International Safety and Security Positions in Higher Ed
White Paper

Introduction

Pulse is a collaborative and diverse member-led network of risk, health, safety, and security professionals. The positions of Pulse members are primarily dedicated to higher education international travel, activities, and operations with a risk management focus. As of May 2021 Pulse is in the final stages of incorporation as a 501c3 in order to better serve the growing field of international risk management. Its goal is to influence and lead in the advancement of knowledge in risk, health, safety, and security in higher education international pursuits. Awareness among institutions of higher education on the benefits of these positions and membership in the organization itself has brought consistent and significant growth since Pulse's inception in 2010. Twenty-three Pulse positions were added since 2018 with thirteen institutions adding their first Pulse position including at two institutions from outside of the United States. To support the growth, professionalization and interest in international travel safety, Pulse welcomes conversation and support of the positions based on the principles laid out in this document.

Pulse membership is available to professionals working in higher education whose roles are primarily dedicated to international health, safety, and security. Colleagues interested in exploring membership in Pulse or in developing a Pulse-eligible position may contact info@pulseintl.org. Inquiries will be directed to the appropriate contact within Pulse leadership for follow-up.

Member Resources and Benefits

- Communication platform for formal and informal dialogues amongst colleagues
- Collection of resources that includes examples of policy, procedure, and training materials
- Data feeds with automatic alerts of U.S. State Department Travel Advisory updates, CDC Travel Notice updates, and major international events
- Updates regarding legislation and insurance/assistance providers' policies
- Benchmarking and surveys
- Leadership opportunities for professional and personal growth

Member Events

- Monthly professional development opportunities
- Two in-person meetings per year

Background

While every university must make decisions to create these positions based on an assessed institutional need, and continual budget restraints, Pulse urges institutions to follow these guidelines when establishing positions. Our

professional body has come to these guidelines based on our collective service to the field and representation at over 80 institutions.

Pulse surveys the field of international safety and security professionals on a bi-annual basis and our Spring 2020 survey was completed by 77% of our membership. The *Pulse Takes Its Pulse* survey helps to elucidate the professionalism and impact of these positions on higher education risk management. In addition, it provides direction to the field and its members on resource and professional development needs to consider as demands for international risk management expertise continually evolve. Pulse members have served on the educational boards of OSAC, the FORUM, NAFSA and URMIA professional organizations, as well as on the advisory boards of third-party providers. As Pulse positions are often new to the institution, the duties, levels of responsibility and continued professional growth of this position must be considered.

Guiding Principles of International Safety and Security Positions

Pulse provides guidance on the following aspects of international safety and security positions for institutions to consider in creating these positions, and to use in reassessing the positions that currently exist on your campus:

1. **Professional Background of Candidates**
2. **Position Placement**
3. **Position Descriptors and Appropriate Salary**
4. **Growth Internal to the Institution**
5. **Professional Development**
6. **Budgeting and Resources**

PROFESSIONAL BACKGROUND OF CANDIDATES

International safety and security professionals bring varied backgrounds to their roles. Direct experience in education abroad offices or other previous experience in higher education is beneficial to these types of positions though not required. Other areas that enhance the skills needed to be successful are backgrounds in civilian federal government, NGOs, military, law, Peace Corps, as well as education abroad experience with third party providers.

A background in health, safety, and security, or risk management, regardless of whether it is in the context of higher education, is also important to navigate the demands of emergency response and crisis management, as well as policy development.

Experience living, working, and/or studying abroad provides useful context to the competencies of the position. While beneficial, especially when liaising with overseas partners or conducting site visits, proficiency in a foreign language is not essential. Though not imperative to carry out the duties of the position, nearly 80% of Pulse members possess a master's degree or above.

POSITION PLACEMENT

As the nature of these positions is to create and/or enforce international policy and protocols, it is essential that positions have reporting lines to those who have authority to direct or influence decision-making over the institution's global activities including oversight of academic, administrative, and/or financial matters.

Institutional placements of these positions are commonly located in the following units (in order of frequency): Provost's Office (24%), Study Abroad (17%), Provider (14%), Public Safety (9%) up from 5% in 2018, Risk Management (8%) down from 16% in 2018, and the remaining 28% is spread among a variety of other units, including Program Management and Global Services or Operations.

POSITION DESCRIPTORS AND APPROPRIATE SALARY

Since the creation of these roles at institutions, there has been great variance in the responsibilities and duties of positions in this field. We provide these guidelines as reasonable expectations for the levels of positions based upon the current state of the field, input from the 2020 annual survey of our membership, and best practices for supporting the safety and security of international travelers in higher education. If resources are limited to just supporting one full-time position at an institution, it is critical to provide at least some part-time administrative support to ensure that a travel safety manager can focus on the more critical tasks of the position: risk assessment, monitoring of world affairs, crisis response and tracking and training of travelers.

With the understanding that there are great differences in cost of living and accepting the fact there are great variances in the duties and responsibilities, we assume the following:

- Given the variability of institution makeup (public, private, and third-party provider), institution size, and placement of the position within an institution, salaries also vary. Pulse recommends that institutions who are considering creating a new position benchmark with peer institutions who already have Pulse positions. Pulse members are also available for consultation.

- Pulse recognizes international risk management positions are highly specialized roles that deal with the complex world of international affairs, data analysis, and must have its heart inside of risk management, legal affairs, international education and insurance compliance.

- Pulse believes that while one could rise to become an international risk manager from any of these fields that one *could not* become a professional of international risk management without 2-4 years of experience in any one of these fields.

- Pulse believes that certain realities of a position may warrant additional remuneration such as serving as the sole 24/7 emergency responder; managing extensive travel to high-risk locations; managing a diverse range of international experiences, such as independent student research travel, non-credit student organization travel, faculty and staff travel; supporting a portfolio with several branches or facilities abroad.

- Pulse recognizes that internal human resource policies at some institutions may impact titles and encourages institutions to examine closely the **responsibilities** of the position as described below when determining the appropriate salary.

TYPES OF POSITIONS IN INTERNATIONAL SAFETY AND SECURITY

Coordinator
Salary Range = $50K-$65K

- Reports to a Director level position in International Safety and Security, Risk Management and Insurance, Public Safety or the Director of Study Abroad that provides direction and supervision for the position.
- Under the direction of a supervisor:
  - Supports the development of travel safety initiatives programs on behalf of a centralized office
  - Manages travel registration and tracking of travelers
  - Provides education and training for travelers
  - Conducts research and monitoring of world affairs
  - May provide assistance in the event of an international crisis
  - Conducts pre-departure orientations
  - Researches and provides analyses of high-risk locations

Analyst
Salary Range = $65K to $80K

- Reports to a Director level position in International Safety and Security, Risk Management and Insurance, Public Safety or the Director of Study Abroad that provides direction and supervision for the position
- Has all of the duties and responsibilities of the Coordinator level and under the direction of a director:
  - Provides detailed risk assessment of university travel including approval/disapproval recommendations
  - Sends timely warnings to travelers
  - Works with supervisor on policy development and protocols
  - Works with supervisor on the creation of a crisis management plan
  - Provides assistance in an international crisis
  - May assist with compliance for Clery, Title IX, VAWA
  - May provide limited coverage (less than 20%) of 24/7 emergency response line

Assistant Director/ Manager
Salary Range = $75K to $100K

- Reports to a Director level position in Risk Management and Insurance, Public Safety or the Director of Study Abroad that provides direction and supervision for the position

- Has all the duties and responsibilities of the Analyst level and…

  - Interprets and clarifies policies in support of institutional clients
  - Develops training materials for faculty/staff
  - Responsible for creation of online pre-departure orientations
  - Coordinates program development of program advisors/administrators seeking to create international programs
  - Prepares and conducts safety and return briefs for high-risk travelers
  - Coordinates a team of international crisis management
  - May handle program management and crisis management in collaboration with team of managers
  - Does site inspections, under the direction of a director level position
  - Assists in the writing proposals for contracts
  - May serve as a primary responder (more than 50%) for 24/7 international crisis

Associate Director
*Salary Range = $90K - $115K **(though if highest position, salary may fall in Director range)***

- May report to Vice-Provost or Senior International Officer

- Has all the duties and responsibilities of the Assistant Director level and...

  - Writes policy working with high-level administrators
  - Has campus wide institutional mandate for international travel safety procedures
  - May serve as a Title IX deputy coordinator
  - Has influence over budget and has ability to allocate resources in a fixed amount under the discretion of their supervisor
  - Responsible for creation or revision of crisis management plan
  - Implements a crisis management plan across campus
  - May be the primary 24/7 responder for international crisis (more than 75%)
  - Approves international travel to high-risk locations
  - Regularly conducts international site inspections and security reports
  - Actively engaged in professional activities in the field (OSAC, Forum, URMIA, Pulse, etc.)

Director / Senior Advisor / Vice President
Salary Range = $110K - $170K+

- Reports to a Vice-Provost, Provost or President level position.
- May have staff that reports to the position, including but not limited to: Coordinator/Analyst position, Assistant Director and/or Associate Director.
- Has all the duties and responsibilities of the Associate Director level and...
    - Has budget authority: development and expenditure
    - May be chair of an international travel safety committee
    - Has authority to suggest the closure of programs, working with other college administration
    - 24/7 responder for international crisis
    - Sets policies and monitors compliance
    - Manages international crisis response for the institution
    - Full capacity to negotiate insurance related for insurance or other contracts
    - Participates in university-wide enterprise risk management and decisions
    - Campus spokesperson for international travel safety and risk (i.e. Media, etc.)
    - Sets compliance for: Clery, title IX, VAWA
    - Works with Research Office on Export Control and university decisions regarding compliance and support for international researchers
    - Assesses training and advising needs
    - Develops training for program leaders for resources and materials
    - Identifies growth areas and develops strategies to address needs
    - Supervises individuals responsible for implementing training
    - Takes leadership positions in the global community, i.e., chair or board member of OSAC, Forum, Pulse, URMIA, etc.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND GROWTH INTERNAL TO THE INSTITUTION

It is important that the position has room to grow or "steps" that lead to its professional development. While a position may begin as a Coordinator or Assistant Director, the institution should consider room for the position to continue to move upwards as expertise and responsibilities grow. Given the importance of having an international safety and security manager that has a good understanding of the resources and risk tolerance of the institution, a growth pathway is critical to retaining a knowledgeable and engaged employee.

Continuing to be professionally engaged is essential for International Safety and Security positions. Information sharing and networking, whether through professional conferences, committees, or workshops, provides invaluable resources; therefore, occasional to frequent attendance at these types of industry events is imperative to success in these roles. The freedom and ability to serve on national committees and/or industry working groups outside the home institution also greatly enhances these positions.

According to the 2020 Pulse Survey, the most popular conferences attended by respondents were the OSAC Annual Briefing and the Forum Health & Safety Seminar each year. Additionally, 85% of the respondents indicate that they attend at least one Pulse meeting each year.

Relevant Conferences:

Overseas Security Advisory Council (OSAC)
 Annual Briefing
 Academia Sector Committee (ASC) College & University Health, Safety, & Security Seminars
 Women in Security Committee (WIS)
 Common Interest Councils and Regional Sector Committee Seminars

University Risk Management and Insurance Association (URMIA)
 Annual Conference
 Regional Conferences

Forum on Education Abroad
 Forum's Standard of Good Practice (Standard 8) Institutes
 Annual Conference
 European Conference

NAFSA: Association of International Educators
 Annual Conference
 Regional Conferences

Information sharing:

Pulse and OSAC Councils and Committees- maintain listservs and contacts throughout the field and Pulse generally meets as a group in conjunction with the OSAC Annual Briefing and the Forum's Standard 8 Good Practice Institute.

BUDGETING AND RESOURCES

Institutions should consider providing for an operational budget or designated funds from a larger budget to support a full-time international safety and security position and must allocate funds for commonly needed resources including a laptop, multiple screens, and a cellular phone. Providing additional resources such as subscriptions to risk assessments, travel tracking systems and funding for site visits can greatly enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of the position. Pre-COVID-19, most current Pulse members conducted one or two site visits a year with those working for Provider organizations conducting as many as six site visits per year. The mean for travel expenditure from 2020 survey respondents was $6000.

About the 2020 PULSE Annual Survey

The 2020 Pulse Survey was administered in Spring 2020 to all Pulse Members and included questions about personal/professional background, institutional background, current position responsibilities, travel population, salary and institutional support and resources of those currently working in full-time international safety and security positions. The survey was developed by a subcommittee of Pulse members and was administered through Qualtrics. The survey was anonymous and 77% of the membership participated.

The 2020 Survey included a separate Provider survey to gather information of specific interest to those who work for Provider organizations. Providers tend to have much larger numbers of participants, sometimes in excess of 10,000 travelers and their structures and resources do not always mirror the operations of a university or college. The Providers survey included most of the questions included in the University/College version of the survey.

Notable findings from the Provider survey included a wide range in salaries (below director-equivalent, $45k-$117K; director-equivalent or higher, $58k-$171k); varied on-call responsibilities (ranging from 6-52 weeks per annum, average 40 weeks), and a widely varied benefits package. Seventy-one (71) percent hold an advanced degree. They reported a wide range of time engaged in international HSS (1- 25 years; average 10.5 years) as well as time engaged in higher education (4-30 years, average 12.14 years.) Sixty-five (65) percent reported having additional responsibilities added to their job post-COVID onset, forty-two (42) percent reported their organization having a staffing reduction due to COVID-19.

As the 2020 Survey was conducted in late April to early May, early in the COVID-19 pandemic, it included some early questions about the impact of COVID-19 on the profession. 60% of respondents expected a budget cut for the 2020-21 academic year. The majority of Pulse members, 61%, saw additional duties assigned to their position including assessing and supporting domestic and personal travel. At the time of the survey, staff reduction measures were minimal with only 8 members reporting furloughs or lay-offs. Thirty-one Pulse staff members indicated that they were involved in the closure of their domestic campus in addition to their responsibilities closing international activities. Following on the stress of managing the mass departures of travelers in March 2020 and an uncertain future for international travel, nearly 45 % of Pulse members indicated that they were considering a career change in the 2020 Survey. Further research on the full impact of COVID-19 on international risk management positions is warranted.

Ninety-two respondents selected a value for Estimated Overall number of travelers for which they are directly responsible. Two respondents noted they either did not know or did not track the number. Respondents were separated between universities and providers, with providers generally serving much larger populations of travelers. Three providers indicated a travel population of more than 10,000 travelers with the greatest number of providers supporting 3000-6000 travelers (6). For the university respondents (79), the greatest response was 2001-3000 (18), followed by 1001-2000 (12 choices) and 4001-5000 & 5001-6000 (10 choices each).

For more detailed information about the Pulse survey or for additional guidance in creating a full-time International Safety and Security position at your institution, please contact Pulse: info@pulseinternational.org.