

**SAFEABROAD**



SafeAbroad's

# **CERTIFICATIONS** **HANDBOOK**

**FOR INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION PROFESSIONALS**

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# Overview

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SafeAbroad provides certifications tailored for international education professionals, offering credentials that serve as concrete evidence of their expertise in safety, crisis management, and analysis in international education. SafeAbroad offers the following certifications for international education professionals:

- Certified International Education Safety Executive (CIESE)
- Certified International Education Safety Specialist (CIESS), concentrations include:
  - Health, Safety, & Security
  - Overseas Operations
  - Mental Health & Wellbeing
  - Crisis Response & Emergency Management
  - International Student Services
  - Compliance & Duty of Care
- Certified International Education Safety Associate (CIESA)

## Body of Knowledge for Professional Competency

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SafeAbroad's certification exams are meticulously curated and refined, grounded in a comprehensive review of industry best practices and authoritative sources in travel risk management. We provide a curated list of foundational texts, industry guides, and practical tools that align with the competencies outlined in our Travel Risk Management Handbook for International Education. Use this list as a reference throughout your studies and professional development to deepen your understanding, reinforce key concepts, and stay informed about industry best practices:

- SafeAbroad's Travel Risk Management Handbook for International Education
- The International Standard Organization's ISO 31030 Travel Risk Standard
- The Forum on Education Abroad's Standards of Good Practice (Sections 5 and 6)
- NAFSA's Responsible Education Abroad: Best Practices for Health, Safety, and Security
- The Center for Global Education's SAFETI Crisis Management Handbook
- FEMA's National Incident Management System and Directive 122-1 for International Travel
- Legal precedents for duty of care

# SafeAbroad's Certifications

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SafeAbroad's certifications have been carefully crafted to address the diverse range of roles and responsibilities in international education. With the global landscape of education constantly expanding, the need for professionals who can navigate the intricate web of safety protocols, risk assessment, crisis management, and compliance standards is paramount.

Our suite of certifications caters to professionals with varying levels of experience and specialization and stands as a testament to an individual's dedication to ensuring that travelers embarking on international educational journeys are supported by experts—individuals who are not only equipped with the necessary skills but also deeply committed to their well-being and security. By earning SafeAbroad certifications, professionals aspire to uphold the highest standards of student well-being across the ever-evolving landscape of international education.

## Certified International Education Safety Executive (CIESE)

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The Certified International Education Safety Executive (CIESE) certification is designed for seasoned professionals with **5+ years of experience** in directing international education programs, including risk management functions. This certification validates the candidate's expertise in safety protocols, risk assessment, crisis response, and compliance with industry standards. Additionally, CIESE certificates possess a comprehensive understanding of strategic planning, enabling them to proactively identify risks, develop robust safety policies, and create secure environments for travelers during their international educational experiences.

## Certified International Education Safety Specialist (CIESS)

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The Certified International Education Safety Specialist (CIESS) certification is designed for individuals with **2+ years of experience** in international education administration. This certification offers 6 concentrations, allowing professionals to develop their knowledge and skills in targeted areas of interest to ensure students' safety and well-being. The concentrations offered are: Health, Safety, & Security; Overseas Operations; Mental Health & Wellbeing; Crisis Response & Emergency Management; International Students & Services; and Compliance & Duty of Care.

## Certified International Education Safety Associate (CIESA)

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The Certified International Education Safety Associate (CIESA) certification is designed for new professionals with less than 2 years of experience managing international education programs. This certification develops and strengthens expertise in managing international education programs, including pre-departure preparation, safety, security, and crisis and emergency management. By earning this certification, professionals are equipped with the crucial tools to ensure the safety of study abroad destinations and travelers abroad.



Empowering professionals in international education is paramount for ensuring traveler safety and well-being.

## Certification Process

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Embark on your journey to professional excellence in international education with SafeAbroad's certification process. Gain the knowledge, skills, and credentials you need to thrive in international education management, safety, crisis management, or risk management. Follow the step-by-step guide below to achieve and maintain your SafeAbroad certification.

1. **Submit Application:** To start your journey towards SafeAbroad Certifications, you must submit an application including a resume and two references at [SafeAbroad.com/certification-application](https://SafeAbroad.com/certification-application). Upon submitting your application, our dedicated team will begin a comprehensive review process that typically takes approximately 2 weeks.
2. **Approval Process:** Upon submission of an application, we carefully assess each applicant's qualifications and suitability for the desired certification. If approved, examinees will receive information about how to schedule the exam.
3. **Schedule Exam:** SafeAbroad's exams are computer-based and taken remotely through an online proctoring service. Specific instructions regarding the exam will be emailed one week and one day before the scheduled exam. Each exam consists of 60 multiple-choice questions to be completed in 120 minutes.
4. **Exam Preparation:** Prepare for the certification exam with SafeAbroad's comprehensive Travel Risk Management Handbook, which is specifically designed to equip you with the necessary knowledge and skills. To assess your understanding and readiness, don't forget to complete the practice exam provided by SafeAbroad, which will further enhance your confidence in achieving certification success.
5. **Take the Exam:** Scoring on the exam is out of sixty (60) points, with each question counting for one (1) point. To pass the exam and obtain the certification, examinees must score at least 45 points. Should an examinee not pass their exam, re-examination is possible but will require a re-application process.
6. **Receive Results:** After completing the exam, examinees can expect to receive their results within 2 business days. If the examinee has achieved a passing score, a copy of their certificate will be sent to the email address provided within 10 days of exam completion. If the examinee does not achieve a passing score on the exam, they will receive a link to reschedule after a waiting period.

## Application and Payment

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To start your journey towards SafeAbroad Certifications, please submit your application through our online portal at [SafeAbroad.com/certification-application](https://SafeAbroad.com/certification-application). As part of the application, please ensure to include the following requirements:

- Resume: Highlight your relevant experience that aligns with the certification you are applying for.
- References: Provide the names and contact information of two references who can validate your experience.

Upon submitting your application, our dedicated team will begin a comprehensive review process that typically takes approximately 2 weeks. We carefully assess each applicant's qualifications and suitability for the desired certification.

### Certification Cost and Fees

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We offer the following certification exams:

- Certified International Education Safety Executive (CIESE) priced at \$1500
- Certified International Education Safety Specialist (CIESS) priced at \$750
- Certified International Education Safety Associate (CIESA) priced at \$450

SafeAbroad's examination costs include all taxes and fees. Applicants must pay the full cost of the examination at the time of application. If an application is not accepted, a refund will be issued for the full amount paid, minus a non-refundable application fee of \$50. Applications received without the necessary payment are not accepted.

### Submitting Payment

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Examinees have the flexibility to choose between two convenient payment methods: check or credit card. You can conveniently pay the examination cost upon applying for the exam online through [SafeAbroad.com/certifications](https://SafeAbroad.com/certifications). For check payments, please make the check payable to SafeAbroad and mail it to the following address:

**470 James St., Suite 007  
ATTN: SafeAbroad  
New Haven, CT 06513**

## Refund & Rescheduling Policy

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Once you have submitted your payment and application for the exam, please note that refunds will not be issued in the event of cancellation.

SafeAbroad provides examinees with the flexibility to reschedule their exams if necessary. Rescheduling done 7 days or more before the scheduled exam will not incur any additional charges. However, if a cancellation or rescheduling is requested within 7 days of the exam, examinees must pay a \$50 rescheduling fee. To reschedule an exam, please email your request to **certifications@safeabroad.org**.

In the event of a "no-show," where an examinee fails to appear for the scheduled exam without proper cancellation and does not provide documentation of any of the justifiable absences in the paragraph below, the entire examination cost will be forfeited. However, no-show examinees still have the option to reschedule the exam by paying the re-examination fee.

We understand that unforeseen circumstances may arise. If an examinee misses their scheduled exam due to emergencies such as the death of an immediate family member, serious injury to themselves or an immediate family member, court appearance, jury duty, or military duty, the examinee has 7 days to submit documentation and reschedule the exam. SafeAbroad reserves the right to request additional information or documentation to support the reason for the absence. If the documentation is accepted, the examinee will be allowed to schedule a new exam within the eligibility period without a rescheduling fee. After the 7-day grace period, or without proper documentation, the initial payment will be forfeited.

All examination fees paid to SafeAbroad are non-refundable.

## Audit Process

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Applicants may be audited to verify the information provided. During an audit, you may be asked to provide:

- Letters from supervisors to confirm work experience
- Copies of previously received certifications

Examinees will have 30 days to submit the requested documents. After SafeAbroad receives all documents, the audit process will take between ten and fourteen days to complete. Failure to provide the requested information may result in application declination.

# The Exam

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SafeAbroad's exams are computer-based and taken remotely through an online proctoring service. Examinees are not permitted to bring additional resources into the examination room to ensure a fair and secure testing environment. Please adhere to the provided guidelines to maintain the integrity of the certification process.

## Exam Structure and Scoring

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SafeAbroad exams will be conducted through a user-friendly online examination platform. This platform allows you to take the exam from the comfort of your home or office, ensuring flexibility.

SafeAbroad's exams are multiple-choice tests administered remotely via an online proctoring service. The exam consists of 60 multiple-choice questions to be completed within 2 hours. Each question is worth 1 point, for a total of 60 points. To pass the exam and obtain the certification, examinees must score at least 45 points.

## Examination Accommodations

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SafeAbroad complies with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and offers examination accommodations. Examinees can request these accommodations during the application process, and approval must be obtained from SafeAbroad before the exam.

## Scheduling the Exam

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Those whose applications have been accepted will receive an email with clear instructions for scheduling their exam. It is crucial for examinees to regularly check their emails for important updates regarding their application status and exam arrangements.

## Exam Security

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To maintain exam security, the exam will be administered through a secure browser that prevents access to outside sources. Examinees will be required to present a valid photo ID before accessing the exam.

All examinees are expected to adhere to the Code of Professional Responsibility. Examination proctors have the authority to dismiss any examinees who fail to follow these guidelines.

Prohibited actions include, but are not limited to:

- Engaging in dishonest or unethical conduct.
- Attempting to tamper with the examination software.
- Providing false information to gain eligibility for the exam.

- Attempting to have someone else take the examination on your behalf.
- Communicating with anyone other than the exam proctor about the exam during the administration.
- Trying to save or print copies of the exam.
- Taking photographs of the exam.
- Failing to provide acceptable identification.
- Having access to or using notes or any unauthorized aid during the exam.
- Disregarding any other examination regulations outlined in SafeAbroad's certification program policies as communicated by the exam proctor or specified in examination materials and software.

## Required Materials

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To ensure a smooth and successful examination process, examinees must have the following materials ready:

- Computer/laptop with a stable internet connection and power supply.
- Two forms of identification:
  - One government-issued photo ID (e.g., driver's license, passport).
  - An additional form showing the examinee's legal name (e.g., credit card or birth certificate).
- A functioning webcam for identity verification.

Examinees will not be permitted to take the exam if any of the following conditions apply:

- The first and last names don't match the information on the photo ID.
- The examinee canceled their exam registration before the exam day.

## Exam Results

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After completing the exam, examinees can expect to receive their results within 2 business days. The results will indicate whether they have passed or failed the exam, along with a detailed breakdown of their performance in each exam section. If the examinee has achieved a passing score, a copy of their certificate will be sent to the email address provided within 10 days of exam completion. If the examinee does not achieve a passing score on the exam, they will be able to re-examine after a waiting period of 14 days.

## Re-examination Policy

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Candidates who fail the exam may take a re-examination after a 14-day waiting period. They are allowed a maximum of three attempts to retake the exam. To schedule a new exam, candidates need to **email [certifications@safeabroad.org](mailto:certifications@safeabroad.org)** and submit a \$200 re-examination fee.

## Appeals Process

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Examinees who wish to file an appeal must submit it within 7 days of receiving the decision. To file an appeal, the examinee should send a letter requesting an appeal to SafeAbroad at **certifications@safeabroad.org**. The letter should include a contact email or physical address for a response from SafeAbroad. The examinee will receive a notification of the appeal decision, including the reasons for the ruling, within 7 days of submitting the complaint.

# Maintaining Your Certification

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SafeAbroad certifications are valid for two years. The purpose of recertification is to ensure that certificants remain up to date on best practices and essential information in their respective certification areas. Continuing education allows professionals to grow, expand their knowledge, and maintain the ability to keep travelers safe.

## Recertification Process

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To maintain certification at the end of the two-year cycle, certificants are required to complete both of the following learning objectives:

1. **Completion of 10 continuing education (CE) hours:** Professionals can meet this requirement by participating in webinars, seminars, or other training sessions related to international health, safety, security, or risk management. Verification of your attendance in the training/education session can be submitted at any time throughout the two-year cycle via the recertification form at [SafeAbroad.com/recertification](https://SafeAbroad.com/recertification).
2. **Recertifying via Examination:** Professionals must showcase their knowledge and proficiency in the certification area by taking another exam at the conclusion of the two-year recertification cycle.

Visit [SafeAbroad.com/recertification](https://SafeAbroad.com/recertification) to begin the re-certification process.

As part of the recertification process, there will be a flat fee of \$200 to maintain any SafeAbroad certification, regardless of whether professionals opt for the CE hours or re-examination route. Email [certifications@safeabroad.org](mailto:certifications@safeabroad.org) with any questions or for assistance submitting CE hours.

## Continued Eligibility for Certification

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Continued eligibility for certification is contingent upon adhering to SafeAbroad's Professional Code of Ethics. SafeAbroad reserves the right to withdraw certifications in the event of a breach of the code, ensuring the integrity and ethical standards of the certification process are upheld. Adhering to the code ensures professional conduct and maintains the integrity of the certification process.



Certified professionals uphold ethical practices through adherence to the **Professional Code of Ethics.**

## SafeAbroad Professional Code of Ethics

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SafeAbroad places a strong emphasis on upholding ethical practices and maintaining the highest professional standards. To earn and maintain SafeAbroad certification, certified professionals must agree to and abide by the Professional Code of Ethics.

As a certified professional, it is your responsibility to comply with all applicable laws and regulations and to conduct your professional services and activities ethically. SafeAbroad's Code of Professional Responsibility is founded upon principles of proficiency, honesty, trustworthiness, equality, and professionalism. By adhering to these standards, you contribute to the integrity and credibility of the SafeAbroad certification program.

**As a SafeAbroad Certified Professional or individual applying for a SafeAbroad Certification, I agree to uphold and abide by the following principles:**

- Perform professional duties in accordance with the laws and with integrity
- Perform professional duties in a competent and ethical manner
- Provide complete and accurate information when applying for certification and recertification
- Refrain from personal behavior that may compromise the integrity of the credential
- Safeguard confidential and privileged information, and exercise due care to prevent its improper disclosure
- Maintain competency requirements through continuing education & recertification
- Use the logo and certification marks only in an authorized and approved manner
- Exhibit appropriate professional conduct in my interactions with all individuals whom I encounter in connection with my professional roles, such as clients, co-workers, and SafeAbroad personnel, including by refraining from discrimination, harassment, or retaliation and by respecting appropriate professional boundaries in my interactions with clients and others
- Not engage in cheating or other dishonest behavior that violates exam security (including unauthorized reproducing, distributing, displaying, discussing, sharing, or otherwise misusing exam questions or any part of exam questions) before, during, or after a SafeAbroad examination

## SafeAbroad Certification Domains

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**SafeAbroad's certifications are based on industry duty of care standards and the thirteen domains outlined in SafeAbroad's Travel Risk Management Framework.**

This framework includes thirteen key domains that together provide a comprehensive approach to ensuring safety in international education. This approach ensures our certifications address the complete range of safety considerations, helping professionals establish and maintain secure learning environments for travelers abroad. Each exam contains a proportionate percentage of material pertinent to the credential's area of focus.

## CIESE Examination Information

The **Certified International Education Safety Executive (CIESE)** exam validates a candidate's expertise in safety protocols, risk assessment, crisis response, and compliance with industry standards. Upon passing their certification exam, candidates will also possess a comprehensive understanding of strategic planning, enabling them to proactively identify risks, develop robust safety policies, and create secure environments for travelers during their international educational experiences.

SafeAbroad Certification Domains & Exam Composition		
Domain	Percentage of Exam	Number of Questions
Duty of Care	7%	4
Pre-Departure Safety Training	5%	3
Destination Onboarding & Risk Assessment	5%	3
In-Country Safety and Security	9%	5
Health and Wellness Initiatives	5%	3
Risk Monitoring & Threat Assessment	5%	3
Crisis Management, Response, and Recovery	9%	5
Traveler Debriefing	5%	3
Program Governance & Stakeholder Engagement	12%	7
Program Optimization & Continuous Improvement	10%	6
Team Training & Development	10%	6
Metrics and Analytics	6%	4
Policies and Documentation	6%	4
External Partnerships	6%	4
<b>Total: 100%</b>		<b>Total: 60</b>

## CIESS Health, Safety, & Security Concentration Examination Information

The **Certified International Education Specialist (CIESS) Health, Safety, & Security** concentration develops a candidate's expertise in traveler preparation, risk assessment and identification, crisis response, compliance with industry standards, and external partnerships.

SafeAbroad Certification Domains & Exam Composition		
Domain	Percentage of Exam	Number of Questions
Duty of Care	10%	6
Pre-Departure Safety Training	9%	6
Destination Onboarding & Risk Assessment	9%	5
In-Country Safety and Security	10%	6
Health and Wellness Initiatives	6%	4
Risk Monitoring & Threat Assessment	12%	7
Crisis Management, Response, and Recovery	12%	7
Traveler Debriefing	5%	3
Program Governance & Stakeholder Engagement	0%	0
Program Optimization & Continuous Improvement	0%	0
Team Training & Development	0%	0
Metrics and Analytics	7%	4
Policies and Documentation	14%	8
External Partnerships	6%	4
<b>Total: 100%</b>		<b>Total: 60</b>

## CIESS Overseas Operations Concentration Examination Information

The **Certified International Education Specialist (CIESS) Overseas Operations** concentration develops a candidate's expertise in managing in-country safety and security, external partnerships, risk assessment, crisis management, and crisis recovery.

SafeAbroad Certification Domains & Exam Composition		
Domain	Percentage of Exam	Number of Questions
Duty of Care	10%	6
Pre-Departure Safety Training	0%	0
Destination Onboarding & Risk Assessment	7%	4
In-Country Safety and Security	40%	24
Health and Wellness Initiatives	15%	9
Risk Monitoring & Threat Assessment	0%	0
Crisis Management, Response, and Recovery	12%	7
Traveler Debriefing	0%	0
Program Governance & Stakeholder Engagement	6%	4
Program Optimization & Continuous Improvement	0%	0
Team Training & Development	0%	0
Metrics and Analytics	0%	0
Policies and Documentation	5%	3
External Partnerships	5%	3
<b>Total: 100%</b>		<b>Total: 60</b>

## CISS Mental Health & Wellbeing Concentration Examination Information

The **Certified International Education Specialist (CISS) Mental Health & Wellbeing** concentration develops a candidate's expertise in managing travelers' mental health and well-being prior to departure, while abroad, and after their return to the United States, as well as candidates' ability to manage crisis situations abroad.

SafeAbroad Certification Domains & Exam Composition		
Domain	Percentage of Exam	Number of Questions
Duty of Care	10%	6
Pre-Departure Safety Training	10%	6
Destination Onboarding & Risk Assessment	0%	0
In-Country Safety and Security	10%	6
Health and Wellness Initiatives	40%	24
Risk Monitoring & Threat Assessment	0%	0
Crisis Management, Response, and Recovery	0%	0
Traveler Debriefing	10%	6
Program Governance & Stakeholder Engagement	5%	3
Program Optimization & Continuous Improvement	0%	0
Team Training & Development	0%	0
Metrics and Analytics	5%	3
Policies and Documentation	5%	3
External Partnerships	5%	3
<b>Total: 100%</b>		<b>Total: 60</b>

## CISS Crisis Response & Emergency Management Concentration Examination Information

The **Certified International Education Specialist (CISS) Crisis Response & Emergency Management** concentration develops a candidate's expertise in risk assessment, incident monitoring, crisis preparation, crisis management, crisis recovery, and the management of third-party engagement in emergency management plans.

SafeAbroad Certification Domains & Exam Composition		
Domain	Percentage of Exam	Number of Questions
Duty of Care	10%	6
Pre-Departure Safety Training	0%	0
Destination Onboarding & Risk Assessment	0%	0
In-Country Safety and Security	5%	3
Health and Wellness Initiatives	5%	3
Risk Monitoring & Threat Assessment	20%	12
Crisis Management, Response, and Recovery	35%	21
Traveler Debriefing	0%	0
Program Governance & Stakeholder Engagement	10%	6
Program Optimization & Continuous Improvement	0%	0
Team Training & Development	5%	3
Metrics and Analytics	0%	0
Policies and Documentation	5%	3
External Partnerships	5%	3
<b>Total: 100%</b>		<b>Total: 60</b>

## CIESS International Student Services Concentration Examination Information

The **Certified International Education Specialist (CIESS) International Student Services** concentration develops a candidate's expertise in managing international travelers attending programs at their university, including proactively overseeing their health, safety, and security.

SafeAbroad Certification Domains & Exam Composition		
Domain	Percentage of Exam	Number of Questions
Duty of Care	10%	6
Pre-Departure Safety Training	0%	0
Destination Onboarding & Risk Assessment	0%	0
In-Country Safety and Security	35%	21
Health and Wellness Initiatives	20%	12
Risk Monitoring & Threat Assessment	0%	0
Crisis Management, Response, and Recovery	5%	3
Traveler Debriefing	5%	3
Program Governance & Stakeholder Engagement	7%	4
Program Optimization & Continuous Improvement	0%	0
Team Training & Development	0%	0
Metrics and Analytics	6%	4
Policies and Documentation	7%	4
External Partnerships	5%	3
<b>Total: 100%</b>		<b>Total: 60</b>

## CIESS Compliance & Duty of Care Concentration Examination Information

The **Certified International Education Specialist (CIESS) Compliance & Duty of Care** concentration develops a candidate's expertise in managing duty of care compliance, governance, stakeholder engagement, and industry standard compliance.

SafeAbroad Certification Domains & Exam Composition		
Domain	Percentage of Exam	Number of Questions
Duty of Care	30%	18
Pre-Departure Safety Training	10%	6
Destination Onboarding & Risk Assessment	10%	6
In-Country Safety and Security	5%	3
Health and Wellness Initiatives	5%	3
Risk Monitoring & Threat Assessment	0%	0
Crisis Management, Response, and Recovery	5%	3
Traveler Debriefing	0%	0
Program Governance & Stakeholder Engagement	10%	6
Program Optimization & Continuous Improvement	5%	3
Team Training & Development	5%	3
Metrics and Analytics	5%	3
Policies and Documentation	5%	3
External Partnerships	5%	3
<b>Total: 100%</b>		<b>Total: 60</b>

## CIESA Examination Information

The **Certified International Education Safety Associate (CIESA)** certificate develops knowledge and skills for managing international education programs, including pre-departure preparation, post-departure procedures, safety and security, crisis and emergency management, and external stakeholder management.

SafeAbroad Certification Domains & Exam Composition		
Domain	Percentage of Exam	Number of Questions
Duty of Care	5%	3
Pre-Departure Safety Training	11%	7
Destination Onboarding & Risk Assessment	15%	9
In-Country Safety and Security	15%	9
Health and Wellness Initiatives	10%	6
Risk Monitoring & Threat Assessment	12%	7
Crisis Management, Response, and Recovery	12%	7
Traveler Debriefing	5%	3
Program Governance & Stakeholder Engagement	10%	6
Program Optimization & Continuous Improvement	0%	0
Team Training & Development	0%	0
Metrics and Analytics	0%	0
Policies and Documentation	5%	3
External Partnerships	0%	0
<b>Total: 100%</b>		<b>Total: 60</b>

## DOC Duty of Care

The concept of the duty of care encompasses the legal obligations and responsibilities of international education organizations to prioritize the safety and well-being of their travelers.

### Competency areas:

- **Definitions of Duty of Care and Informed Consent:** Understanding and applying the concept of duty of care in travel risk management, along with informed consent principles for travelers.
- **Past Legal Cases:** Knowledge of relevant legal cases and their implications to understand the duty of care requirements and liability of international education programs.
- **Industry Standards:** Familiarity with industry standards such as ISO 31030 to effectively fulfill duty of care obligations and enhance risk mitigation strategies.
- **Fulfilling Duty of Care:** Applying strategies such as policy development, risk assessment, crisis management, and accommodation considerations to meet the duty of care requirements and ensure the safety and security of travelers.

## PRE Pre-Departure Safety Training

Pre-departure safety training is key to ensuring traveler preparedness and safety when studying abroad.

### Competency areas:

- **Essential Preparation:** Providing comprehensive guidance on packing, necessary documentation, and school supplies, and familiarizing travelers with local language, customs, and laws.
- **Traveler Safety and Security:** Educating travelers about potential risks, providing instructions on financial, transportation, and accommodation safety, and implementing emergency protocols to ensure travelers are aware of safety measures for independent travel.
- **Health and Wellness:** Informing travelers about healthcare differences between countries, illness management, culture shock, and providing guidance on handling medical emergencies.

## DES Destination Onboarding & Risk Assessment

**Destination onboarding & risk assessment protocols involve thoroughly evaluating travel destinations and forecasting potential threats to ensure traveler safety.**

**Competency areas:**

- **Risk Assessment Process:** Conducting comprehensive risk assessments by gathering current intelligence, conducting research, and performing site evaluations to assess destination safety and stability.
- **Determining High-Risk Destinations:** Establishing quantifiable standards and conducting third-party risk assessments to identify high-risk study-abroad destinations and develop mitigation strategies for prospective travelers.
- **Identifying Potential Dangers:** Using risk monitoring data to identify potential dangers in specific classifications, including crime, local sentiments, environmental factors, and health risks.
- **Identifying Local Safe Havens:** Creating a list of local safe havens, such as hospitals, police stations, and community centers, that provide safety and refuge for travelers during emergencies.

## SEC In-Country Safety and Security

**Ensuring in-country safety and security involves developing emergency protocols that prioritize travelers' safety and security while they are abroad.**

**Competency areas:**

- **Communication of Potential Risks:** Ensuring continuous monitoring of potential threats and promptly communicating them to travelers, providing security and safety support.
- **Emergency Contacts and Registration:** Facilitating access to emergency contacts, including university, embassy/consulate, and local emergency services, while encouraging documentation of travel itineraries for effective support during emergencies.
- **Campus and Local Area Security:** Conducting campus and local area tours, offering evacuation maps, sharing information on emergency services, local laws and customs, and providing a list of local safe havens for travelers.
- **Safety Surveys and Risk Mitigation:** Utilizing safety surveys to gather feedback, proactively identify risks, and develop mitigation strategies. Additionally, conducting routine safety checks, establishing strong relationships with neighboring areas, and ensuring due diligence on third-party vendors.

## HTH Health and Wellness Initiatives

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**Health and wellness initiatives focus on ensuring travelers' physical and mental well-being during their time abroad.**

### Competency areas:

- **Healthcare and Managing Health Risks:** Providing travelers with the latest healthcare information about the host country is essential. This includes details about the local health system's capabilities; the availability of mental health services, medicines, and pharmaceuticals; the risk of diseases/outbreaks; regional health issues; common illnesses; and necessary safety precautions, such as vaccination requirements or recommendations.
- **Mental Health:** Offering accessible mental health services and resources to travelers abroad, either on-site or off-campus, to address the increased stress and potential development of mental health stressors such as anxiety, depression, and culture shock that may arise during international travel.
- **Diversity & Traveler Identity:** Equipping travelers with essential mental healthcare information for host countries and acknowledging diverse traveler identities to foster an inclusive environment.

## MON Risk Monitoring and Threat Assessment

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**Risk monitoring and threat assessments include continuous evaluation of threats and the proactive development of appropriate risk mitigation strategies.**

### Competency areas:

- **Risk Monitoring:** Implementing a comprehensive risk monitoring system that includes continuous monitoring, risk escalation procedures, attention to indicators and thresholds, multi-channel communication, and the ability for travelers to confidentially report incidents or concerns.
- **Threat Assessments:** Performing thorough threat assessments by identifying, researching, and understanding risks, determining severity and probability, assessing current mitigation measures, identifying gaps or vulnerabilities, and providing recommendations for risk mitigation.
- **Risk Management:** Developing risk mitigation plans through various techniques, including risk avoidance, risk acceptance and sharing, risk mitigation, and risk transfer.

## CRS Crisis Management, Response, and Recovery

Crisis management planning involves developing comprehensive plans and protocols to respond effectively to crises that may arise during international education programs.

### Competency areas:

- **Crisis Management:** Creating and implementing crisis management plans that outline strategies, procedures, and roles for responding to crises, ensuring a systematic and coordinated approach.
- **Establishing Policies and Emergency Protocols:** Developing program-wide and location-specific guidelines and steps for handling unforeseen emergencies to provide a framework for quick and clear decision-making during crisis situations.
- **Activation Thresholds:** Defining specific criteria that determine when a situation escalates to a crisis level to trigger appropriate actions and interventions.
- **Crisis Training, Exercises, and Simulations:** Conducting regular training sessions, drills, and simulations to familiarize stakeholders with emergency protocols, assess their effectiveness, and identify areas for improvement.
- **After-Action Review:** Documenting all crisis incidents, emergency responses, and outcomes in comprehensive reports; analyzing lessons learned; and implementing necessary adjustments to enhance future crisis management efforts.

## DBF Traveler Debriefing

Traveler debriefing practices designed to gather actionable feedback are imperative for providing additional support to returning travelers and identifying areas for program improvement.

### Competency areas:

- **Developing Traveler Questionnaires:** Creating standardized questionnaires to gather feedback from travelers, including their overall trip experience, criticisms, suggestions for program improvement, and requests for post-travel support.
- **Conducting Debriefings:** Meeting with returning travelers to facilitate open, supportive discussions about their travel experiences, including any health, safety, or security concerns, incidents encountered, and stressors.
- **Identifying Areas for Improvement:** Analyzing common concerns and criticisms raised during debriefings to identify areas for program enhancement and implementing necessary changes to improve the travel experience.
- **Providing Further Care and Support:** Responding to traveler requests for additional information, evaluations, or support during their transition back to normal life, addressing issues such as reverse culture shock and social or academic reintegration.

- **Recognizing and Managing Stress:** Understanding the different types of stress experienced by travelers, familiarizing oneself with the signs and symptoms of stress, and providing appropriate support and interventions to mitigate its impact.

## GOV Program Governance & Stakeholder Engagement

Functional program governance demands effective structures and the prioritization of stakeholder engagement to ensure the success of an international education program.

Competency areas:

- **Program Charter:** Creating an official document that outlines the goals, responsibilities, and risk management plan of the international education program, incorporating health, safety, and security considerations into the program's mission statement.
- **Identifying Stakeholders and Driving Engagement:** Identifying key stakeholders and their roles, responsibilities, and influence in the international education program, and developing strategies to engage and involve them in program decision-making and operations.
- **Communication:** Establishing a comprehensive communication plan to regularly update stakeholders on program developments, risk management efforts, and crisis management capabilities, tailored to each stakeholder's level of engagement and preferred communication method.
- **Stakeholder Feedback and Procedure Enhancement:** Engaging proactively with stakeholders to gather actionable feedback aimed at identifying improvement opportunities, resolving concerns, and optimizing program operations.

## OPT Program Optimization & Continuous Improvement

Program optimization and continuous improvement rely on evaluating, benchmarking, and continuously improving the health, safety, and security capabilities of an international education program.

Competency areas:

- **Benchmarking:** Proactively comparing program capabilities with peer institutions, industry standards, and established frameworks to identify areas for improvement and align with best practices.
- **Continuous Quality Improvement:** Logging and analyzing events, identifying trends and gaps, and taking necessary steps to continuously evaluate and enhance emergency and crisis response plans.
- **After-Action Review:** Identifying gaps, weaknesses, and areas for improvement is essential. Additionally, establishing a culture of accountability within the program team ensures consistent compliance with standard operating procedures and communication protocols.

**TRN** Team Training & Development

**Effective team training and development ensure program safety and risk management through thorough staff onboarding, collaboration, and a culture of continuous learning.**

**Competency areas:**

- **Staff Onboarding:** Consistently onboarding new staff members with a standardized checklist and providing them with the necessary training on departmental policies and procedures.
- **Training:** Providing targeted and comprehensive training programs for the international education team, including crisis management certifications and cross-training in risk management.
- **Team Collaboration:** Fostering collaboration and a clear understanding of roles and responsibilities within the international education team through routine training sessions and a centralized resource hub.
- **Continuous Learning:** Encouraging staff members to engage in continuous learning by participating in external training opportunities such as conferences, webinars, and formal training programs to enhance their skills and knowledge in risk management and support services.

**MET** Metrics and Analytics

**Recording program metrics and analyzing data drives informed decision-making and reduces risk in international education programs.**

**Competency areas:**

- **Case Management Systems:** Implementing a case management system to document and track safety and risk incidents that occur within the international education program. This system captures key data points and ensures compliance with specified regulations.
- **Measuring Metrics:** Establishing and measuring metrics to detect trends, risks, and anomalies. Subsequently, conducting meaningful analysis and presenting data to key stakeholders.
- **Analytics and Analyzing Trends in Data:** Validating and analyzing collected data involves processing information and identifying trends, which in turn supports proactive decision-making to address increased risks.

## POL Policies and Documentation

**Policies and documentation enable the establishment and maintenance of effective management for international education programs.**

### Competency areas:

- **University Policies:** Developing guidelines and policies related to academic standards, residence guidelines, insurance coverage, and financial burdens for travelers abroad.
- **Independent Travel Policies:** Establishing policies that outline procedures for notifying program managers about independent travel plans and addressing issues related to independent student travel and personal decisions to remain abroad.
- **Withdrawal, Disciplinary, and Emergency Return Policies:** Creating clear policies and procedures for program participants who decide to withdraw from the international education program, addressing disciplinary actions abroad, and outlining measures and requirements for emergency returns to the home country.
- **Documentation and Change Management:** Ensuring proper documentation and periodic review of all policies and resources, maintaining an approval chain and change management process, and documenting student acknowledgment of program policies.

## EXT External Partnerships

**Partnerships with external organizations and institutions greatly enhance the safety and security of international education programs.**

### Competency areas:

- **Identification of Potential Partners:** Identifying and establishing relationships with relevant external partners, including local government, law enforcement officials, educational institutions, diplomatic missions, industry networks, and medical/security providers.
- **Partnership Functions:** Defining the roles and responsibilities of each external partner, establishing clear communication channels, and leveraging their expertise and resources to support various aspects of the program.
- **Documentation and Agreements:** Maintaining formal documents such as contracts to ensure a clear understanding of the collaboration between the program and external partners.
- **Partner Vetting:** Conducting thorough screenings and evaluations of potential partners, particularly those involved in travel arrangements, transportation, activities, and excursions, to mitigate risks and ensure traveler safety.
- **Joint Planning and Resource Allocation:** Facilitating joint planning sessions between university stakeholders and external partners to define the purpose of the partnership, allocate resources, and establish shared responsibilities.

## Practice Exam

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- 1. Which of the following best describes the concept of duty of care in the context of international education programs?**
  - a. A legal obligation for universities to prioritize student safety and protect them from foreseeable threats
  - b. A requirement for universities to obtain consent from travelers for international education programs
  - c. A policy that allows universities to transfer liability to third-party organizations
  - d. A financial responsibility for universities to cover all expenses incurred during international education programs
  
- 2. Which of the following factors is not a key consideration when determining the risk level of travel destinations?**
  - a. Quality of local cuisine and tourist attractions
  - b. Political stability and economic growth
  - c. Availability of public transportation and healthcare facilities
  - d. Local crime rates and civil unrest
  
- 3. Which of the following should be a key focus of any pre-departure training?**
  - a. Preparing to Go Abroad
  - b. Traveler Safety and Security
  - c. Health and Wellness
  - d. All of the Above
  
- 4. Which of the following terms refers to the psychological and emotional disorientation experienced when individuals are exposed to new customs or environments?**
  - a. Stress
  - b. Culture Shock
  - c. Depression
  - d. Anxiety
  
- 5. Which risk reduction technique involves shifting the risk from the program manager to another party?**
  - a. Risk avoidance
  - b. Risk sharing
  - c. Risk mitigation
  - d. Risk transfer
  
- 6. Which of the following represents the three main phases of crisis management?**
  - a. Crisis Planning, Crisis Response, Crisis Mitigation
  - b. Crisis Preparation, Crisis Response, Crisis Recovery
  - c. Crisis Monitoring, Crisis Engagement, Crisis Resolution
  - d. Crisis Identification, Crisis Containment, Crisis Evaluation
  
- 7. What source provides a destination tool to find vaccine and health recommendations for a specific location?**
  - a. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

- b. U.S. Department of State
  - c. Occupational Safety and Health Administration
  - d. World Health Organization
8. \_\_\_\_\_ is caused by direct experience of, or close exposure to, a sudden, unexpected, and violent event.
- a. Traumatic Stress
  - b. Basic Stress
  - c. Cumulative Stress
  - d. None of the Above
9. Which of the following is not a key component of establishing a stakeholder engagement plan?
- a. Identifying all key stakeholders and their roles
  - b. Conducting regular briefings for key stakeholders
  - c. Establishing a communications plan
  - d. Developing detailed crisis response plans.
10. According to an institution's International Travel Policy, travel to elevated-risk destinations must be approved by the Office of Global Education, and then approved by the University Risk Manager. This is an example of \_\_\_\_\_.
- a. Parallel approval
  - b. Sequential approval
  - c. Risk transfer
  - d. Prerequisite approval
11. What is the primary goal of benchmarking against peer institutions?
- a. To ensure compliance with industry standards.
  - b. To establish a network of external stakeholders.
  - c. To identify areas for program enhancement.
  - d. To implement new management processes.
12. What is a reason to record metrics about health and safety pertaining to an international education program?
- a. To effectively inform decisions about health, safety, and security incidents and to reduce risk exposure.
  - b. For ease in logging incidents.
  - c. To automate after-action reviews
  - d. All of the Above
13. Emulating different emergency events to allow managers and their teams to gain insight as to how to better respond during a crisis is known as \_\_\_\_\_.
- a. Threat Assessments
  - b. Crisis Simulations
  - c. Risk Mitigation
  - d. Risk Assessments
14. Which case set the precedent that universities are responsible for following disability service guidelines even when travelers are studying abroad?
- a. Bloss v. University of Minnesota (1999)

- b. King v. Board of Control of Eastern Michigan University (2002)
- c. Tezca v. University of San Francisco (2013)
- d. Boisson v. Arizona Board of Regents (2015)

**15. What is the current non-binding universal guideline for travel risk management standards as of 2021?**

- a. ISO 31030
- b. The Forum on Education Abroad's Standards of Good Practice
- c. World Health Organization's Travel Health Guidelines
- d. Occupational Safety and Health Administration's Travel Safety Regulations

## Answer Key

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1. A
2. A
3. D
4. B
5. D
6. B
7. A
8. A
9. D
10. B
11. C
12. A
13. B
14. C
15. A

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## About SafeAbroad

We're the international education safety experts. It is our mission to prepare travelers and study abroad managers to navigate and manage the risks of international education.

SafeAbroad is a leader in security consulting and risk analysis for international education. As certified security analysts and study abroad alumni, our team understands the global risk landscape.

Our analysts have helped build fusion centers for government agencies and corporations. We've conducted security risk assessments in every corner of the world, and we've helped corporate executives plan safe travel to high-risk destinations. Now, we're applying these skills and technologies to help international education programs travel confidently and to help program managers navigate and manage the risks of international education.

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