



Best Practices For Academics Traveling Overseas

American academic freedom and the advanced research & development conducted at Academic Institutions are essential to progress and innovation. There are still some considerations to help protect your students and your R&D from being stolen by other researchers, or used by hostile foreign governments / their military agencies.

✓ Prior to your travel, be sure to visit www.state.gov/avoidadvice or www.cia.gov/cia/publications/oddbrook/index.html to obtain any country-specific travel advisories and the current political situation of the countries being visited.

✓ Do not travel with any unnecessary information or current research on a laptop. Avoid placing internet addresses, laptops, or any other items you take with you which you will present or discuss at the conference. Do not leave your laptop unattended. Make sure your laptop is password protected. Do not connect to any wireless network or other network, especially strange ones, while overseas. Save the system password in a secure location before and after travel. Recognize that your personal belongings may be searched several times.

✓ Understand that foreign universities, foreign companies, and foreign governments are often interconnected, such that any involvement or contact with them may be from a hidden interest with an ulterior motive.

✓ Not all conference attendees with whom you come in contact will be genuinely interested in your research. Some may be inquiring on behalf of another country or researcher.

✓ Be aware of unsolicited requests sent to you on the internet, persons asking questions about your research, and persons requesting your opinion on the status of others' research being conducted at the Academic Institution. Information about failures in research can be as valuable as successes. Be careful in discussing any research that is not your own.

✓ Recognize not all foreign students who contact American professors do so on their own accord. Some are directed to do so by a competitor or foreign intelligence service.

✓ Obtain business cards of all personnel with whom you have extensive contact while traveling. Put the date of contact on the back and retain them for future reference.

✓ Do not discuss any government or state-sponsored research and development being conducted by others in your department. Deflect questions to the appropriate authority.

✓ Avoid political transactions, or offering political opinions, while in foreign countries. This includes in person, on the telephone, or on the internet.

✓ Do not take any provocative or suggestive literature with you to other countries.

✓ After meeting with the appropriate researchers in your academic institution, report any unusual personal, telephonic, or internet contacts to your local office of the FBI.