

CSU Education Abroad COVID-19 FAQs

An education abroad remains as important as ever. At this time, CSU Education Abroad (EA) is allowing students to apply for programs that begin in 2021-2022. However, due to the significant and lasting effects of COVID-19 on our global community, it is important that potential Education Abroad students assess their risk tolerance with planning travel in these uncertain times; make backup plans in case their studies cannot move forward as planned; and if approved, set realistic goals about what the experience will look like. Your well-being is important to CSU. While we want you to have an education abroad experience, we need to remain flexible in this evolving situation.

When can I study abroad?

- CSU-EA is accepting education abroad applications for programs that begin in summer 2021, fall 2021, fall break 2021, and academic year 2021-22. In January 2021, we will begin to accept applications for spring 2022, spring break 2022, and calendar year 2022 programs.
- The CSU International Travel Oversight Committee (ITOC) has specific guidelines to assess when it is possible and a relatively healthier time to go abroad, as well as the risks students need to be aware of in regard to travel at this time. Monitor the [Higher Risk Travel](#) and [Response to COVID-19](#) section of the Education Abroad website for updates and advising resources.
- CSU plans to make decisions about whether to authorize programs approximately two to four months prior to their start dates. Students who have an application in MyEdAbroad can anticipate ongoing communication from the Education Abroad team.
- Know that CSU's authorization to attend some programs may need to change as the departure dates approach. Further, if the health and safety environment deteriorate, students may be advised to return home early.

What financial considerations should I be aware of and plan for?

As noted above, CSU and our partners plan to make firm decisions about authorizing programs abroad approximately two to four months prior to departure. As information is continually evolving, we recommend all students make a financial plan to protect some of their resources in case plans need to change later.

- We recommend that you postpone your financial commitments as long as your program will allow. Inform yourself about the withdrawal timelines and financial commitments for your program.
- "Affiliate Programs" or "Unaffiliated/direct enrollment programs" bill students directly for fees. Speak to your host organizations about this process and billing timeline. Most programs abroad are giving students more flexibility on commitment timelines during this uncertain time.
- "CSU Programs" (i.e. exchange or CSU faculty-led program) are billed directly by CSU. If CSU or our partners need to cancel these programs before departure, CSU will refund deposits and not bill for future expenses
- CSU charges an [Education Abroad Fee](#) to all Education Abroad participants. Check your myEdAbroad for billing timelines.
- Wait to purchase airfare or only purchase airfare that has minimal cancellation or change fees. Several airlines are offering more flexible tickets right now to make flight changes easier.

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- Education abroad students are required to have [international health insurance](#). These plans are not trip insurance, and CSU recommends that you consider “cancel for any reason” insurance. Many plans have pandemic exclusions. Be sure to read the fine print so that you understand any insurance limitations.

What if I go abroad and I no longer feel safe abroad or my program is cancelled?

- CSU and your host organization will closely monitor changing country conditions. However, it is important that you consider when, and what changes, may make you decide to return home early. After a program begins, it is unlikely to be canceled. The pandemic is very dynamic, and the ever-changing environment is an important reality to consider in consultation with your emergency contacts.
- If a program is canceled, many organizations will work to refund any recoverable costs. However, these will likely be limited, if at all available. Be sure to understand all refund policies, as applicable. If you decide to depart early but your program provider does not cancel the program, it is likely that you will forfeit all program costs.
- The CSU Education Abroad Fee is non-refundable once billed.
- Ensure that your program guarantees academic continuity in the form of online or remote classes in case of on-site cancellation. Note that if you can earn those credits, even if the teaching environment looks much different than you anticipated, those tuition fees will not be refunded.
- Budget for the additional costs of a last-minute flight, housing (e.g. any non-recoverable costs from housing abroad, hotel costs as you make your way home, etc.) and associated costs back home if you must return early. CSU is unable to reimburse students for these fees.

What might education abroad look like at this time?

- For the foreseeable future, travel will remain quite limited. This means no weekend trips to neighboring countries, cultural activities may still be restricted, and you might not get to see all the places you had originally planned. However, staying close to your home university and city offers a unique – and valuable – opportunity to immerse yourself in your host city and country.
- Remember, we each have an important role in reducing the spread of the virus. If you can travel abroad, you will need to do so in a healthy and responsible way to reduce exposure for both yourself and others. It is important to assess your interest in a more limited experience as well as your own risk tolerance with planning during this period of uncertainty.
- International travel increases your risk of exposure to COVID-19. It is important to recognize that if you test positive for the virus, you will be abroad until you are no longer at risk of infecting others. This may incur additional personal costs.

What can I do now to plan for a future education abroad experience?

At this point in time, many programs beginning in 2021 are still being offered. However, CSU and our partners will continue to assess their feasibility in close considerations of travel restrictions and the host country's response to the pandemic.

- Consult with an academic advisor now so that you can map alternate plans that fit an education abroad later into your graduation plan, should upcoming travel no longer be possible.

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- If you hope to take specific courses to be able to graduate on time while abroad, please make a back-up course plan in case programs need to be canceled later. This includes registering in CSU coursework for the term you hope to be abroad.
- Check to see if your passport is valid at least 6+ months beyond return date. Due to the pandemic, processing passport applications is severely delayed. If your passport is expiring before 2022, start the [application for a passport renewal](#) as soon as possible.

My loved ones are nervous about me going abroad right now. What should I tell them?

Your choice to go abroad extends well beyond CSU's decision making. Here are some things to consider and discuss with others:

- Consider how certain [pre-existing conditions](#) present a higher risk and may impact your personal health and safety while abroad. This is also applicable to the friends and family you may live with when you return.
- CSU is here to help in navigating these uncertain times. In addition to your program coordinator, we have an international risk manager, who is available for consultation. Please reach out to your coordinator or educationabroad@colostate.edu with any questions or concerns, including those from your emergency contacts.
- Keep an eye on the most recent developments in your country of interest. Some helpful resources include:
 - The Department of State <https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/international-travel.html>
 - The Centers of Disease Control & Prevention <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/travelers/map-and-travel-notice.html>
 - International Air Transport Association <https://www.iatatravelcentre.com/world.php>
 - The U.S. Embassy in your host country