

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) recommendations. If host country entry regulations are more relaxed than CDC recommendations, The Experiment defers to CDC recommendations.

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

Homestays have always been an integral part of The Experiment experience. Due to the elevated health risk posed by COVID-19, homestays were suspended in most Experiment locations during the pandemic. As global vaccination rates have continued to increase, we have begun to reintroduce homestays 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 has resumed 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 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.

* There are two types of [viral tests](#): rapid tests and laboratory tests. COVID-19 testing is one of many risk-reduction measures, along with vaccination, masking, and physical distancing, that protect you and others by reducing the chances of spreading COVID-19.

- **Rapid Point-of-Care tests**, test performed or interpreted by someone other than the individual being tested, can be performed in minutes and can include antigen tests, some NAATs, and [other tests](#). [Self-tests](#) are rapid tests that can be taken at home or anywhere, are easy to use, and produce rapid results.
- **Laboratory tests** can take days to complete and include RT-PCR and other types of NAATs.

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.

[Different types of masks can provide different levels of protection](#). Whatever mask you choose, it is important to check that it fits snugly over your nose, mouth, and chin. Gaps between the mask and your face may occur if you have the wrong size or type of mask, and these gaps can let air with respiratory droplets leak in and out around the edges.

The Experiment requires all participants, regardless of vaccination status, to wear a mask anywhere required by host-country laws or in locations where The Experiment staff and partners on the ground determine it is necessary to mask based on conditions at the time.

The Experiment recognizes that COVID-19 prevalence varies from one location to another and conditions, while improved in many places, are still very fluid. The Experiment will outline the masking protocols for each location in the location-specific risk management plans developed prior to each term and will adjust protocols at any point if local government regulations change or conditions warrant it.

5. Tests & Quarantine

The following testing protocols are based on CDC guidelines.

Before Departure to Host Country

- Unless required by the host country or where The Experiment deems it necessary, vaccinated students do not need to obtain a viral test prior to departure.
- However, the [CDC recommends getting tested](#) for current infection with a [viral test](#) as close to the time of departure as possible (no more than 3 days) **before** travel.

Upon Arrival to Host Country

- Students must obtain a viral COVID-19 test 3-5 days after arrival (The Experiment will arrange and pay for this test). Please note that certain host countries may have additional testing requirements

that are not detailed here, such as testing immediately upon arrival or pre-departure testing for all travelers regardless of vaccination status. See *COVID Response Protocol* section below for protocols should this test produce a positive result.

6. Transportation

Traveling on public transportation, including planes, increases the risk of getting and spreading COVID-19 as it puts travelers in close contact with each other, often for prolonged periods of time, and exposes them to frequently touched surfaces. While the CDC no longer requires wearing masks on public transport, The Experiment strongly encourages students to mask while on planes and any form of public transport in their host country, regardless of local masking protocols, in order to mitigate the spread of COVID-19 and help protect the local communities in which students are immersed abroad.

Some The Experiment programs may organize private transport, such as vans or buses, for student groups to travel between program activities. In turn, The Experiment staff and partners on the ground will determine if it is necessary for students to mask based on local conditions at the time.

COVID RESPONSE PROTOCOL

The Experiment COVID response protocols are based on [CDC recommendations](#).

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, after a known exposure, students must 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 students 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 (from a viral test) 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, in turn day 0 does not count as a **full day** of isolation). 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) AND **should not travel** until a full 10 days after symptoms started or the date that the positive test was taken if the individual had no symptoms..

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). These individuals should continue to mask around others at home and in public until day 10 (day 6 through day 10) AND **should not travel** until a full 10 days after symptoms started or the date that the positive test was taken if the individual had no symptoms. Furthermore, if symptoms develop after testing positive, the five-day isolation period should start over (day 0 would be the first day of symptoms).

BEFORE TRAVEL BACK TO THE UNITED STATES.

While there is no longer a requirement for travelers to present a negative COVID-19 test or documentation of recovery in order to enter the U.S., we encourage participants who are returning to other countries to confirm the testing requirements for that country.

Note: If a student tests positive, and is unable to travel home at the same time as the group, 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.