

03.16.20: Summer Study Abroad Announcement:

In response to the expanding global disruption caused by the spread of COVID-19 and the responsibility we owe to our students, faculty, staff and community, we have made the difficult decision to **cancel all Washburn University study abroad programs scheduled to depart in May, June & July with immediate effect.** The latest updates from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the U.S. and foreign governments have led us to take this action.

We know that, for some, this end to ambiguity will come as a relief, and that for others this will be truly awful news. We, too, are disappointed that programs are canceled in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. However, we must put the safety and wellbeing of our students, faculty, staff and community above all other concerns, and we believe that this is the best path forward at this time.

The OIP will refund the WU Study Abroad Application fee for participants and work with the Business Office to refund additional fees where possible. We will work with the Endowment & VPAA to apply scholarship awards for students who have incurred non-refundable fees. For students who have not incurred fees we will defer scholarships for future program participation where possible.

We are asking our faculty who are leading programs to contact the travel providers to see what refunds are possible. For credit-bearing courses, we are asking faculty members to design alternative course requirements.

This cancellation decision does not apply to any Washburn University study abroad programs that have already departed, although we strongly encourage those on current programs to return home as soon as feasible. Travelers are urged to keep current on the spread of the virus and the latest travel advisories by visiting the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention website at <https://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/destinations/list/>.

During this time the campus community should also stay apprised of the extent of the virus and the most current travel advisories at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention website at <https://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/destinations/list/>. The latest updates to the campus community can be found via the WU COVID-19 update site, linked from <https://washburn.edu/student-life/health-safety/index.html>.

03.04.20 COVID-19 Announcement

In light of the rapidly changing dynamics of the COVID-19 situation, the WU Office of International Programs (OIP) continues to closely monitor the spread of the virus and its possible risk to WU students currently abroad or planning international education programs during the Spring, Summer or Fall terms.

Currently the OIP has not cancelled study abroad programs outside of mainland China. The OIP will make decisions carefully and deliberately, with the best interest of our students' and faculty's health and safety.

The OIP will determine whether to continue to operate our programs with the following criteria. These events, in isolation or together, would compel WU to cancel or temporarily suspend our programs:

- An elevation in the CDC alert level to a 3 (“avoid non-essential travel” recommendation) for the host country;
- An elevation in the U.S. State Department advisory level for the country to a 4 (“do not travel” status);
- The host country or U.S. government recommends evacuation or immediate departure for foreign visitors or U.S. citizens.

Please note that while these factors are currently our guiding criteria for suspension or cancellation, WU may at any time expand this list of criteria if it is deemed to be in the best interest, safety and wellbeing of our participants.

In addition, all participants should be aware of the following:

- The U.S government and/or local host governments can enact travel restrictions, institute quarantines, and activate additional border screening processes at any time.
- Flight carriers can announce reduction or suspension of travel routes into and out of a country at any time.

The OIP encourages study abroad participants to purchase travel insurance in case of an interruption to your travel plans. If you purchase travel insurance, make sure it covers epidemic situations (many do not) and the area/s to which you want to travel. The following is a short list of providers, there are many more to choose from:

- [AIG Travel Insurance](#)
- [ISIC Travel Insurance](#)
- [LewerMark Student Insurance](#)

WU students and their families can learn more about the virus and recommendations for travel by visiting the following resources:

- [U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#)
- [U.S. Department of State](#) (see Travel Advisories for Country-Specific information)
- [World Health Organization](#)

For local information specific to Topeka, Shawnee County, and the State of Kansas, please visit:

- [Shawnee County Health Department](#)
- [Kansas Department of Health and Environment](#)

Please contact the WU Office of International Programs with any questions or concerns at 785-670-1051.