

COVID-19 & Study Abroad: FAQ

Last updated December 10, 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.

As of October 15th, 2020, SJU suspended all faculty-led study tours for the Spring 2021 semester. The suspended programs are listed below.

- *Executive MBA International Residency*
- *Food Marketing International Residency*
- *Pharmaceutical & Healthcare Marketing International Residency*
- *Fermentation Science Study Tour*
- *Just Healthcare in Costa Rica Study Tour*
- *Contemporary China Study Tour*

Affected students have been contacted through email.

SJU is has reviewed spring 2021 semester abroad programs with enrolled participants on a program-by-program basis. Suspended programs are listed below:

- *Belgium Internship Program* - Spring 2021 semester suspended by SJU
- *IES Abroad Paris - French Studies* - Spring 2021 semester cancelled by program
- *Fairfield University - Florence University of the Arts* - Spring 2021 semester cancelled by program
- *Saint Louis University, Madrid* - Spring 2021 semester suspended by SJU
- *National University of Ireland, Galway* - Spring 2021 semester suspended by SJU
- *University College, Cork* - Spring 2021 semester suspended by SJU
- *DIS - Study Abroad in Copenhagen* - Spring 2021 semester suspended by SJU
- *St. Mary's University, Twickenham, London* - Spring 2021 semester suspended by SJU
- *The American University of Rome* - Spring 2021 semester suspended by SJU

All affected students have been contacted through email. At this time, no further Spring 2021 semester abroad programs are under review.

At this time, SJU Summer Programs in 2021 are scheduled to take place as planned. The University continues to monitor conditions and will review the status of Summer travel on February 15th. Any changes or recommendations will be communicated directly to participants.

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 delays before receiving your passport. Current processing time for routine service applications is 10-12 weeks. You also have the option of paying an additional \$60 for expedited service to receive your passport in 4-6 weeks.

Due to anticipated delays, if you are planning on studying abroad during Summer or Fall 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 provide decisions on each program based on the timelines set, 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 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/>
- CISI (Cultural Insurance Services International)
<https://www.culturalinsurance.com/academic-trip-protector-insurance-program.asp>
- 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 like 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 suspended spring 2021 study tour will be fully refunded. No other fees have been charged to students for spring study tours at this time.

Deposits submitted for a 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 summer travel in February.

Should 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 University 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 .

Semester abroad confirmation deposits submitted to SJU for a future semester abroad are fully refundable at this time. Please check back when fall 2021 applications open in January for more detailed information.

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.

Semester abroad students are advised not to make any non-refundable payments for their study abroad experience until a University update on the status of student travel for their intended term abroad has been provided.

As conditions may continue to evolve after a University decision is issued for a program, 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 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 Spring 2021 Semester Abroad, or my program was cancelled. I would like to go abroad in Fall 2021. Will I need to reapply?

No, you will not need to reapply. The CIP will contact all students previously approved for Spring 2021 study abroad with instructions to reopen your application. For this reason, if your application for Spring 2021 semester abroad was previously approved and you would like to study abroad in Fall 2021, you will not need to begin a new application when fall applications open in January. Please monitor 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 summer 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 summer travel. Should summer 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 for their intended term abroad 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 program 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 your Spring 2021 program is suspended after University review, 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 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 or 610-660-3479.

For general inquiries or concerns, please reach out to Tom Kesaris at 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](#)