](#). Private medical facilities are good in urban areas and near game parks, but they may be limited elsewhere. Pharmacies are well stocked and the equivalent to most American medicines is available.

MENTAL HEALTH

Refer to the [Mental Health Consumer Information](#) website for more information.

According to the South African Department of Health, mental health services form part of integrated comprehensive Primary Health Care. The service seeks to improve mental health and social wellbeing of individuals and communities. All clinics have regular visits (for patient care, training, supervision and support) from dedicated mental health or psychiatric nurses from health centers, hospitals or mobile teams based in the district. All clinics have access (by referral or by periodic clinic visits) to specialist mental health expertise (psychiatrists, psychologists, occupational therapists) and social workers from district or regional level at least once a month. In every clinic there is a member of staff who has had continuing education in psychiatry or mental health (including community aspects) in the last year. In every clinic there is at least one person trained in counseling and the management of victims of violence and rape. Records are kept according to protocol with emphasis on confidentiality and accuracy.

The Mental Health Information Centre is South Africa's top mental health awareness initiative.

UKZN-Pietermaritzburg

The Pietermaritzburg Mental Health Society believes that people with intellectual and psychiatric disabilities have a right to a place in society, and a right to education, training, work and social inclusion. The Society strives to create awareness about mental well-being to dispel the myths and stigma attached to these disabilities.

The Student Counselling and Development Centers cater for the educational and personal needs of students and prospective students. Telephone: (033) 260 5233

Community resource: [Lifeline Pietermaritzburg](#) offers online counseling, email counseling, crisis response, AIDS counseling, rape help, 24-hour support line, etc.

University of Cape Town

For counseling and support, contact the UCT Student Counselling Service (Psychological Services)

Wellness Service
28 Rhodes Avenue
Mowbray
Tel: 021 650 4589

The office is open from Monday to Friday, 08:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Risk mitigation for students

- The EAP student health insurance covers counseling up to 30 visits.
- If students will need care, the U.S. Embassy provides a list of counselors and can help the UC Liaison Officer to establish contact to provide confidential treatment.
- If a student is seeing a counselor/therapist in the U.S., the student should consult carefully about health and medication management before departure.
- Student should bring adequate supply of prescription medication to last through the stay along with a doctor's prescription and a letter indicating condition. We do not recommend sending prescription medication through the mail as packages can take weeks to arrive at their destination and it may be held up in customs for an indeterminate amount of time.
- Students need to be prepared for the inevitable cultural differences in medical services. Students who need a particular type of medical care should find out in advance whether such care is available. Students should discuss options with their physician or health care provider

ILLICIT DRUGS

Illicit drugs are becoming a concern for the local authorities because of the increasing availability and variety. Alcoholism and multiple drug abuse have been associated with the alarming rate of crime and violence in South Africa. The possession, use or distribution of illegal drugs, and the inappropriate possession, use or distribution of legal drugs, is not acceptable in South African institutions of education.

The possession of or using of drugs is a crime in South Africa. Local law prescribes heavy penalties for drug use convictions, including marijuana

Risk Assessment

- While in South Africa, a U.S. citizen is subject to its laws and regulations that differ significantly from those in the United States and may not afford the protections available to the individual under U.S. law.
- Students violating South African laws, even unknowingly, may be expelled, arrested or imprisoned.
- Penalties for possession, use, or trafficking in illegal drugs in South Africa are severe, and convicted offenders can expect long jail sentences and heavy fines.
- If a student is found with prohibited narcotic drugs (cannabis-\$6.00 an ounce; easy to purchase and popular to smoke, morphine, heroin, valium, cocaine, etc.), without a prescription, he/she is committing an offense under local law.
- When students are in an environment where they perceive an easier way to get away with smoking marijuana in public, for example, they may become lax and irresponsible about their choice to smoke and where to smoke it.

Risk mitigation for students

- Students must decide to act responsibly.
- University of California, UKZN and UCT expect students to comport themselves in a manner consistent with University policy and that they must conduct themselves in a lawful manner at all times.
- Violation of UKZN, UCT, and University of California policies subjects students to disciplinary procedures.
- Violation of country laws exposes the student to criminal charges and/or arrest.

Transportation, Traffic, and Local Travel

Risk assessment

- Unlike the United States, where traffic moves on the right hand side of the road, traffic in South Africa moves on the left.
- Road conditions are generally good in South Africa.
- Traffic drives on the left.
- Traffic accidents are largely attributed to poor driving standards (ignoring red lights, speeding, and drunk driving); exercise caution at traffic lights and stop signs.
- Insufficient lighting on rural roads makes it difficult to see pedestrians.
- Do not hitch hike.
- Trains, buses, and bus stations are crowded, which provides opportunities for pickpockets, thieves, and purse snatchers.
- Most personal crimes, including robbery and assault occur at night and on low-end domestic service trains. Travel should be accomplished during the day, using the highest class of travel available and the most direct booking.
- Avoid using the station's public restrooms if they are vacant or not being guarded by an attendant.

Risk mitigation for students

- Be careful when crossing streets as a pedestrian
- If traveling within South Africa: Johannesburg, like other major international cities, has specific risk areas. Students should avoid Berea and Hillbrow. There is a high level of muggings around the Rotunda bus terminus in the Central Business District.
- In all areas of South Africa, students should be cautious when out after dark; use the buddy system. Streets, even in urban areas, are not brightly lit at night.
- Be vigilant at all times in Durban's city center and beachfront area.
- Safety while taking public transport: Try to stay away from isolated bus stops, especially after dark. On an empty bus, sit near the driver or conductor.

Minibuses

Risk assessment

- While minibuses in most parts of Southern Africa are practical and frequent ways to get from one point to another, safety concerns in some areas should make you think twice before boarding.
- Travel by public transportation in South Africa, except for sedan taxis, is generally not secure.
- Minibus taxis travel everywhere in South Africa, covering relatively short hops from town to town.
- Minibuses (kombis) cover many routes not covered by the main bus service
- Minibuses are quite cheap but notoriously dangerous.
- The reputations of minibus taxis in Johannesburg and Cape Town are particularly suspect; robberies are not uncommon, and news of "wars" (anything from scuffles to outright shooting) between competing drivers makes many travelers stick to other options.
- Reckless driving and speeding among South African long-distance minibus drivers has been a major problem in the past, but new, well-enforced legislation that mandates speed limits and license requirements has made this concern more infrequent.

Risk mitigation for students

- Talk to locals you trust to learn about minibus safety in your area
- Do not use public transportation in rural areas; hire a private care and driver.
- Do not use mini-bus taxis (16 seaters) as they are often targeted for robberies and drivers are irresponsible and take dangerous risks while traveling.
- Loose items, such as cameras, purses, etc., should be kept within a larger securable bag that is kept in front of you; never behind or on any over head bins.
- Never board a minibus unless you are positive that this minibus will get you there
- Do not even consider riding a minibus after dark
- Be aware that minibus taxis are poorly maintained and rarely comply with safety standards. They require patience as they make many detours and changeovers at the taxi rank (hub) where the driver will wait for passengers to fill up the bus.
- If you must travel by minibus, get advice from Study Center staff on which companies are more reputable

Crime/Security

Although the vast majority of students live in South Africa without incident, students should be aware that criminal activity, often violent, occurs routinely. Notwithstanding government anti-crime efforts, violent crimes such as sexual assault, rape, armed robbery, carjacking, mugging, “smash and grab” attacks on vehicles, and other incidents, are regularly reported by visitors. As in most African countries, poverty is a major cause for the high crime rate.

Crime is a serious problem throughout South Africa ranking among the worst in the world. For more information, refer to the [Anti-crime website](#). Urban areas, such as Cape Town, have the highest crime rates.

SEXUAL ASSAULT

South Africa has the highest incidence of reported rape in the world. According to the WHO Sexual Violence Research Initiative, the rate of reported rape is 194 per 100 000 female population. This is at least three times higher than, for example, the rate in the United States. (According to the Department of Justice, in the U.S. someone is raped every 2 minutes.) Foreigners are not specifically targeted but several have been the victims of rape. Adult women and children travelers are targeted as it is believed that they are disease-free. Females should never travel in groups smaller than three and never travel at night.

Risk assessment

- Rape and sexual assault in South Africa is present throughout the country and is not limited by socioeconomic or geographic factors. Study abroad students have been assaulted in their rooms and even in broad daylight.
- Criminal activity, such as assault, armed robbery, and theft is particularly high in areas surrounding public transportation centers, especially in major cities.
- Theft of passports and other valuables is most likely to occur at airports, bus terminals, and train stations.
- A number of U.S. citizens have reported to the U.S. Embassy that they were mugged or attacked on commuter and metro trains, especially between Johannesburg and Pretoria.
- Crime also occurs in and around railway stations and on trains.
- Tourists have been mugged around the Rotunda bus terminal in Johannesburg.
- Crime is significantly higher after dark in the centers of major cities and in township areas. In all areas of South Africa, students should be cautious. During the day, thieves---sometimes armed---also frequent shopping malls.
- Muggings have become common along many popular routes on Table Mountain in Cape Town.
- “The “Safer Streets” project was established to create a safe and secure environment for the people in Pietermaritzburg, in light of the rising crime rate. Ongoing Crime Prevention Operations in the Pietermaritzburg Central Area were intensified. The Station Bicycle Squad is used to enhance visible policing and promote social crime prevention. A security project was started to police nightclubs and liquor outlets in an attempt to target teenagers under 18 years.

Risk mitigation for students

- Avoid projecting a too wealthy image and stay clear of the lower income areas.
- Do not open your door to strangers
- Be vigilant at all times and never venture out alone. Even when venturing out in groups remain alert to your surroundings and promptly seek shelter in a safe, crowded place if you sense a possible threat.
- Use the buddy system; go in groups. Walking alone anywhere, especially in remote areas, is not advised. Should you feel in any way at risk, proceed to a location (e.g. police, shopping center or service station) where help is available. Females should never travel in groups smaller than three and never travel at night. If you must go out after dark, do not go out alone.
- Females should avoid standing or sitting next to men in public, especially on public transportation. Do not sit in the front seat of a taxi.

- Pay close attention to your personal security at all times and monitor the media for information about possible new safety or security risks.
- Avoid isolated beaches, lookouts and picnic areas.
- Avoid the areas of Berea and Hillbrow in Johannesburg and the beachfront in Durban.
- As crime rates are generally high in the townships, you should only visit township areas with an organized group by a reputable company.
- Do not accept assistance from anyone or assist anyone who appears to be experiencing any problems or difficulties with ATM transactions. Criminals often pretend to be in distress to attract victims.
- When giving a credit card to a store or restaurant employee for processing, do not let them take the card out of your sight.
- Passport and money (divided into more than one stash and taken as traveler's checks where practical) should be kept separately in inside zipped pockets or under your clothes in a security flat money belts.
- Carry a "decoy" wallet with a small amount of cash.
- Only a minimal amount of cash, sufficient to reach the destination should be carried.
- Carry your bag close to you with the clasp facing inwards. Carry your keys/security entrance cards in your pocket.
- If someone grabs your bag, let it go. Do not offer resistance. If you hang on, you could get hurt. Remember your safety is more important than your property.
- Carry mobile phones. U.S. mobile phones may not work in South Africa, but rental mobile phones are widely available and may be rented from kiosks at major airports. The nationwide emergency number for the police is 10111, and the nationwide number for ambulance service is 10177. It is not necessary to dial an area code for these numbers. Note: The rate of response varies from to area to area, but is generally slower than response to 911 calls in the United States.
- Register with the nearest U.S. Embassy or Consulate through the State Department's travel registration web site (<https://travelregistration.state.gov/ibrs/ui/>) so that you can obtain updated information on travel and security within South Africa.
- If you think someone is following you, check by crossing the street—more than once if necessary—to see if he/she follows. If you are still worried, get to the nearest place where there are other people—a pub or anywhere with a lot of lights on—and call the police.
- If you use a personal stereo, remember you cannot hear traffic, or somebody approaching behind you.
- Do not take short cuts through dark alleys, parks or across waste ground.
- Walk facing the traffic so a car cannot pull up behind you unnoticed.
- If choosing to drink, "Think before You Drink: Date Rape Drugs are Out There." Females should be alert for feeling dizzy, light-headed and nauseated and for needing fresh air. Rohypnol, once touted as the date-rape drug, is now green in color and not as easily soluble as it used to be. But women still need to be on the lookout. Experts advise that women should be alert for what has become known as the 'date-rape drug'.
 - ▶ Never leave your drink alone.
 - ▶ Watch as the bar tender pours your drink.
 - ▶ If you need to go to the restroom, have a friend watch your drink while you're gone. Party with a group of friends, and stick together.
 - ▶ Do not let someone go off with a stranger, and do not leave someone behind.

Mobile Phones

Mobile phones have become everyday accessories and are attractive targets for thieves. A very small percentage of these thefts occur when the owner is the victim of a street robbery. Most thefts are a result of owners leaving mobile phones unattended in their cars or elsewhere. Listed below you will find some helpful advice from [Crime News, South Africa](#) to help you secure your mobile phone:

- Do not bring attention to your mobile phone by leaving it in view on tables in pubs, cafes, restaurants and other public places
- Do not leave your phone unattended in jacket pockets and bags
- Be discreet if you have to use your mobile phone in the street
- Make sure you lock the keypad using a pin number when you are not using your phone. If it is stolen it cannot be used to make calls
- Mark your phone (and its battery and other accessories) with your postcode. Do this by using an ultra-violet marker pen. If your phone is stolen and later recovered by the Police this mark will make it easier to trace it back to you.
- If your mobile phone is stolen, call your service provider and quote your IMEI (International Mobile Equipment Identity) number (or in some cases the last 9 digits of your SIM card). Using this information, your service provider should be able to isolate your mobile phone so that it cannot be used. Keep a record of your IMEI number.

Campus Security

As on UC campuses, preventing crime is a top priority at the South African campuses. Theft is the most common crime on campuses.

UKZN-Pietermaritzburg

Security is greatly improved when students practice sensible and cautious behavior. Recognize your own vulnerability to crime and reduce your risk through preventive action and cooperation.

- UKZN-Pietermaritzburg offers an escort service when walking across campus at odd hours or to unknown areas.
- You are encouraged to use this service; however, past participants have indicated that this service is not always reliable. If you encounter resistance to escort you, report this to university authorities.
- The buddy system is critical on campus and throughout the city. If you are uncomfortable in any situation, leave and do not worry about being rude.
- The buddy system is a safety system in which two people, buddies, operate as a single unit so that they are able to monitor and help each other especially if encountering a situation where help would be needed. Improved safety is the main benefit of the buddy system as it ensures that quick assistance can be provided in the event of an emergency.
- For personal safety to be most effective, shared involvement between the student and the local EAP administration is essential. Pay attention to their safety advice and think about your personal safety, even when visiting what might be considered a relatively safe area.
- USE COMMON SENSE—Think before you act.
- Lock your room door and windows when you leave, even if only for a minute.
- Keep valuable items out of sight.
- Politely assist persons in your building who you do not recognize.
- If you hear or see something suspicious, call Risk Management Services (RMS) immediately.
- RMS offer a comprehensive range of security services:
 - ▶ Trained security guards are posted around the campus.
 - ▶ Student identity cards are issued/ revalidated at registration and must be carried on your person at all times while on campus.
 - ▶ Residences have 24-hour electronic access control; do not prop doors open and do not provide access to anyone.
 - ▶ Campus perimeter entrances have pedestrian/visitor access control.

UCT

Campus Protection Services (CPS) operates 24 hours a day, seven days a week. CPS is committed to protecting the safety of the university community and its property, as well as maintaining order in accordance with university policy. The staff is available at all times to give assistance. The CPS 24-hour hotline is 021 650 2222 / 3 (use the last four digits only if calling from a UCT extension).

Risk Mitigation for Students

- You are always safer when walking in groups; use a buddy system.
- Anticipate and recognize a crime or safety risk; trust your intuition.
- Involve CPS to reduce or to eliminate any perceived risk.
- Be aware of your surroundings, and particularly the people in your environment. Criminals rely on the community being indifferent.
- Be alert for suspicious persons in and around campus buildings and in parking areas.
- If you suspect anything, call CPS immediately on 021 650 2222 / 3 (use the last four digits only if calling from a UCT extension).
- The best way of preventing property theft is to reduce or remove the opportunity.
 - ▶ Whenever you leave your residence, lock the door and close windows.
 - ▶ Never leave access doors propped open.
 - ▶ Do not grant access to anyone you do not recognize.
 - ▶ Do not leave any backpack or bags in open public places.
 - ▶ Have emergency numbers handy at all times.
- In residence
 - ▶ Keep emergency numbers next to your phone or fixed on your desk.
 - ▶ Secure your door and window when you are alone and while you are asleep.
 - ▶ Do not leave keys hidden in a traditional location, such as under the doormat.
 - ▶ Do not put your address on your key ring.
 - ▶ Get to know your neighbors. You can keep an eye on each other's rooms when you are not there.
 - ▶ Call 021 650 2222/3 to report suspicious persons or activities in or around your neighborhood if you live on UCT premises.
 - ▶ Do not leave any messages on your door to indicate that you will be away for any length of time.
 - ▶ Do not keep large sums of money inside your room.
 - ▶ Take your valuables home when you go on vacation.
- When Walking on campus
 - ▶ Get into the habit of being escorted by a security official when walking late at night within UCT premises.
 - ▶ Practice using the "Blue Safe Walk" when walking on university property. You have the advantage of being close to the emergency phones and the area is monitored by surveillance cameras.
 - ▶ Avoid walking in dark and deserted areas and stay away from short cuts.
- UCT Shuttle Service: The [Jammie Shuttle](#) provides convenient and safe bus transportation between UCT's campuses and residences during the term. Service hours are:
 - ▶ **Daytime:** Monday to Friday 7:30 a.m.–6:00 p.m.
 - ▶ **Night time:** Monday to Thursday 6:30 p.m. to 1:00 a.m.; Friday 6:30 p.m. to 10:00 p.m.
- Safe escort service: In the event that the Jammie Shuttle does not function, assistance is offered to students and staff by escorting them on foot or giving them a lift from campus to their residences.