

Guidelines for study abroad activity summer and fall 2022.

The State University of New York (SUNY) takes the health and safety of all students as the highest priority. Particularly in the current era of COVID-19, concerns for health and safety are integral to study abroad program operation decision-making at both the campus and System levels. However, to maintain operational needs of campuses, students, and international partners, SUNY is prepared to operate. Recruiting and applications may continue, as long as applicants are informed that their chosen program may not run and deposits are waived or refundable. However, internally, campuses will be required to gather data to submit to SUNY Office of Global Affairs (OGA) for approval to operate the program. This will allow campuses to simultaneously promote study abroad programs and do their due diligence to assess each program. Programs are to be assessed on a term-by-term, program-by-program basis, in line with education abroad industry best practices.

Risk Management

The decision on offering study abroad relies on various risk management strategies including CDC and NYS guidelines for health and safety; acknowledges that each program will depend on conditions specific to regions and countries; mandatory vaccination; close monitoring of host country conditions by SUNY (organizing campus and System Administration); and SUNY support services.

US Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and Department of State (DOS) levels.

OGA and Campuses continuously monitor US Department of State (DOS) travel advisories and make decisions on continuation of programs in areas with elevated DOS risk levels according to the usual campus processes. While a country may have an acceptable CDC level, OGA will likely not approve a petition if the host country is rated as higher risk by the DOS due to non-COVID related security concerns.

Mandatory Vaccination.

All faculty/staff and students participating in SUNY Study Abroad programs must be fully vaccinated in order to be eligible to participate. Students should meet campus vaccination requirements for as if they were to be on campus.

Campus program administrators must inform applicants if the host country requires specific vaccines, and that if the applicant's vaccination does not match host country requirements, that they should consult with their health care provider and/or a travel medicine health care provider before starting a new vaccine series in order to be eligible for the program. SUNY cannot waive or accommodate any requirements for entry into another country.

Program Approval and Monitoring.

SUNY organizing/host campuses will request to offer eligible programs and will provide data on host, protocols and resources of the program and/or host campus, and academic continuity planning for various scenarios.

Other sources that will be used in determining program approval will be SUNY's international insurance provider's, [United Health Care Global](#), determination of level of care available in host country and other tools recommended by the [Overseas Security Advisory Council \(OSAC\)](#), [NAFSA: Association of International Educators](#), and [Forum on Education Abroad](#).

All approved programs will be monitored by OGA prior to the start date and until they conclude.

After approved programs begin, they will remain under active surveillance by the campus program sponsor, which must flag relevant developments to OGA, including any that may eventually result in a higher level of risk as assessed by the CDC and/or the Department of State (<https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/international-travel.html>). In recognition of the fact that these agencies' assessments may not be updated as soon as significant developments occur, the program sponsor campus must use additional sources to monitor conditions on the ground, before and after programs begin. Specific COVID travel notices:

<https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/traveladvisories/ea/covid-19-information1.html>

Study Abroad Summer and Fall 2022

This document outlines the conditions and steps necessary for offering study abroad and exchange programs in the Summer and Fall 2022. A process to assess campus requests to offer programs will attempt to address campus and student planning needs with these priorities. However, this continued uncertainty of the pandemic will inevitably require an extraordinary level of contingency planning by campuses sponsoring programs, even by best practice standards in international program administration.

If programs are approved and offered, SUNY campuses must submit program data and student contact information to OGA **no less than two weeks before departure**, and campuses are responsible for following up with students to confirm their best contact information abroad. OGA will provide further guidance on this process. All requests to offer programs will include the following.

1. Eligibility for the program request process

For summer and fall term 2022 programs, requests will be eligible for review if:

- a. The country is [rated by the CDC](#) as "[Level 1: COVID-19](#)," "[Level 2: COVID-19](#)," or "[Level 3: COVID-19](#)" or in some cases "[Level 4: COVID-19](#)" with a SUNY Risk Index score equal to or less than 2.50 as outlined on SUNY's COVID Risk Assessment Tool.
- b. The host country is admitting travelers from the United States (including with conditions), and
- c. The United States is admitting travelers from the host country (including with conditions), and
- d. The SUNY campus has conducted a partner survey which indicates COVID-19 preparedness from the affiliated program provider or partner university (where applicable), and
- e. The SUNY campus Responsible Executive Officer, in most cases the Chief Academic Officer (CAO), affirms campus support for the planned activities. Each campus should determine whether the President and/or Chief Financial Officer should be consulted on plans to operate programs.

Because the CDC COVID-19 risk assessments by country are relatively new, eligible cases will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis along with information from multiple sources as outlined above. The following chart indicates under what conditions a program is eligible to petition and indicates which measures may be required for relaunch.

Table 1: Eligibility for the program relaunch petition process

CDC weekly updated tracker for travel in the time of COVID <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/travelers/map-and-travel-notice.html>

| COVID-19 Travel Recommendations by Destination (Host Country) | | | | |
|---|---|--|--|--|
| <u>Level 1: COVID-19</u> <u>Low</u> | <u>Level 2: COVID-19</u> <u>Moderate</u> | <u>Level 3: COVID-19</u> <u>High</u> | <u>Level 4: COVID-19</u> <u>Very High</u> | <u>Level Unknown:</u> <u>COVID-19</u> <u>Unknown</u> |
| - Eligible | - Eligible | - Eligible if the country's Risk Index score is less than or equal to 2.50 | - Eligible if the country's Risk Index score is less than or equal to 2.50 and regional conditions are deemed to be satisfactory | - Not eligible |

Host/organizing campuses are encouraged to provide regional/subnational data in addition to country-level data.

2. The Request Process

The following schedule will be observed:

Table 2: Timetable for program requests

| | Requests accepted at OGA starting | Deadlines for OGA Review | OGA Decisions will be made as soon as possible |
|--------------------|--|---------------------------------|---|
| Summer Terms 2022 | 02/25 | Rolling | Rolling |
| Fall Semester 2022 | 03/30 | Rolling | Rolling |

Submission timing: Petitions will not be accepted before specified dates in order to ensure that the COVID-19 data considered is reasonably current.

Eligible requests should address adaptations and contingency planning, strict compliance with local requirements, financial planning for potential evacuation and/or shelter in place scenarios, including communication of respective financial responsibilities (“division of risk”) with students. The request form provides a comprehensive outline of issues campus program sponsors should address.

Upon receipt of a petition OGA will as quickly as possible review the petition and ask any follow up questions. OGA will verify the CDC and DOS information on the host region. OGA will verify with SUNY’s international insurance carrier that the carrier has no concerns about the host country’s ability to provide medical care and that the carrier will provide full coverage in the host region.

In general, petitions should demonstrate the following. OGA has developed a petition form to facilitate this process (Appendix A)

a. Close coordination and communication with partners/providers (where applicable)

Petitions for affiliated and exchange programs should indicate that partners have completed a partner/provider survey.

Faculty-led programs that rely on service providers should also obtain a completed survey, if the provider's services are part of the expected risk mitigation plan.

b. Plan to verify vaccination status of all applicants

SUNY home campus health centers (administering campus when the participant is not an enrolled SUNY student or when the SUNY home campus does not have a student health center) must verify the vaccination status (including boosters) of all participants. Applications can be accepted on a contingent basis before a student has been immunized and "boosted." Home campuses will inform administering campuses when participants have provided proof of vaccination. The release of information will be covered by each participant's signature on a release. This vaccine requirement cannot be waived.

Campus program administrators must inform applicants if the host country requires specific vaccines, and that if the applicant's vaccination does not match host country requirements, that they should consult with their physician before starting a new vaccine series in order to be eligible for the program. SUNY cannot waive any requirements for entry to another country; or influence the host campus' vaccination requirements.

c. Planning for post-arrival and post-return quarantines, where applicable and if needed on short notice

Planning for faculty led courses should include time for quarantine upon arrival in the host country, where required, and/or upon return, as determined by NY DOH and/or CDC, and/or the SUNY administering campus if students are expected to return to campus.

In addition to quarantines that can be anticipated during the program planning phase, if conditions change before departure or during a program, post-arrival or post-return quarantines may be required on short notice. Petitions should anticipate both scenarios.

As long as post-arrival quarantines are needed in order to run programs responsibly, campuses should assess all programs, particularly short-term ones, for compatibility with any testing and quarantine requirements.

d. Planning for COVID testing prior to return to the United States.

CDC requires all air passengers entering the United States (including US citizens and Lawful Permanent Residents) to present a negative COVID-19 test, taken within one day of departure or proof of recovery from the virus within the last 90 days. Petitions should indicate evidence that COVID-19 tests will be readily available for all participants prior to return to the States and should indicate whether the administering SUNY campus, or the host institution, or a provider will assist participants in getting tested, or if the students will be advised where to be tested and told it is their responsibility to follow up.

Given the short duration of faculty led programs administering campuses should be planning to assist students and staff is getting required tests.

e. Planning for academic continuity.

Petitions should provide evidence of the ability to provide academic continuity in the event students need to return to the United States. If a program is disrupted or cancelled, campuses offering programs must assist students in setting up alternate academic plans and limiting disruptions to academic programming to the extent possible.

3. Monitoring of approved programs

Prior to program commencement and departure dates, SUNY Campus will monitor destinations of approved programs and where necessary measures will be applied as follows:

Table 3(a): Pre-program monitoring targets and actions

| Changes before program start | Measures |
|--|--|
| Shift from Level 1, 2, or 3 to Level 4 with a Risk Index Score greater than 2.50 | Admin campus must consult with OGA Active review (subnational patterns will be considered.) Possible cancellation. |

4. Transparency and clear, documented communications with students

The recruitment, application and orientation processes should clearly explain program adaptations and contingency planning. Application and orientation materials must address these issues in greater detail, but information about financial planning for various scenarios, including communication of respective financial responsibilities (“division of risk”), must be addressed. In addition, students are encouraged to purchase, or may be required by the administering campus to purchase supplemental insurance identified by SUNY that will help mitigate potential expenses stemming from COVID disruptions. Such a policy will assist students with COVID related costs such as trip delays, quarantine due to testing positive for COVID prior to return to the US, evacuation costs, etc. The capacity and limits of the required supplemental insurance policy to provide support in pandemic conditions must be addressed at an early stage.

In order to prepare students for the possibility of an altered or cancelled program, campuses offering programs **must communicate the following before students commit to a program:**

- All program admissions are conditional until the program has been approved by OGA, and until it can be verified that the student has been vaccinated at a point that allows for maximum protection before departure.
- Programs may be modified or ended early if conditions warrant after the program begins.
- Programs may be cancelled if COVID-19 conditions in the host country or region deteriorate significantly, and students must be informed of cancellation or early termination conditions.
- Host requirements for quarantine and what associated costs there may be, if any.

- A post-arrival quarantine requirement may be introduced at any point before the program begins.
- Students may be required by the administering campus to purchase supplemental insurance identified by SUNY that will help with potential unrecoverable expenses stemming from COVID disruptions. This policy will assist students with COVID related costs such as trip delays, quarantine due to testing positive for COVID prior to return to the US, evacuation costs, etc.
- In the event that evacuation is required and is not covered by the student's travel insurance policy, the SUNY administering campus will be responsible for providing coordination and travel assistance, if necessary, to all impacted students. As a last resort, the SUNY administering campus will be responsible for group evacuation coordination.
- SUNY's vaccine requirement, combined with the US testing requirement for all passengers entering the US should significantly limit the need for post-return quarantine. However if a breakthrough infection is detected after return to the US, for anyone who is required to quarantine by local or US authorities and who cannot safely quarantine at home, the administering campus will arrange an appropriate quarantine option at the campus' expense.
- All students should be asked to consider their personal risk profiles preferably using the COVID advising document developed by the CIE, and that of any household members who may be impacted when they return.

In addition, in **the application and orientation process and materials**, campuses offering programs must communicate the following to the students. Some of these conditions will be documented in a separate COVID Acknowledgment and release form signed by the student indicating:

- that working with their academic advisors they should prepare an alternate academic plan in the event they cannot attend their chosen overseas program, e.g., be prepared to enroll in classes at the home institution
- that they are required to update their contact information after arrival and keep the SUNY administering campus informed on their current contact information at all times
- that strict compliance with SUNY's and local risk mitigation requirements is a firm expectation of all participants, and that non-compliance may lead to program expulsion
- that in the event of a rise in COVID cases at their host institution or in their host country they will be expected to follow the requirements of the host institution for isolation and the continuity of studies
- that if they choose to return home due to an increase in COVID activity, they will do so at their own expense and they are expected to make arrangements with their host institution to finish their academic programs
- that they should be prepared in the event they must return home due to the closure of their host institution, city, or country. In the event that evacuation is required and is not covered by the student's supplemental insurance policy, the SUNY administering campus will be responsible for providing coordination and travel assistance, if necessary, to all impacted students.
- that the host country may require vaccination with a vaccine different from the vaccine received prior to departure. Students should consult with their medical provider before taking a second vaccine type for the purpose of study abroad.
- that CDC directives related to testing and travel may change and that students are responsible for checking the guideline 3-5 days prior to departure. CDC currently require that all passengers

boarding a plane destined for the United States must test negative for COVID-19 with a test administered with 3 days of boarding

- that they are required to return if directed to by SUNY
- that limits on commercial air travel may restrict their options in practice and they could be forced to remain in place until flights are available.
- that immigration restrictions (“travel bans”) may be imposed more quickly by the United States. Although these circumstances can affect all travelers, non-US citizens without Resident Alien status should be advised that they are at the highest risk of not being readmitted to the United States if an outbreak occurs while they are abroad. These risks should be assessed on a case-by-case basis in collaboration with applicants, and where appropriate, in consultation with international student advisors or the student’s immigration attorneys.