



University of Pittsburgh COVID-19 Standards and Guidelines: Academic Travel, Study Abroad Programs and Experiences Abroad

I. Purpose

This document details the University of Pittsburgh’s (University) Standards and Guidelines on Academic Travel, Study Abroad Programs and Experiences Abroad. These Standards and Guidelines are applied to each of the University’s COVID-19 operational postures (High Risk, Elevated Risk and Guarded Risk). More information on these operational postures and their gating criteria can be accessed at the following website: <https://www.coronavirus.pitt.edu/operational-postures>.

The Standards and Guidelines outlined below are subject to change as deemed necessary by the provost and senior vice chancellor’s recommendation to the Senior Leadership Team and approval of the chancellor. Communication about the University’s current Standards and Guidelines will be announced and posted on the following website: <https://coronavirus.pitt.edu/>.

The University will always operate in compliance with federal, state and local health standards and restrictions, including [Pennsylvania Department of Health guidance](#). The University reserves the right to implement additional health standards and restrictions that reflect the needs of the University and the health, safety and well-being of its community.

As conditions and circumstances change, this set of standards and guidelines may need to be revised.

II. Scope

The Standards and Guidelines below apply to all University of Pittsburgh students on all campuses of the University.

III. Definitions

- A. **Academic Travel:** Travel off campus, whether national (study away programs in the United States) or international (study abroad programs & global experiences), taken in connection with an academic program being offered for academic credit by Pitt Study Abroad and may involve coursework, experiences abroad and site visits on location. Academic Travel does not include travel for seminars, conferences or student group activities which is addressed in the [University’s Safe Mobility Standards and Guidelines](#).

- B. Virtual Engagement and Remote Learning Opportunities:** Any study abroad program or experience where students complete similar coursework or experiential activities but without Academic Travel. These programs may be delivered using the University's remote learning technologies or those of our partners.
- C. Study Abroad Programs:** Refers to any international experience in which a student earns academic credit for coursework and involves academic travel or hybrid programming, including:
1. Panther Programs – credit-bearing programs with at least one course taught by University of Pittsburgh faculty;
 2. Exchange Programs – credit-bearing programs based on bi-lateral agreements in which a student directly enrolls in the host institution;
 3. Pitt Recognized Programs – credit-bearing programs in which a student enrolls in a third-party program offered by an approved provider; or
 4. Partner Programs – credit-bearing programs in which a student directly enrolls in the host institution.
- D. Experiences Abroad:** Refers to any experience in which a student completes a requirement for degree progress, including credit-bearing and noncredit-bearing experience, or for which a student receives financial support from the University and which includes Academic Travel:
1. [Fieldwork/Research](#)
 2. Practical or Clinical Experiences: Experiences that are directly related to a student's intended future profession and that are necessary to meet requirements for graduation, licensure and/or accreditation in disciplines such as but not limited to: dental medicine, education, health and rehabilitation sciences, medicine, nursing, pharmacy and social work.
 3. Internships: University-sponsored educational experiences that occur outside of a classroom and are intended to enrich and/or extend a student's classroom education. Can be for academic credit, for monetary compensation, both or neither.
 4. Service-Learning: Community-driven service placements that occur outside of the classroom under the supervision of faculty, community/local partners or both. Service-learning experiences must include an academic component that guides students through the experience.
 5. Projects or consulting: Experiences that are time- or goal-bound and driven in which students provide services to an overseas organization. Projects and consulting experience must include an academic component that guides students through the experience.
 6. Non-transferable coursework: Experiences in which students engage in overseas coursework (especially language study) which may not be eligible for transfer credit at the University but is related to their academic or professional goals.
 7. International travel that is complementary to a domestic Pitt course: Optional international experiences that are complementary to an on-campus course but for which additional credit is not granted.

8. International Conferences: Professional or academic conferences that take place outside of the United States.
- E. **Student Organization Travel:** Any programs, experiences, or travel offered by student organizations, or any international experience that is not credit bearing or required for degree progress.

The Standards and Guidelines regarding Academic Travel, Study Abroad Programs and Experiences Abroad are applicable in each of the University's [Operational Postures](#).

IV. Requirements for Academic Travel and Study Abroad Programs and Experiences Abroad

The following are requirements for undergraduate and graduate students participating in Academic Travel, Study Abroad Programs, and Experiences Abroad. Under all operational postures, students are strongly encouraged to enroll in Virtual Engagement and Remote Learning Opportunities to the maximum extent possible.

A. Local Conditions Govern Travel

The safety of Academic Travel, Study Abroad Programs and Experiences Abroad depend heavily on local conditions where programs are taking place. Academic Travel outside the student's Home Campus county should only be initiated if local conditions correspond to a Guarded Risk Posture for at the student's Home Campus, as determined by Pitt Study Abroad in consultation with appropriate others.

B. Required Forms

All students must complete required forms as issued by the Study Abroad Office prior to departure and adhere to Pitt's [International Travel Guidelines for Students](#). More information is available at the [Pitt Study Abroad](#) website.

C. Health Standards and Guidelines

Travelers must follow the University's Health Standards and Guidelines, including the use of face coverings, personal hygiene, personal protective equipment (PPE) when required, and physical distance appropriate to the work involved (interior, exterior, solitary, group). Travelers should follow any local requirements that exceed the University's requirements.

D. Changes in Local Conditions

Local conditions where a program is taking place may change after Academic Travel is initiated. In the event of substantive changes in local conditions while a student is traveling that would significantly increase the risk of transmission of SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19, to travelers, Academic Travel must be amended to reduce the risk within a three-day period (including weekends) from the date when

the student is informed by the Study Abroad Office. Amendments may include completing the experience through Virtual Engagement and Remote Learning Opportunities, and/or requiring students to return to the United States or their home country.

V. University Assessment and Decision Making for Academic Travel, Study Abroad Programs and Experiences Abroad

A. Ongoing Monitoring of Program Safety and Feasibility

In all operational postures, Pitt Study Abroad, in conjunction with relevant others, will actively monitor recommendations from the Centers for Disease Control, the U.S. Department of State and International SOS to determine the feasibility of beginning and/or continuing Academic Travel components of Academic Programs and Experiences Abroad. If conditions change in a relevant location, Pitt Study Abroad, in consultation with relevant others, will determine whether any students should be recalled. A transition to the equivalent of a higher risk posture in a given location does not automatically mandate the cancellation of Academic Travel, Study Abroad Programs and/or Experiences Abroad, or the recall of students currently abroad.

B. Recall of Students Abroad

Regardless of the University's operational posture, Pitt Study Abroad retains the right to cancel Academic Travel and to mandate that students return to the United States or their home countries if local conditions dictate such measures are necessary.

C. Evaluation of Future Programs

Pitt Study Abroad, in conjunction with relevant others, will regularly evaluate the feasibility of continuing to offer each upcoming Study Abroad Program or Experience Abroad based on student health and safety, financial risk to the University, financial risk to the student, and academic calendars to provide adequate time for a student to make alternative plans. If Academic Travel, Study Abroad Programs, or Experiences Abroad must be cancelled or altered, Pitt Study Abroad will announce these programmatic changes as early as possible.

VI. Student Organization Travel

These Standards and Guidelines are not applicable to Student Organization Travel, which is outside of the scope and responsibility of Pitt Study Abroad. Student Organization Travel is governed by the COVID-19 Standards and Guidelines: [Student Activities](#).

VII. Related Authorities

[Pennsylvania Department of Health COVID-19 guidance](#)
[Process to Reopen Pennsylvania](#)
[University's Department of Environmental Health and Safety Guidance](#)
[University Standards and Guidelines: Shared Spaces](#)

[University Standards and Guidelines for Face Coverings, Personal Protective Equipment, and Hygiene](#)
[University Standards and Guideline: Safe Mobility](#)

VIII. Contact Information and Public Accessibility

This document is posted on the University of Pittsburgh COVID-19 Standards and Guidelines website and can be found at: <https://www.policy.pitt.edu/university-policies-and-procedures/covid-19-standards-and-guidelines>. For questions related to this document, please contact: Resilience Steering Committee at ResilienceSteeringCommittee@pitt.edu.