

COVID-19 Risk Management Protocols for Experiment Programs

The Experiment has implemented the following health and safety protocols for summer 2022 programs with the goal of reducing COVID-19 infection and the spread of the virus from one location to another.

To achieve this goal, The Experiment adheres to both host country entry regulations and Centers for Disease Control (CDC) regulations. If host country entry regulations are more relaxed than CDC regulations, The Experiment defers to CDC regulations.

PROGRAM UPDATES

Responding to the dynamic risk horizon caused by the COVID-19 virus, and out of an abundance of caution, The Experiment continues to evaluate and amend many program elements to mitigate risk. These include:

I. Homestays

Due to the elevated health risk posed by COVID-19, homestays were suspended in most Experiment locations during the pandemic. Homestays have always been an integral part The Experiment experience, and we are optimistic that homestays will resume in more areas as vaccination rates continue to increase globally. Homestays are permitted with the following conditions:

- Key COVID-19 indicators are not at elevated levels (e.g. case numbers, vaccination rate, hospitalization, and capacity)
- Students participating in homestays are fully vaccinated.
- Students will be placed only in homestay families where all members of the household can prove that they are fully vaccinated.
- Homestay families will provide students with single rooms.

To the extent possible, in places where these conditions cannot be met or in locations where risk has increased after students have entered the homestay and the homestay is considered unsafe, The Experiment will utilize alternative accommodation such as hotels, guesthouses, apartments or other viable and safe options available in the program country.

2. International Excursions

The Experiment defines “international excursion” as a student educational trip planned and led by The Experiment outside of the host country.

Due to the elevated health risk posed by COVID-19, international excursions were suspended in most locations during the pandemic. However, with continued increases in vaccination rates globally, more countries are opening borders and easing entry requirements for international travelers.

The Experiment will resume international excursion opportunities under the following conditions:

- Key COVID-19 indicators in the excursion country are not at elevated levels (e.g. case numbers, vaccination rate, hospitalization, and capacity).
- There are no prohibitive entry requirements for the international excursion location (e.g. borders are open, testing is readily available, and there is not a long quarantine requirement).
- There are no prohibitive movement restrictions in place within the host country (e.g. limited mobility allowed that would prevent program activities from occurring).
- Following the international excursion, students will be required to obtain a viral PCR test 3-5 days upon return to the program base country (unless students have been tested within a day of departure from the international excursion country.) The Experiment will arrange and pay for this test.

In places where these conditions cannot be met, The Experiment will replace the international excursion with in-country excursions that have similar learning outcomes.

3. Vaccinations

The Experiment requires students to be fully vaccinated against COVID-19 prior to the start of their program.

The Experiment understands that there are legitimate reasons why students may not be vaccinated against COVID-19. We provide the opportunity to petition for an exemption to our vaccination requirement on the grounds of medical reasons, sincerely held religious beliefs, or vaccine unavailability. Petitions will be reviewed by The Experiment’s Risk Assessment Committee as long as they do not present undue hardship and/or pose a direct threat to the health and safety of the requesting student or to other members of our programs.

Given the increase of COVID variants resulting in changes to entry requirements from countries around the world, and varying definitions of how countries define “fully vaccinated,” **The Experiment is strongly recommending that all eligible participants receive a COVID-19 booster shot** prior to the start of the program. Data from clinical trials has shown that a booster shot can increase the immune response and help prevent COVID-19 symptoms. Additional information about booster shots can be found on the [Center for Disease Control’s website](#).

Recognizing that COVID-19 vaccines may not be available in many global locations, The Experiment strongly encourages—but is not requiring at this time—all in-country program faculty and staff to be fully vaccinated against COVID-19. The Experiment does require that all Group Leaders be fully vaccinated against COVID-19.

4. Masks

[The CDC recommends wearing a well-fitted mask](#) to help prevent severe illness and reduce the potential for strain on healthcare systems. Consistent with this recommendation, and to provide maximum protection from COVID variants and prevent possible spread to others, **The Experiment requires that all participants, regardless of vaccination status, wear a mask in public indoor settings and anywhere else required by local laws, regulations, and guidance.**

5. Tests & Quarantine

Before Departure to Host Country

- **Unvaccinated** students must take a viral PCR test 1 – 3 days prior to departure, or in some cases prior to arrival (based on the specific requirements of the host country). Students who test negative should present the test result to airport officials. Students who test positive may not travel.
- **Vaccinated** students do not need to obtain a viral PCR test prior to departure (unless required by the host country or when The Experiment deems it necessary).

Upon Arrival to Host Country

- **Unvaccinated** students must quarantine after arrival for 7 days with receipt of a negative test (taken between day 3-5 of quarantine) **OR** must quarantine for 10 days if no test is administered. Quarantine requires remaining in a specific room separate from other non-exposed people.
- **Vaccinated** students do not need to quarantine upon arrival (unless required by the host country or when The Experiment deems it necessary).
- **Both unvaccinated & vaccinated** students must obtain a viral PCR test 3-5 days after arrival (The Experiment will arrange and pay for this test).

6. Transportation

The Experiment supports CDC recommendations to mitigate COVID-19 risk in transportation settings, to include: a) Wear masks, maintain physical distance, avoid touching surfaces, and practice hand hygiene; b) Refrain from eating or drinking; c) With regards to the driver, maintain physical distance and request ventilation improvements as needed.

COVID RESPONSE PROTOCOL

Quarantine guidelines should be followed when an individual may have been exposed to the virus and may or may not have been infected.

Isolation guidelines should be followed when an individual is sick or when that person has been infected with the virus, even if they are non-symptomatic.

I. Exposure

a. Who does not need to quarantine. Students who have a known exposure to someone with suspected or confirmed COVID-19 do not need to quarantine if they have received all recommended vaccine doses (or have tested positive for COVID-19 through a viral test within the previous 90 days and subsequently recovered and remain non-symptomatic). However, students should wear a well-fitting mask around others for 10 days from the “date of last close contact” (the date of last close contact is considered day 0) and should get tested at least five days after the date of last close contact. In turn, if participants test positive or develop COVID-19 symptoms, they should follow the recommendations in the Isolation section below.

b. Who should quarantine. Students who have a known exposure to someone with suspected or confirmed COVID-19 should quarantine if they are in one of the following groups:

- Are unvaccinated or have not completed a primary vaccine series.

c. What to do for quarantine. Stay inside housing accommodations and away from other people for at least five full days (day 0 through day 5) after the date of last close contact. The date of last close contact is considered day 0. Participants should also:

- Wear a well-fitting mask when around others at home.
- For 10 days after the date of last close contact watch for fever (100.4 degrees F or greater) and [other COVID-19 symptoms](#).
- If symptoms develop, get tested immediately and isolate (see below) until test results are returned. If the test result is positive, continue to follow isolation recommendations. If negative, participants can leave housing accommodations, but should continue masking when around others at home and in public until 10 days after the date of last close contact.
- If symptoms do not develop, get tested at least five days after the date of last close contact.

2. Positive Test or Symptomatic

If a person tests positive and/or is experiencing symptoms consistent with COVID-19, regardless of their vaccination status, The Experiment follows these CDC guidelines:

a. Isolate. Isolation is used to separate people infected with COVID-19 from those who are not infected. Isolation means staying home in a specific room and separating from other people for at least five full days (day 0 is the first day of symptoms or the date of the positive viral test for non-symptomatic individuals). Those in isolation should:

- Monitor their symptoms. If participants have an [emergency warning sign](#), they should seek emergency medical care immediately.
- Remain in contact with their health care provider
- Stay in a separate room from other household members and use a separate bathroom, if possible.
- Take steps to improve ventilation at home, if possible.
- Don't share personal household items, like cups, towels, and utensils.
- Wear a well-fitting mask when around other people.
- Take care of themselves (e.g. rest and stay hydrated).

b. Contact Trace. An infected person can spread COVID-19 starting 48 hours before the person has any symptoms or tests positive. By letting one's close contacts know they may have been exposed to COVID, they are helping to protect everyone. The CDC defines close contact as someone who was within 6 feet of an infected person for a cumulative total of 15 minutes or more over a 24-hour period starting from two days before illness onset (or, for asymptomatic patients, two days prior to test specimen collection) until the time the patient is isolated.

c. Ending Isolation. People who had COVID-19 and were symptomatic may be around others after: a) five full days of isolation (day 0 is the first day symptoms appeared), and b) 24 hours with no fever (without using fever-reducing medications), and c) other symptoms of COVID-19 are improving. These individuals should continue to mask around others at home and in public until day 10 (day 6 through day 10).

- If an individual who was symptomatic would like to test prior to ending isolation, the best approach is to use an [antigen test](#) toward the end of day 5. Obtain a test only if fever-free for 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medication and other symptoms have improved. If the test result is positive, the person must continue to isolate until day 10. If negative, end isolation, but continue to mask around others at home and in public until day 10.

People who had COVID-19 but were non-symptomatic—and continue to have no symptoms—may be around others after five full days of isolation (day 0 is the date the test was conducted). However, these individuals should continue to mask around others at home and in public until day 10 (day 6 through day 10). Furthermore, if symptoms develop after testing positive, the five-day isolation period should start over (day 0 would be the first day of symptoms).

- If an individual who was non-symptomatic would like to test prior to ending isolation, the best approach is to use an [antigen test](#) toward the end of day 5. If the test result is positive, continue to isolate until day 10. If negative, end isolation, but continue to mask around others at home and in public until day 10.

BEFORE TRAVEL BACK TO THE UNITED STATES.

Per U.S. Government Policy, unvaccinated and vaccinated people returning to the U.S. must get a viral PCR test no more than 1 day prior to departure (or provide documentation of recovery from COVID-19 in the past 3 months).

Note: If a student tests positive, The Experiment will assist the student in finding room and board and will extend travel insurance coverage during the isolation period. However, students will be responsible for the cost of room and board and other expenses associated with an extended stay (for example airline ticket change fees, local transportation, etc.) beyond the program's official end date.