February 28, 2020

Dear Students on Study Abroad Programs,

We are very sorry that your study abroad experience has been impacted by COVID-19. As we all try to adjust to the changes in programs, we are here to support you as much as we possibly can. This document is intended to help guide you as you make decisions about your academic program this semester. While our highest priority is your health and safety, we also want to help ensure that you receive academic credit for work completed this spring (or summer, see below).

If you are a junior, our goal is to have you graduate along with your classmates in May 2021. To that end, we recommend the following actions:

1. **So long as the Center for Disease Control (CDC) has not issued a warning level 3 travel health notice (Avoid Non Essential Travel) for the country in which you are studying**, we advise you to stay with your program provider and the solutions that it offers to complete work this semester. We trust our program providers, and we will give a semester of academic credit if you complete (and pass) the courses in which you are enrolled.

2. **In the event that the CDC issues a warning level 3 travel health notice for the country in which you are studying**, we urge you to return home, even if your program is not cancelled. If you choose to stay in the country, you do so at your own risk and you and your parents will be required to sign an assumption of risk that acknowledges some of the risks of staying in the country. If you leave the country in which you are studying, you should follow the advice given in the event that your program is cancelled (see next point).

3. **In the event your program is cancelled**, we will work with you to find an in-residence program or online courses that will allow you to receive a semester of academic credit. If your program offers alternative options for making up courses, please pursue those first. If your program does not offer alternative options, you may pursue other options that take place either this spring, this summer, or during both spring and summer. You should consult with your academic adviser, other faculty in your major, the Office of Global Education, your class dean, and anyone else who might prove helpful. International students should contact the Center for International Student Engagement with questions around course enrollment, travel, and student visa status. Here are some important facts to be aware of:

   - If your program is cancelled, you will be asked to come up with an academic plan that will allow you to receive a semester of credit.
Your academic plan will need the approval of the Office of Global Education, your academic adviser, your class dean, and the Registrar’s Office.

When planning how you will make up your coursework, please remember that living at Amherst College is not an available option. Only students who are actively enrolled in Amherst College courses or employed over the summer may reside on campus.

We recognize that these are extraordinary and challenging times for you that could not have been anticipated when you made your study abroad plans. We are committed to making sure that you are able to fulfill your major and degree requirements within eight semesters, if possible. Please do not hesitate to reach out, particularly if these options may not be suitable for you.

Below please find some frequently asked questions and answers. We are here to help you navigate these complex and distressing issues. Take good care of yourselves.

Sincerely,

Catherine Epstein, Provost and Dean of the Faculty
Karu Kozuma, Chief Student Affairs Officer
Janna Behrens, Director of the Office of Global Education

Frequently Asked Questions

**When may I return to campus?**

Unfortunately, you may not return to Amherst as an enrolled student until the fall 2020 semester. (Only students who are actively enrolled in courses this spring at the College may be in residence.)

In the meantime, if you have been in a country for which the CDC has issued a [warning level 3 travel health notice](https://www.cdc.gov/travel), you may not return to campus for any reason until you have been in the United States for at least fourteen days and have not shown any symptoms of COVID-19.

International students with F-1 visas are advised to contact the Center for International Student Engagement for up-to-date information on return travel to the United States.

**How will my financial aid work for alternate in-residence programs or online courses?**

The Office of Financial Aid will work with financial aid recipients who are looking to enroll in alternate in-residence or online courses on a case-by-case basis to support tuition and academic fees. Please contact the Office of Financial Aid directly.

**Amherst doesn’t usually give credit to courses taken during the summer or online, so how will I get credit for such work?**
Given the extraordinary circumstances that the COVID-19 situation has created and its impact on study abroad programs around the world, Amherst will waive its traditionally strict prohibitions on giving credit for work during the summer or for online courses. Courses will continue to need prior approval from your academic adviser and the Registrar.

I can't find an in-residence program this late in the semester, but I really want to graduate in spring 2021. What can I do?

You may choose from a number of options:

- Some schools are on the quarter system and may still permit you to enroll for the spring quarter, although you would likely receive credit for only three courses. If this were the case, you would need to take a fourth course this summer, combine half courses that you might take or have taken, or graduate with the minimum 31 credits. Please note that schools may require that you not come to campus until you have been in the United States for at least fourteen days and have not shown any symptoms of COVID-19.
- Many universities offer summer sessions, and you could take the equivalent of four courses during the summer of 2020. Again, schools may require that you not come to campus until you have been in the United States for at least fourteen days and have not shown any symptoms of COVID-19.
- You could take online courses this spring and/or summer with approval from the Registrar and your academic adviser if the course will satisfy a major requirement.

I have an internship or other summer plans lined up. Could I take a mix of online courses this spring and summer so that I can still do my internship?

Absolutely. You might take two courses online in the coming months, and two courses online during the summer. There are other options, too. You might, for example, take two courses at a local university this spring, one course online this summer, and combine two half courses that you’ve taken in the past or will take next year at Amherst. We are happy to consult with you to determine the best solution.

How will Amherst determine that the courses I take in residence at another institution or online will receive credit towards graduation?

Please consult with your academic adviser and other faculty members to determine the quality of the courses you intend to take. To receive academic credit, your courses must have the pre-approval of your faculty adviser and the Registrar.

This semester has not worked out, and I do not want to take courses anywhere else but Amherst. Can I graduate a semester late?

That may depend. If your program was cancelled and you received a complete refund, you may choose to enroll in Amherst in fall 2021 and graduate as a ’22 E. If tuition is not refunded, or only partially refunded, the College will work with you to complete your degree within the required eight semesters. If that turns out to be impossible, we will work with you on a case-by-case basis.
**What if I need financial help for my return travel home?**

If you are with a program that is cancelled, the program will likely pay for your return home. If that is not the case, please contact the Office of Global Education by emailing `geo@amherst.edu`.

If the program gives you the option to return but is not cancelled, the program may pay for your return. If it does not, please contact the Office of Global Education.

**What if I was counting on study away to fulfill my major requirements?**

We are committed to making sure you can graduate on time and we will work with you and your faculty adviser to arrive at a satisfactory solution.