

# COVID-19 & Study Abroad: FAQ

Last updated September 3, 2020

## Has SJU cancelled any study abroad programs due to COVID-19 for the 2020-2021 academic year?

As of June 24, 2020, SJU suspended all University-sponsored study abroad programming for the Fall 2020 semester. This included the suspension of fall 2020 semester abroad, as well as the postponement of one winter break study tour departing in early January 2021. All affected students have been contacted through SJU email.

At this time, Spring 2021 study tours and semester abroad programs are scheduled to take place as planned. The University continues to monitor conditions and will review the status of Spring travel in early October. Any changes or recommendations will be communicated directly to participants.

At this time, SJU Summer Programs in 2021 are scheduled to take place as planned.

## I'm planning to travel abroad, can I apply for a U.S. passport at this time?

You can still apply for a new or renewed U.S. passport, but you should expect significant delays before receiving your passport. U.S. passport operations were significantly reduced in March 2020, but as global conditions evolve and U.S. states begin to reopen, they are resuming operations in phases. Due to anticipated delays, if you are planning on studying abroad during Spring or Summer 2021, you are strongly encouraged to apply for a passport as soon as possible.

Refer to the [U.S. State Department Update on U.S. Passport Operations](#) for the most current information, and visit their [Passport Agency and Center page](#) to check on the status of passport agencies and centers. To see the current wait times to receive your passport and the return of your citizenship documents (such as previous passports and birth/naturalization certificates), please see the [U.S. State Department's Processing Times page](#).

## Should I purchase Trip Cancellation & Interruption Insurance?

While the University will review the status of spring travel in early October, it is important to note that conditions may continue to evolve after a decision is made. Host institutions or program providers may make cancellations, or students may voluntarily opt to withdraw. To protect funds committed

toward a study abroad experience, the CIP recommends that students purchase Trip Cancellation & Interruption insurance.

SJU does not endorse any specific insurance carrier, but we have compiled below a list websites vendors to assist with your research. AAA, your car insurance company and your credit card company may offer Trip Cancellation benefits as well. Please obtain online quotes to compare or speak with an insurance representative:

- AIG/Travel Guard <https://www.travelguard.com/>
- Travel Insured International <https://www.travelinsured.com/agency/>

Each carrier provides different levels of services at different rates, so it is important to understand exactly what is covered by a particular plan before purchasing, particularly in regard to COVID-related cancellations. In many cases, losses due to COVID may not be covered by a standard plan. Students may need to look for special coverage, such as a “Cancel for Any Reason” plan. It is strongly advised that you speak with the insurance provider to understand details of a specific plan, as even “Cancel for Any Reason” coverages may vary between providers.

## How will I know if my program is cancelled or postponed?

SJU will directly contact students with updates via email. SJU reaches out to students’ designated emergency contacts only in specific situations, such as when a student has been incapacitated or when we cannot reach the student. All members of the SJU community can find updates related to COVID-19 on this page, and at <https://www.sju.edu/hawk-hill-ready>

## How does SJU make decisions about its study abroad programs?

SJU takes guidance from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control (CDC), the U.S. Department of State, and the World Health Organization (WHO). When making decisions about specific programs, we also consider local conditions as well as input from peer institutions and our overseas partners.

Prior to cancelling a Study Tour or Summer Program, we first explore all viable alternatives, such as postponing a program. For those programs that are postponed, the details of what a postponement will look will be communicated directly with the participants, and the outcome for each program could be different.

## What would happen if an SJU study abroad program was cancelled?

### **SJU Study Tours/Summer Programs:**

Deposits submitted for a spring 2021 study tour or summer program are fully refundable should a student withdraw due to concern for COVID-19. Students will not be charged additional fees by SJU for study abroad until the University has reviewed the status of spring travel.

Should spring and summer 2021 travel be approved after University review, students will be held to the CIP's withdrawal policy as captured in the [Terms of Participation in Program Agreement](#) (Study Tours and Summer Programs) or [Academic, Disciplinary and Financial Waiver](#) (Semester/Year Abroad), on which students sign off as part of their application.

In the event a decision is made by the University to cancel or suspend a program after the initial early October review, Saint Joseph's University will issue recoverable cost refunds, but only if and when SJU has recovered actual expenses from its vendors. Please note that the University is working diligently to ensure that as many costs as possible are recoverable.

Tuition is not refundable if students are provided an option to continue pursuing a course for credit. As refunds are not guaranteed, the CIP recommends that students purchase Trip Cancellation & Interruption insurance to protect funds committed to a study abroad experience. Suggested websites to research insurance options can be found above.

### **SJU Approved Semester Abroad Programs:**

If a future semester abroad program were cancelled prior to the start of the SJU semester, students would be able to enroll in SJU courses. No tuition refund would be issued, as tuition remains the same for students participating in a semester abroad and students taking classes full-time at SJU .

As non-tuition fees are paid directly by students to their abroad programs, refund policies will vary. Many programs have updated their refund and cancellation policies in light of COVID-19. Be sure to fully understand the partner program's refund policy as SJU has no control over another institution's policies.

Students are advised not to make any non-refundable payments for their study abroad experience until a University update on student travel for Spring has been provided.

As conditions may continue to evolve after a University decision is issued in October, students are advised to be aware of refund and cancellation policies before making any payments to external providers. As refunds are not guaranteed, the CIP recommends that students purchase Trip Cancellation & Interruption insurance to protect funds committed to a study abroad experience. Suggested websites to research insurance options can be found above.

## **My 2020 Study Tour/SJU Summer Program was postponed to 2021 and I want to be a part of it. Will I need to reapply?**

Yes, you will need to reapply. If your program was postponed to 2021, it is possible that the terms of the program (dates, itinerary, etc.) and cost have changed. You will need to submit a new application to confirm that you wish to participate and that you accept the new program terms and cost. Certain question items from your 2020 application can be carried over to your 2021 application (please contact Ilana at [iegert@sju.edu](mailto:iegert@sju.edu) to do so).

Students who were previously confirmed participants on a 2020 Study Tour or SJU Summer Program will be given priority if they reapply.

## I withdrew from Fall 2020 Semester Abroad, or my program was cancelled. I would like to go abroad in Spring 2021. Will I need to reapply?

No, you will not need to reapply. The CIP will contact all students previously approved for Fall 2020 study abroad with instructions to reopen your application. For this reason, if your application for Fall 2020 semester abroad was previously approved and you would like to study abroad in Spring 2021, please do not open a new application. Please check your SJU email for further instructions and the CIP will guide you through the process.

## What would happen if a student withdraws from a future study abroad program ( spring semester and onward) out of concern for COVID-19?

SJU understands that personal circumstances may vary, and that final decisions will be made between students and families. All enrolled study abroad students may voluntarily withdraw from a study abroad program at any time. Deposits submitted for spring 2021 study abroad are fully refundable should a student withdraw due to concern for COVID-19. Students will not be charged additional fees by SJU for study abroad until the University has reviewed the status of spring travel. Should spring travel be approved after University review, students will be held to the CIP's withdrawal policy as captured in the [Terms of Participation in Program Agreement](#) (Study Tours and Summer Programs) or [Academic, Disciplinary and Financial Waiver](#) (Semester/Year Abroad), on which students sign off as part of their application.

Semester abroad students pay non-tuition fees directly to their programs abroad, and non-SJU summer & winter program students pay all fees directly to their programs abroad. Students are advised not to make any non-refundable payments for their study abroad experience until a University update on student travel has been provided. As conditions may continue to evolve after a University decision is issued, students are advised to be aware of refund and cancellation policies for any non-SJU fees, such as housing costs or airfare. Many programs have published information on their websites for future students. If you are not sure how to contact a program representative, the CIP will be happy to assist.

## If my spring 2021 semester abroad is cancelled, or I voluntarily withdraw, are there on-campus housing options for me?

On-campus housing is available for students who have signed a 2020-2021 Housing Agreement. If Spring 2021 travel is suspended after University review in October, your space in campus housing for the Spring 2021 semester will be held.

If Spring 2021 travel is approved and you choose to move forward with your study abroad experience, your space in on-campus housing will be released. Should a student withdraw, or should a program be cancelled, the student will be eligible for on-campus housing.

Students who have not signed a 2020-2021 Housing Agreement should discuss options with the [Office of Residence Life](#).

## Who can I contact about study abroad and the coronavirus situation?

For questions about a semester abroad program, non-SJU summer program, or a student on one of these programs, contact Sara Haines at [shaines@sju.edu](mailto:shaines@sju.edu) or 610-660-1675

For questions about a Study Tour, SJU Summer Program, or a student on one of these programs, contact Ilana Egert at [iegert@sju.edu](mailto:iegert@sju.edu) or 610-660-3479.

For general inquiries or concerns, please reach out to Tom Kesaris at [tkesaris@sju.edu](mailto:tkesaris@sju.edu) or 610-660-1836.

Please note that this page will be updated frequently as new information becomes available. All are encouraged to refer back regularly for the latest information.

## What resources does SJU recommend for reliable updates regarding COVID-19?

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