

COVID-19 Risk Management Protocols for Experiment Programs

The Experiment has implemented the following health and safety protocols 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 for mitigating the spread of COVID-19. Because The Experiment operates in a global context, the COVID-19 protocols listed below will serve as a minimum requirement across all Experiment programs. For example, if a host country does not have an isolation requirement, our programs will adhere to The Experiment isolation protocols. Conversely, if host country COVID protocols are stricter than The Experiment's, The Experiment will defer to host country protocols.

PROGRAM UPDATES

Responding to the dynamic risk horizon caused by the COVID-19 virus, and out of an abundance of caution, The Experiment continuously evaluates and amends many program elements to mitigate risk.

These include:

1. Homestays

Homestays have always been an integral part The Experiment experience. However, due to the elevated health risk posed by COVID-19, they were suspended in most Experiment locations during the pandemic. As global vaccination rates continue to increase, homestays are allowed under the following conditions:

- Key COVID-19 indicators are not at elevated levels (e.g., case numbers, vaccination rate, hospitalization, and hospital capacity).
- COVID-19 testing, and treatment is readily available at or near the homestay in the event a participant or homestay family member gets sick, and accommodation plans allow for isolation and care of anyone who tests positive.
- In most cases, participants in homestays are placed in single rooms. However, in locations where accommodation resources are more limited and may not allow for single rooms, participants might be placed in a shared room with the standard homestay safety protocols in place.

To the extent possible, in places where these conditions cannot be met or in locations where risk has increased after participants 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 an 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, as vaccination rates continue to increase globally, most countries have reopened borders and eased 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 hospital 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, participants will be required to obtain a *viral test 3-5 days upon return to the program base country [per CDC recommendations](#) regarding international travel. This test will not be required if participants 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** are performed or interpreted by someone other than the individual being tested. They can be performed in minutes and can include antigen tests, some NAATs, and [other tests](#).
- **Rapid Self-tests** are performed by the individual being tested and can be taken at home or anywhere. They are easy to use and produce rapid results.
- **Laboratory tests** are performed in a medical facility and samples obtained from the individual being tested are analyzed by a medical professional. These 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

Based on evolving conditions of the pandemic including higher vaccination rates, increased protection with many individuals from previous infections, lower rates of serious illness associated with positive cases, and the removal of vaccine mandates in most Experiment locations, The Experiment will no longer require vaccination to participate on programs except for locations where host country governments require it.

While vaccination will no longer be required, The Experiment continues to encourage all participants to be up to date with their vaccinations against COVID-19 prior to their program per [CDC recommendations](#).

The Experiment continues to closely monitor COVID-19 conditions in each program location and will advise participants on any location-specific COVID-19 requirements and regulations prior to and during their program.

4. Masks

[The CDC recommends wearing a well-fitted mask](#) to help prevent severe illness and reduce the potential for strain on healthcare systems. 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 guidelines are based on CDC recommendations.

Before Departure to Host Country

The Experiment encourages all participants to [obtain a viral test as close to the time of departure as possible](#), but no more than 3 days prior to travel. Participants who test positive should begin isolation (see Isolation section below) and [should not travel](#) for at least 5 full days since the onset of symptoms or since testing positive if asymptomatic. After testing positive, participants can travel if:

- They have completed the isolation period of 5 full days
- Remain symptom free OR if originally symptomatic, their symptoms are improving
- Have not had a fever for at least 24 hours
- Wear a mask in all public settings, especially on any public transportation, until 10 full days since the onset of symptoms or since testing positive if asymptomatic.

During Travel to Host Country

In accordance with [CDC recommendations for individuals during travel](#), participants should properly wear a well-fitting mask or respirator while on public transportation (such as airplanes, trains, buses, ferries) and in transportation hubs (such as airports, stations, and seaports), especially in locations that are crowded or poorly ventilated (e.g. airport jetways).

Upon Arrival to Host Country

All participants 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. In these instances, participants are expected to pay for the testing required by host countries.

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 recommends** that participants mask while traveling to their host country and while on any form of public transport in their host country, regardless of local masking protocols. This will help mitigate the spread of COVID-19 and help protect the local communities in which participants are immersed abroad.

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

7. Exposure

Regardless of vaccination status or previous infection, participants who have a [known exposure to someone with suspected or confirmed COVID-19 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 5 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.

8. 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 5 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:

- 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.
- Do not share personal household items, like cups, towels, and utensils.

- Take care of themselves (rest, stay hydrated, etc.), and 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.
- Wear a well-fitting mask when around other people for an additional 5 days after ending isolation.
- Do not travel on public or private transportation for at least 5 full days since the onset of symptoms or since testing positive if asymptomatic. Day 0 is the date of the positive test result, or the date symptoms first appeared.
- After testing positive, participants can travel if:
 - They have completed the isolation period of 5 full days
 - Remain symptom free OR if originally symptomatic, their symptoms are improving
 - Have not had a fever for at least 24hrs
 - Wear a mask in all public settings, especially on any public transportation, until 10 full days since the onset of symptoms or since testing positive if asymptomatic

Should onsite staff capacity, itinerary, and/or logistical issues cause unique challenges for the participant and program in relation to the 5-day do-not-travel policy, The Experiment's student affairs and medical staff will assess the feasibility of the participant traveling earlier.

b. Contact Trace. An infected person can spread COVID-19 starting 48 hours before the person has any symptoms or tests positive. [Contact tracing](#) helps protect you and your local community by letting one's close contacts know they may have been exposed to COVID. 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 2 days before illness onset (or, for asymptomatic patients, 2 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) 5 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).

People who had COVID-19 but were **non-symptomatic**—and continue to have no symptoms—may be around others after 5 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).

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 to enter the U.S., we encourage participants who are returning to other countries to confirm the testing requirements for that country. If a participant tests positive for COVID at the end of their program and is not able to return home as planned, The Experiment will assist the participant in finding room and board and will extend iSOS insurance coverage during the participant's isolation period. The iSOS insurance policy offers specific coverage that can assist participants with some of the housing, meal, and airfare costs associated with quarantine. Please refer to [The Experiment's travel insurance plan benefit brochure](#) for more details.