

Hello, GO Long Fall 2021 students,

We are writing because of the update to the US Department of State Travel Advisories that occurred earlier this week. *We anticipate that the travel advisories will change before your program this fall and this will not be an issue but did want to connect with you.*

The US Department of State considers risk indicators to issue international travel advisories of 1-4 (Level 4 advice is “Do Not Travel”). We have always reviewed the advisories of the Department of State, Center for Disease Control (CDC), World Health Organization (WHO), Risk Management and Security Advisors, news accounts, and our local partners in all countries where our students travel. It is important to note that the Department of State guidance is geared toward the average traveler, not toward a study abroad students, who have a completely different risk profile and, more importantly, have support on-site. In alignment with best practices in study abroad, we have been reviewing and updating our policy so that the Department of State advisory is not the only factor in approval.

Please review the attached FAQ with additional information for how this may impact you. If you have additional questions, please contact goprogram@susqu.edu.

Best,

Molly Roe, Director of Global Opportunities

Scott Manning, Dean of Global Programs

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What does GO use to determine approval for countries? As part of normal protocol, we continuously review information from the U.S. Department of State, Center for Disease Control (CDC), World Health Organization (WHO), Risk Management and Security Advisors, news accounts, and our local partners in all countries where our students travel. GO staff receives real-time updates regarding health and safety within the countries where we send students. We also are in at least weekly contact with our in-country partners. GO reserves the right to rescind approval for a program in a region with a level 3 or 4 U.S. State Department Travel advisory. We hold our students’ health and safety in the highest regard.

What are the Department of State Levels? The US Department of State issues international travel advisories. Travel Advisories apply up to four standard levels of advice, describe the risks, and provide clear actions U.S. citizens should take to help ensure their safety.

- Level 1 - Exercise Normal Precautions: This is the lowest advisory level for safety and security risk.
- Level 2 - Exercise Increased Caution: Be aware of heightened risks to safety and security.
- Level 3 - Reconsider Travel: Avoid travel due to serious risks to safety and security.
- Level 4 - Do Not Travel: This is the highest advisory level due to greater likelihood of life-threatening risks. During an emergency, the U.S. government may have very limited ability to provide assistance.

The US Department of State considers the following risk indicators for the Advisory Levels: *Crime, Terrorism, Civil Unrest, Health, Natural Disaster, and Kidnapping*. They also may indicate a change in levels or issue alerts for a *Time-limited Event* (local events, like elections, that may change safety risks),

or for another reason outside of these categories which are indicated as *Other*. Each country's level is based on the current assessment of conditions in-country that might affect the welfare or safety of U.S. citizens in that country. ^

What is the change? On April 20, 2021, the US Department of State changed the statuses resulting in 80% of countries to be at a Level 4: Do Not Travel. This does not necessarily indicate a change to the current health situation in each country – just the alignment with CDC and giving more weight to CDC than they previously did. ^

Department of State Level 4: Do Not Travel has always been considered a *very* serious rating, and we would not typically permit travel there. However, we will note that the risk itself has not changed, just the way that the Department of State rates the risks. They are now weighing much more heavily on COVID risks, as opposed to civil unrest, terrorism, crime, poor security services, kidnapping, or geopolitical risks.

How often does the US Department of State change their advisories? Historically, the US Department of State does not update the advisories frequently. Given this change, we do anticipate a change in their timeline. The US Department of State says that they will now “update destination-specific information when appropriate.” ^

Can I get into the country if it is at a US Department of State Level 4 Advisory? The US Department of State advisories are separate from the entry requirements of different countries. Entry requirements vary by destination, check with your provider and the destination's Office of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Health or the [US Department of State, Bureau of Consular Affairs, Country Information](#) for details about entry requirements and restrictions for arriving travelers. Follow all entry requirements for your destination and provide any required or requested health information. If you do not follow your destination's requirements, you may be denied entry and required to return to the United States. *

Study abroad students have been able to enter their host country through their student visa/sponsorship process rather than the advice of a tourist, so it is important that you review the student entry process.

Will things change for the Department of State Levels before my program? It is very likely. We don't know when or if this change would happen, but we are watching it closely.

What does the CDC say? Do not travel internationally until you are fully vaccinated.

The CDC has been issuing health advisories for international travel long before COVID, but they have been more prevalent in the last year. The COVID-19 situation, including the spread of new or concerning variants differs from country to country, and even fully vaccinated travelers need to pay close attention to the [situation at their destination](#) before traveling. *

How often does the CDC change their advisories? The CDC reviews COVID data daily and updates their travel advisories weekly based on data from the World Health Organization. *

When should I buy my airfare? We recommend waiting to make any airline tickets until closer to your departure date (a month or so prior to departure). Each airline has their own policy regarding refunds and cancellation waivers due to the coronavirus. These are being updated regularly as the situation is

changing minute to minute. Many are offering to waive change and/or cancellation fees if you travel with them at a later date.

Should I apply for my visa? Yes. We anticipate changes to the Department of State advisories as well as the Susquehanna policy and recommend that you continue to move forward with plans to be abroad this fall, including application processes for the host university, housing, and visas.

Is GO still going to be a requirement for me if there are further travel restrictions for the Fall? Yes. The university has guaranteed to work with students to meet the cross-cultural requirement for graduation. We recognize that this may be different for each student, as students' needs are unique. We are committed to working with students individually to find a suitable alternative, if needed. At its heart, GO is a graduation requirement based on working toward a set of specific learning goals and reflection on that work.

Other Travel Advice:

Do I need to be vaccinated? Yes. *

Can SU assist me in vaccination? [You can search vaccine availability by zip code.](#)

If you need help arranging a vaccine appointment, please contact lizardi@susqu.edu.

We recommend signing up for an appointment ASAP, keeping in mind for the 2-shot vaccines (Moderna/Pfizer), the location of your first dose is where you would need to go for your second dose. We encourage you to consider searching for providers that have the Johnson & Johnson (single shot) vaccine. [Giant](#) and [Walmart](#) are two store that have that vaccine. Remember that Pfizer has a wait period of 21 days between shots, and Moderna is 28 days between shots. You are not fully vaccinated until 14 days after your last shot (or single shot for J&J).

Are their requirements for coming back into the US? Currently, all air passengers coming to the United States, including U.S. citizens and fully vaccinated people, are required to have a negative COVID-19 test result no more than 3 days before travel. Additionally, CDC recommends that unvaccinated travelers self-quarantine after travel for 7 days with a negative test and for 10 days if they do not get tested. *^

Am I able to take side-trips to visit other countries/cities if I can participate in my program?

Our current advice, if programs are able to run, is that students should not engage in non-program sponsored travel outside of the program location at any point in the term. Students are advised to limit or forego sharing physical space with visitors from outside of program location.

* indicates Center for Disease Control (CDC) advice (<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/travelers/international-travel-during-covid19.html>)

^ indicates US Department of State advice (<https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/international-travel.html> and <https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/traveladvisories/traveladvisories.html/>)