COVID-19 Guidance and Frequently Asked Questions for Study Abroad Program Directors
September 2021

COVID-19 GUIDANCE

<u>When planning your study abroad program and before departure:</u>

1) Familiarize yourself with the COVID-19 situation in your destination country and stay informed. Speak to your local contacts, study abroad provider (if using one) and visit Department of State, US Embassies abroad and the US Centers for Disease Control country-specific websites: US Department of State International Travel, US Embassies, and US CDC Travel Notices. Be sure to review COVID-19 testing and vaccination requirements and plans, social distancing protocols, shutdowns and lockdowns in the destination country.

2) Consider limiting your study abroad program proposal to one destination country so that you are not subject to different national COVID-19 policies and the possibility of border crossings being closed because of COVID-19.

3) Consider social distancing recommendations in your accommodation and transportation plans and your program budget. SAP recommends no more than two students per room.

4) Plan for the possibility of you or your students testing positive for COVID-19 during the program or when getting tested to return to the United States. How will the study abroad program continue? What resources and support do you need in implementing this plan?

5) Consider including airfare in your program fee so that GSU can purchase airfare for you and your students and assist all of you with group changes in dates and cancellations for study abroad program.

6) If possible, do not pay for accommodations or airfare for your study abroad program until at least 90 days before the program to limit the financial impact of cancellation to GSU, the students and yourself. Check cancellation policies and change fees before payment. As always, route contracts as soon as possible, but the Office of Legal Affairs will likely approve with a note that they should not be signed by the campus signatory until closer to the date of the program.

7) Plan for you and students to get tested for COVID-19 before returning to the United States. Include the cost of testing in your program budget.

8) Stay up to date on the COVID-19 situation in your destination country and keep students informed. The US Department of State and the US Centers for Disease Control are monitoring the situation around the world. Please visit their websites for up to date information on the situation in your destination country: US DOS International Travel and US CDC Travel Notices.

9) Stay up to date with entry requirements to your destination country and share information with students. Are US citizens able to enter the destination country? Do you need a negative COVID-19 test before travel to this country? Is proof of vaccination a requirement to enter the country without quarantine? For information about these requirements, visit the website of the US Embassy in your destination country: US Embassies Abroad

10) Recommend to students that they be fully vaccinated for COVID-19 before departure. For more information regarding getting a vaccine, see: https://ahead.gsu.edu/covid-19-resources/covid-19-vaccine/

11) Become familiar with your mandatory CISI study abroad insurance and consider "cancel for any reason" and "interrupt for any reason" insurance in addition to your study abroad insurance. Please see below for frequently asked questions regarding the CISI insurance.

12) If you and your students are flying together as a group, check if your airline requires any health information, testing, or other documents. Some destinations require testing before travel and/or after arrival. Information about testing requirements for your destination is available from the US Department of State, Bureau of Consular Affairs, Country Information.

13) Enroll in STEP for the duration of your study abroad program to receive alerts and advisories shared with US citizens living in your destination country. Encourage your students to do the same. To enroll, visit https://step.state.gov/step/

While Abroad:

1) Remind students at in-country orientation that they need to follow local and national guidelines while abroad (including lockdown measures, curfews, and other masking and social distancing restrictions) and what to do if they have been exposed to COVID-19 and/or experience symptoms of COVID-19. You can find testing locations on the US Embassy website for your destination country at https://www.usembassy.gov/. This testing may be at your own expense or the student's expense.

2) If a student or you test positive for COVID-19, immediately isolate yourself and follow local public health recommendations. Do not travel until it is safe for you to be around others; this includes your return trip home. See below FAQ for more information on this situation.

   Please remember that you can always call the Study Abroad emergency phone number at GSU. That number is 470-825-3986.

Preparing for return to the United States

Students and you will need a negative COVID-19 test before boarding an airplane back to the United States. Schedule this test for students and yourself. For more information on this requirement, visit: US CDC information on testing prior to return to United States. Testing locations abroad can be found here: US Embassies Abroad

Return to the United States

Please follow CDC guidance for self-isolating upon return to the United States, if applicable. https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/travelers/testing-international-air-travelers.html

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FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

1) What is GSU's study abroad insurance policy?

All program directors and students traveling on Georgia State study abroad programs are covered with international medical insurance through [Cultural Insurance Services International](#) (CISI). The insurance is included in the cost of all faculty-led programs and is also required for students participating in exchange programs.

2) If I become sick abroad, will my international medical insurance cover me?

Yes, if you get sick abroad, CISI insurance will cover you while you are sick abroad. Check the website for exclusions.

3) If I become sick abroad (with COVID-19 or any other illness), may I be transported back to the United States for medical treatment?

No, not unless the situation constitutes a medical emergency evacuation.

4) What constitutes a medical emergency evacuation?

Medical evacuations are executed when the evacuation is deemed necessary. The treating physician must recommend an evacuation and must clear the student for travel (per an evacuation plan devised by that physician).

5) If I become ill/hurt abroad, will the insurance cover continuing treatment once I arrive back in the US?

Benefits will be paid up to policy limits for expenses incurred in the United States for accidents or illnesses which were first treated while participating in the study abroad program. These expenses must be incurred within 30 days after return to the United States.

6) Does CISI insurance cover the cost of quarantine abroad?

It does not. It will cover the cost of treatment for COVID-19 abroad but will not cover the cost of the quarantine itself. If you as program director or a student on your program need to quarantine abroad as a result of COVID-19, please call GSU's emergency phone number to inform SAP of the situation. SAP will review the program's budget and explore all available options to cover the cost of quarantine.

7) What is GSU's study abroad emergency phone number?

The study abroad emergency line is 470-825-3986. The number is answered by the Director of Study Abroad Programs or the Assistant Director of Study Abroad Programs 24/7.

8) As Program Director, am I liable if a student gets sick with COVID-19?
No, program directors are not liable. GSU study abroad waivers currently include COVID-19 as a possible risk of studying abroad.

9) What does SAP communicate to students with respect to country and airline requirements?

Study Abroad Programs will let students know that airlines and foreign countries may have their own requirements for international travel and entry into the country when it comes to masks, vaccines, testing,

quarantines, and social distancing and that these requirements may change. We share this information with the students in our COVID-19 guidance for students as well as our mandatory pre-departure meeting, and in student advising preparing for departure. Students and program directors will be subject to the rules of the airline and the laws of the foreign country when it comes to these items. As Program Director, please make sure to inform your students about airline and country requirements for your program before departure so they are aware of the rules and laws in place at the moment of departure.

10) If, as Program Director, I am hospitalized abroad with COVID-19, what happens to the students on my study abroad program and the rest of the study abroad program?

Please call the emergency line in Study Abroad Programs as soon as possible. If this is not possible, please ask a student to call it to inform SAP of the situation. SAP's primary concern will be with the health and safety of the faculty member and the students. SAP will work with your Department Chair to identify a colleague who could continue the study abroad program as Program Director. OII could also send staff to support the Program Director and students in the location abroad in case of emergency.

11) If a student on my program shows symptoms of COVID-19 while abroad, what should I do?

Please review the listing of COVID-19 testing sites available in your location at: https://www.usembassy.gov/ and assist the student in scheduling a COVID-19 test as soon as possible. Follow local protocols while awaiting COVID-19 test results.

12) If a student tests positive for COVID-19 while abroad, what should I do?

Immediately ask the student to isolate herself/himself/themselves and follow local public health recommendations or mandates with regard to quarantine. The student may not travel until it is safe to do so; this includes the return trip home. Student will need to stay in single accommodations during this time.

13) The destination country for my study abroad program requires proof of vaccination upon entry. What should I do?

Study Abroad Programs has prepared a vaccination acknowledgment to be signed by all students in your program prior to departure, indicating that they understand this vaccination requirement. The statement also includes language about their understanding that they will not be able to participate in study abroad program if they cannot show proof of vaccination at entry and that they will not be able to get a refund from GSU if they are not able to show proof of vaccination at point of entry.

14) Can I require students to be vaccinated prior to departure?

Study Abroad Programs and Georgia State University strongly recommend to students to get fully vaccinated for COVID-19 prior to departure for study abroad. However, neither SAP, GSU nor you can require this of your students.

15) Can I require students to wear masks on my study abroad program while abroad?

As travelers in a foreign country, you and the students are subject to the local and national laws of the destination country. Please follow local mandates regarding masks, social distancing, testing and quarantine. You can recommend students wear masks but cannot require it if it is not mandated abroad.

16) When should I purchase airline tickets and make housing accommodations for my program?

GSU has been making decisions regarding programs approximately 90 days before program departure. Please do not purchase airfare or make hotel accommodations until 90 days before departure. Consider having GSU purchase airfare for you and the students so that GSU can assist you with refunds and changes.