Short-Term Abroad Program Leader Guidelines (COVID-19)
GW Office of International Programs
Last Update: 5/5/2022

Introduction
As part of the 2021-2022 program development process, there will be additional requirements and expectations for faculty leading programs as the COVID-19 pandemic continues. The information will be updated regularly based on current conditions and you will be responsible for reviewing the details and understanding the implications for your program and making the necessary changes. The information detailed throughout this document will outline the new and existing requirements and set the expectation for new procedures. These guidelines apply to programs traveling through Summer 2022 – this guidance will be revised as needed prior to AY 2022-23.

Budget Considerations
Many of the guidelines laid out in this document may have implications for program budgets. Implementing some changes will increase the cost of the program significantly (i.e., if your host destination requires enforcing 6 ft of distance between all passengers on a private coach); while other changes (i.e., eliminating overnight trips to additional countries) will reduce costs. For short-term faculty-led programs, the planning budget, student fee collection, and payment of expenses are ultimately the responsibility of the program leader and sponsoring academic unit.

PPE and Safety Protocol
Faculty-led program leaders will be required to adhere to the standard of the international destination and local protocol.
The main points impacting a typical study abroad program are as follows:
- If your program destination(s) requires masks, social distancing, vaccine pass or other safety protocols, students must follow all policies set by the host country/region.
- It is highly recommended that unvaccinated students wear masks indoors and in congregate settings.
- Students are expected to bring their own masks.
- Program leaders should bring any other PPE and hand sanitizer either for the duration of the program or confirm that those supplies will be immediately available upon arrival.
- Program leader might consider the use of a travel lapel microphone and mini speaker (or individual student headsets) for the program due to masking policies and physical distancing requirements.

Mask/PPE/Social Distancing/Quarantine Compliance
Students who do not comply with GW COVID-19 protocols are subject to consequences per GW's Code of Student Conduct and COVID-19 Campus Health and Wellbeing Policy.

Please note that if a member of the group is required to quarantine for any reason and violates that quarantine or isolation requirement, the program leader must notify their sponsoring school/college and/or OIP right away to determine the appropriate course of action in response. It is important for all program participants to realize that quarantine/isolation regulations can be subject to GW student

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conduct policies and also local laws. Sanctions for individual students who refuse to comply may include expulsion from the education abroad program at the student's expense and result in and incomplete grade for the associated course. Violation of quarantine can also result in potential fines or criminal charges in some countries.

Travel Logistics

Pre-Travel | COVID-19 testing

Prior to program departure, students may be required to obtain a negative COVID-19 test result or an acceptable equivalent to enter the host country. Students should be aware of border requirements imposed by the host country, airline requirements, the timing of tests, PCR vs. Antigen, any connecting flight/country of transit policies, and host destination protocols or quarantines.

If a negative COVID test is not required to enter the host country, it is recommended that program leaders require students to submit proof of a negative COVID PCR test from the GW Public Health Lab (to minimize the opportunity of a fraudulent submission) 72-hours prior to departure. If a student does not satisfactorily submit this documentation prior to the program start date or if they cannot provide documentation from the Colonial Health Center of a positive COVID test in the last 90 days, the student should not be permitted to participate in the program since a COVID positive student risks infecting other program members.

Additionally, program leaders should allocate ample time and guidance to obtaining return test results, as required by the United States, in advance of their return flight. Please note, the international emergency medical insurance policy, GeoBlue, will not cover COVID-19 testing required for travel. Students should be expected to arrange and pay for their own testing.

International Flights

GW does not require students and leaders to participate in a group flight. However, faculty coordination of a group flight may minimize the number and scope of travel disruptions and delays in arriving on site. Please note that at each layover location, there may be COVID-19 symptom checks or pre-flight requirements.

Requirements for Air Travelers Returning to the U.S.

Air travelers, regardless of nationality or vaccination status, are required to show documentation of a negative viral test result taken within one day of the flight's departure to the United States before boarding. These include an antigen test or a nucleic acid amplification test (NAAT).
A test result must be in the form of written documentation (paper or digital copy). The documentation must include:

- Type of test (indicating it is a NAAT or antigen test)
- Entity issuing the result (e.g., laboratory, healthcare entity, or telehealth service)
- Sample collection date
    - A negative test result must show the sample was taken no more than 1 day before the flight.
    - A positive test result for documentation of recovery from COVID-19 must show the sample was taken within the 90 days before the flight.

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- Information that identifies the person (full name plus at least one other identifier such as date of birth or passport number)
- Test result - before boarding a flight to the U.S., the traveler will need to show a paper or digital copy of their test result for review by the airline and may be requested to show to public health officials after arrival in the U.S.

In lieu of a negative test, travelers who recently recovered from COVID-19 may instead travel with documentation of recovery from COVID-19 (i.e., positive COVID-19 viral test result on a sample taken no more than 90 days before the flight's departure from a foreign country, and a letter from a licensed healthcare provider or a public health official stating the traveler is cleared to travel). Travelers are likely to continue to test positive after the self-isolation period. The positive test result and letter together are referred to as "documentation of recovery."
See: https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/travelers/testing-international-air-travelers.html

Note: Non-U.S. citizens must be fully vaccinated to enter the U.S. Even if a student who is a non-U.S. citizen has an approved exemption to GW's vaccine policy that GW approved exemption is not a valid exemption for entry into the U.S.

Ground Transportation/Group Transportation
Any ground transportation that takes place during the education abroad program should be carefully considered for its necessity and safety.
- In-country public transportation (i.e., metro, public buses, train transportation): generally speaking, program leaders should carefully assess and know the local protocols for using public or private transportation and be transparent with students regarding levels of exposure to potentially large crowds. Program leaders should review country-specific information about health and safety concerns related to utilizing public transportation by utilizing the following resources:
  o US Department of State Travel Advisory for your destination country
  o Most of the travel advisories include a link to the local in-country embassy's COVID-19 information and travel protocol, with reference to local public transportation
  o If you cannot find the local embassy information through the US Department of State link above, then do an online search for US Embassy in (your country), open the embassy page and look for a link about COVID-19 information
- In-country private coach/bus should follow local guidelines and protocols as it relates to usage and capacity.

Day trips and overnight excursions
Many faculty-led programs typically include day trips and overnight excursions outside of the main host city. Other programs travel constantly because of the nature of the academic discipline being studied. Basic guidelines for an acceptable amount of excursions are included here:
- Programs are strongly encouraged to limit mobility to a single country and not cross international borders during program time. If crossing an international border is an academically-essential part of the program, it is recommended to have a single travel day and not return to the original host country.

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- o   Please be mindful, even fully-vaccinated individuals may be required to complete pre-travel COVID-19 testing when entering into new countries.
- o   Program leaders must consider contingency plans in the event that any member of the group is unable to cross the border due to COVID-19 complications (or other reasons).
- We strongly encourage the program to have one home base city where students spend a vast majority of the length of the program.
- Generally, any group travel outside of the city should be limited to academically-necessary excursions.

Housing and Accommodations

Housing arrangements should be reviewed in light of the following guidance:
- Student accommodations should be safe and sanitary. While there is not a maximum requirement for occupancy, we recommend two (2) students per bedroom.
- Private bathrooms are preferred for each bedroom to facilitate self-isolation as needed.
- Running water is required at all overnight accommodation locations. If running water is not available for a limited number of nights (i.e., safari camp for two nights), hand washing and sanitizing stations must be readily available.
- Program leader lodgings must be within reasonably close proximity to student accommodations in order to assist and support students on short notice.
- While homestay accommodations will be permitted, all families must be contracted with set expectations either with a third-party provider or individually facilitated by the program leader.
- Program leaders should plan for where leaders/students would quarantine or isolate individually if necessary.
- Students should have access to individual housing options at a premium cost.

<u>Meals</u>

Meals can be an important part of the academic and cultural experience abroad. However, large group meals can also present risks to participants. The following guidance should be followed whenever possible:
- Avoid scenarios with shared utensils, cutlery, drink pitchers, etc. (large group meals, family style, and self-serve buffet).
- For restaurant or dining hall meals, outside seating is strongly preferred.
- Participants should order their own, individual meals and drinks rather than sharing plates.

Technology and Internet

Program leaders should consider which, if any, elements of their academic program will be delivered online as a regular practice as well as how they would "switch" to virtual learning experiences if the on-the-ground situation suddenly warranted. Baseline questions to consider are included, but depending on the nature and location of the program, additional questions may be necessary for program leaders to evaluate:
- Which elements of the program, if any, will be delivered online? Examples include guest lectures from local faculty members, virtual tours of local sites or businesses that currently prohibit in-person group tours.

- What is the internet access like at my location? Will students be able to use Canvas, Zoom, and other online programs?
- Are there any restrictions in my destination country for websites or programs that will be vital to my students' success?
- If the on-the-ground situation suddenly warranted a move to virtual instruction (and the cancellation of all or most in-person classes, tours, and cultural events), how would I implement an academic continuity plan that would allow students to complete coursework, group projects, and cultural events?

Student Independent Travel (Weekends)
Students often want to travel outside of the main host city on weekends. Under the current COVID-19 circumstances, independent travel by students should be discouraged in case of possible border closures and sudden quarantine restrictions. The following guidelines should be observed:
- As leader, avoid planning for "long weekends" without academic activities. This will naturally discourage extended independent travel.
- Set parameters for any possible independent travel.
  - Students should not cross any national borders.
  - Students should not visit any location considered by local authorities to be a "hot spot" that might require quarantine upon arrival or departure.
  - Students should not utilize air transportation for independent travel arrangements.
- Students must "register" their travel with the program leaders, including exact route and travel schedule, hotel information, and working cell phone number.
- Students must check email, text messages, and phone twice a day while traveling in case any important messages are sent by the program leader or by GW.
- Students must notify the program leader immediately of any delays, travel disruptions, or COVID-19 related developments.

Symptom Monitoring
Vaccine exempt students must continue to update their symptoms in the CHC medical portal daily.

Testing After a Close Contact
Since all members of the group are likely to have been in close contact with the COVID positive student or program leader, students who are up-to-date with COVID-19 vaccinations should monitor themselves for symptoms and complete a COVID-19 test 3-5 days after exposure. If the test result is negative, students should continue to self-monitor for symptoms 10 days after exposure.

Vaccine exempt students must self-isolate for a minimum of 6 days (if the host country's guidance is longer, program leaders should follow that - the purpose is to ensure GW's self-isolation guidelines are followed at a minimum). Students should take a COVID-19 test immediately and complete a second COVID-19 test 5 days after exposure. If both tests are negative, and they have no symptoms, students can end quarantine on day 6. Once released from isolation, vaccine exempt students should continue to self-monitor for symptoms 10 days after exposure.

Close contact is defined as (1) being unmasked within approximately 6 feet (2 meters) of an individual with COVID-19 for more than 15 minutes over a 24-hour period, or (2) having direct contact with the infectious secretions from an individual with COVID-19.

Program leaders should prepare the following in advance of departure:
- find out where the group can obtain a COVID test in each destination they are traveling to*
- if testing is not expected to be easily obtained, the program should bring 1-2 antigen tests per person (or ask students to bring their own)
- determine if walk-ins are allowed or appointments are required for testing
- find out how much the tests cost
- find out how quick the turnaround time is (if it takes 2 days that is too long for the purpose of a pre-departure test)
- know where students can meet with a clinic or physician if they test positive and are not in a major city

*PCR testing with 24-48 hours turnaround time for results is the preferred method for post-exposure testing. If this is not feasible, a home antigen test kit will suffice.

Isolation After a Positive Test
To proactively prepare for the possibility of isolation during the program:
- Program leader should develop a program continuity plan (academic continuity, excursions or activities)
- Program leader should research how groceries and meals could be delivered to leaders or students under isolation
- Program leader should consult with their colleges/schools/academic departments about potential added expenses or budget impacts related to self-isolation procedures

If any member(s) of the study abroad program must participate in self-isolation at any point during the program due to a positive COVID test result, the following guidance would take effect:
- Program leaders must notify the sponsoring college/school immediately
- Students should contact their family or trusted contact at home to notify them
- Should a student develop symptoms of COVID-19, it is recommended they make a telemedicine appointment to speak with a physician through GeoBlue's app Global TeleMD. Should the student's symptoms worsen, or if they feel they need immediate medical care they should not hesitate to call the local 911 equivalent for emergency medical assistance.
- The student should self-isolate in accordance with the host country's guidelines (generally 5-7 days). If the host country has no self-isolation guidance in place, follow GW's guidance at a minimum:
  - Students should self-isolate for 5 days from the first full day of symptoms or the first day of a positive COVID test, whichever is earlier. If, on Day 5, the student is asymptomatic or their symptoms are markedly improved, the student should take an antigen test. If the Day-5 test is negative, the student is cleared from isolation. If the Day 5 test is positive, the student should continue to isolate and then test again on day 7 and clear isolation if the test is negative (most students test negative on Day 5). If the day 7 test is

positive, the student should isolate through day 10. (Note if there are enough testing kits, a test can be done at any time after 5 days of isolation. If each student has only two tests, then the day 5 and day 7 testing guidelines are recommended.)

- o Once released from isolation the student should continue to mask through the 10 day mark (10 days after the positive test or the onset of symptoms, whichever was first).

- Note that US airlines interpret the CDC guidance to mean that travelers who are not experiencing symptoms must quarantine for at least 5 days from the date they tested positive before they are cleared to travel.

The Program Leader should assist with the student's needs while in self-isolation. Initial contact will be by mobile phone.

- If housed with a roommate(s) with no access to a private bedroom, the student should be moved to another room where they will remain until being cleared. If there is a private bedroom but a shared bathroom, students should make a schedule to use the bathroom – if this cannot be accomplished, the student should be moved to another room. Students in isolation may not leave their residential unit unless there is a building emergency, or they are directed to leave by medical personnel to seek testing or medical care.
- If roommates test positive at the same time, they will isolate together.

Advise students to obtain travel insurance/CFAR insurance to assist w/the costs of self-isolation. GeoBlue does not cover self-isolation costs.

One program leader must remain onsite with a student who is self-isolating, beyond the program end date (if applicable). Also, if a student must remain onsite beyond the program end date due to COVID infection or other illness, let GW know so their GeoBlue insurance can be extended (extension request must be submitted to GeoBlue on or before the original program end date).

Hospitalization On-Site
Program leaders should be aware that routine medical care may have differing availability or protocol due to the pandemic. Please review the following considerations:
- Contact GeoBlue to schedule non-emergency appointments in advance
- Call ahead to any clinic or hospital (if possible) to ask about arrival and check-in procedures
- A program leader should accompany the student to appointments whenever possible, but please note that COVID-19 protocol may prevent the program leader from entering the facility
- If English-language health care is not readily available, consider that the student may be navigating an unfamiliar healthcare system without knowing the local language and norms.
- Students must be able to contact the leader by cell phone (not relying on WiFi) during the appointment.
- If any program participant must be hospitalized, the program leader should make every effort to ensure that the student receives quality care and has access to English-speaking providers.

- Keep in mind that during hospitalization it is unlikely that the student or leader would be allowed any visitors.

GeoBlue Insurance & COVID-19

GeoBlue is an accident and illness insurance plan. It does not provide the type of benefits found under a travel insurance or cancel for any reason insurance policy. Currently, GeoBlue does not offer any trip cancellation/trip interruption or quarantine coverage in its group medical plans. Students may wish to purchase travel insurance on an individual basis through https://www.hthtravelinsurance.com/8_travelprotector/compare_new.cfm

GeoBlue covers COVID testing when prescribed by a physician for symptomatic individuals or for individuals who were directly exposed and may be asymptomatic. If a student receives a prescription or referral through GeoBlue's telehealth vendor, the subsequent test would be covered. Students would submit a claim for a COVID test the same way as other medical services and indicate the reason/diagnosis on the claim form.

Please note that GeoBlue's Post Departure Trip Interruption and the Emergency Family Travel Arrangements benefits typically do not apply to COVID-19. In the case of the post-departure trip interruption benefit (the illness/injury would have to be "so disabling as to cause a reasonable person to determine that they cannot continue their trip or if an academic program" and the emergency family travel arrangements benefit requires hospitalization for more than 3 days or the patient must be in critical condition.

Guest Lecturers

Program leaders may wish to inform guest lecturers or include in any contracts that GW prefers guest lecturers be up-to-date with COVID-19 vaccines or have tested negative 72 hours prior to meeting w/students.

Contracts

Due to the uncertain nature of planning study abroad programs during the COVID-19 pandemic, contracts should be established for any company, vendor or third party that is providing essential program services. Examples include long-term housing arrangements for program participants, private bus charters, local "fixers" who coordinate various activities, and third-party providers who offer customized academic programs and services.