Travel to Cuba by U.S. citizens and residents is generally restricted because of the U.S. embargo on trade with Cuba. However, restrictions on travel for education and academic research were eased in January 2011. This document provides general guidance to the Penn community for Cuba travel. Penn travelers should be mindful that the OFAC regulations are subject to change, so specific requirements should be checked prior to departure. Those interested in traveling to Cuba are also referred to the OFAC Cuba sanctions website (http://www.treasury.gov/resource-center/sanctions/Programs/Pages/cuba.aspx) for complete information.

**Cuba Travel Eligible for University of Pennsylvania Sponsorship**

The following activities may be sponsored by Penn and conducted under a General License available to accredited U.S. undergraduate and graduate degree granting academic institutions:

- Educational travel program in Cuba as part of a course offered for credit at Penn
- Graduate student travel to Cuba for academic research specifically related to Cuba where the research will be accepted for credit towards the graduate degree at Penn
- Participation in a formal course of study at a Cuban academic institution where the completed coursework will be accepted for credit toward the student’s degree by Penn (For undergraduate students, this activity is administered through the Office of International Programs. Please see http://www.upenn.edu/oip for application information)
- Penn faculty travel to Cuba to teach at a Cuban academic institution, provided that the duration of teaching is no shorter than 10 weeks, the teaching activities are related to an academic program at the Cuban institution, and the faculty member remains employed by Penn for the travel period
- Travel to Cuba by Penn faculty and staff that may be required for organization of and preparation for any of these activities may also be sponsored by Penn.

Penn faculty, staff, and students traveling to Cuba under University of Pennsylvania sponsorship are required by OFAC regulations to carry an appropriate authorization letter printed on University letterhead and signed by the designated representative for Penn. Please contact expctrl@lists.upenn.edu or 215-573-8817) for assistance in obtaining the required letter.
Travel to Cuba for Professional Research and Professional Meetings

Penn faculty wishing to travel to Cuba to attend professional meetings or to engage in research activities may be able to do so under a General License. In order for such activities to meet the requirements for this general license, the following conditions must be met:

Professional research must:

- Be of a non-commercial, academic nature
- Comprise a full-time work schedule in Cuba
- Have a substantial likelihood of public dissemination
- Not be in pursuit of a hobby, tourism, or recreational travel

Professional meetings:

- Must be organized by an international professional organization headquartered outside the United States unless a specific license to hold the meeting in Cuba has been obtained
- May not have the purpose of promoting tourism or other commercial activities in Cuba
- May not have the purpose to promote production of biotechnological products.

Information Applicable to All Authorized Cuba Travel

Travel arrangements for Cuba travel must be made through a travel service provider authorized by OFAC. The current list of authorized providers may be found at:


OFAC restrictions limit per diem spending in Cuba to the current federal rates. The allowable per diem expense amounts may be found at:


NO Penn-owned equipment, including laptop computers, digital cameras, or cell phones may be taken to Cuba without a license from the Department of Commerce. It may take up to 2 months to obtain a license. Such items that are personally owned by the traveler may be taken to Cuba as long as they do not contain export-controlled technology. The items need to be kept under the control of the traveler while in Cuba and must be brought back to the U.S. Please contact the Export Compliance Office (expctrl@lists.upenn.edu) if you need additional information.

All records of transactions related to Cuba travel must be retained for 5 years after the completion of the travel.

Travelers to Cuba may not bring back to the U.S. goods of Cuban origin, including cigars, rum, and manufactured items. Only informational materials may be brought back to the United States from Cuba.

Additional Considerations

The above information is to ensure compliance with the United States Cuban Assets Control Regulations administered by OFAC. In addition to meeting these requirements, travelers to Cuba must meet all applicable visa requirements imposed by the Cuban Government. Generally, educational travel must be approved or arranged through an agency authorized by the Cuban Government or sponsored by a Cuban institution, such as the University of Havana. Professional research must similarly be sponsored by a
Cuban institution. It is important to recognize that sponsoring organizations in Cuba will have their own processes for approval, and that it may take several weeks or months for a proposed activity to be approved by the sponsor.

Information on Cuba travel visas may be obtained by calling the Cuba Interests Section in Washington, DC. Phone calls to the Academic Visa Section should be directed to 202-797-8518 ext 123 or via US mail by at: 2630 16th Street NW, Washington, DC 20009.