

# GUIDING PRINCIPLES

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COVID-19 has created challenges to study abroad, including travel restrictions, decreased availability of medical care, alterations to academic programming and community engagement, and the potential for difficulty returning home in the event of sudden border closures. While these challenges have limited traditional study abroad, the nature of SFS programs – cohort-based field work in remote regions of the world – along with adaptive risk management, allows SFS to offer programming on select campuses.

SFS centers operate similarly to a field station, where students and staff live, work, and study together. The group has shared use of facilities on campus, including classrooms, dining halls, laboratories, and student lounges. The capacity of each SFS center has been recalculated to allow physical distancing in these spaces, and we will maximize outdoor dining and classroom facilities. Our centers offer ample outdoor communal and recreational space.

Our comprehensive and dynamic risk assessment and management system continuously monitors and adapts to known and foreseeable risks and supports SFS leadership regarding program policies, design, and curriculum. Upon arrival, students participate in a multi-day orientation that provides context to local laws, customs, and belief systems. Throughout the program, the daily activities are managed via structured itineraries, sign-out policies, and curfews. Residential life is supported by trained staff, community living agreements, and limited guest access. These longstanding policies provide for a healthy campus by managing and mitigating the risks of infection and illness.

## VACCINE REQUIREMENT

SFS has a collective responsibility to limit spread and exposure of COVID-19 in the communities in which we operate. Beginning with Summer 2021 programs, SFS requires all students to be fully vaccinated prior to participation in their SFS program. The vaccine requirement 1) protects students, SFS staff, and the local community and 2) allows for a more robust academic program. SFS shares in this responsibility and as vaccines are available locally, we are supporting our staff in becoming vaccinated.

To meet this requirement, students should upload documentation of their completed COVID-19 vaccination to their Magnus Health Account no later than two weeks prior to departure for their program.

## ESTABLISHING A RESIDENTIAL COHORT

To establish our residential cohort, SFS will employ strategies to reduce the possibility of infection from being introduced to campus. The process is:

### PRE-DEPARTURE

Our pre-departure medical review asks about past COVID-19 infection, status of COVID-19 vaccination, and health risks that may increase the student's risk for severe illness from COVID-19. Students will learn about SFS COVID-19 protocols, and be able to ask questions, during their online pre-departure orientation. Students are asked to strictly adhere to CDC recommendations and guidelines regarding COVID-19 precautions for a full two weeks prior to departure for their SFS program. These precautions include physical distancing and appropriate use of face coverings in public settings, good personal hygiene, and avoiding high-risk gatherings.

### TEST PRE-ARRIVAL

Before departing for the program, SFS requires students get tested 1-3 days prior to travel. While the CDC has waived the recommendation for pre-departure testing for fully vaccinated individuals, SFS requires this testing to 1) limit exposure to the residential cohort and the local community, 2) comply with host country entry requirements and airline protocols where they exist, and 3) prevent issues that may arise in the instance of airport health screening, border control, or interrupted flight itineraries.

### **QUARANTINE ON CAMPUS**

Students and residential staff may be asked to quarantine on campus until they receive results of post-arrival COVID-19 testing. The group will comply with CDC guidelines with respect to physical distancing, the use of face coverings, and personal preventative health measures. During this time in quarantine, students will participate in a comprehensive orientation and begin their academic instruction.

### **TEST POST-ARRIVAL**

As per CDC recommendations for international travel, students will be tested for COVID-19 between Day 3 and Day 5 of the program. Testing logistics, including appointments and transportation, will be conducted by the SFS staff. SFS will cover the cost of this testing.

### **ESTABLISH COHORT**

Upon receipt of negative test results, students and residential staff will enter a single, residential cohort that observes and adheres to campus policies. At this time, off-campus academic programming can resume while adhering to local, country, and CDC guidelines. Within the cohort, some on-campus policies, such as distancing and face coverings, may be relaxed at the discretion of the Center Director and SFS Director of Health & Wellness. When interacting with community members or non-residential staff, all preventative measures will be observed.

## **PREVENTATIVE MEASURES**

### **PROMOTE HEALTHY BEHAVIORS**

During orientation, staff will provide context for policies and protocols in place to reduce likelihood of transmission. These policies consider both host country laws and CDC recommendations and will include a behavioral code that provides structure to community interactions, such as visits into town. Regular cleaning and disinfecting of common spaces, high touch surfaces, and shared objects will follow CDC guidelines. Students will conduct daily self-assessments and communicate symptoms.

### **MODIFIED COMMON SPACES**

Common areas will be cleaned and disinfected regularly. SFS will provide space for both indoor and outdoor dining areas to allow for physical distancing. Classrooms will be outdoors, or indoors with students physically distanced. We have made efforts to increase ventilation (screened windows, fans) in indoor rooms and dormitories.

### **MODIFIED FIELD TRIPS**

To protect the students, staff, and our community, we will modify programming to follow CDC recommendations and host country laws. While we will monitor conditions, it is unlikely we will be able to cross international borders. If there is risk of community transmission, local field trips may be cancelled, or itineraries may change with short notice.

### **NON-PROGRAM TIME**

Pre-pandemic, programming had designated non-program time where students were able to travel to other regions of their host country, or nearby countries for a weekend or longer break. This type of travel has been cancelled for all Fall 2021 programs and on-campus or local programming will be offered instead. SFS will continue to assess local conditions at each center and, as conditions permit, relax these restrictions when safe and prudent to do so for both students, staff, and the community.

### **MONITOR CONDITIONS**

SFS will monitor sources of local and national public health data concerning community transmission. SFS will update sending schools of any possible closure of national borders or suspension of international air travel.

## **TESTING + MONITORING**

COVID-19 testing locations are accessible to students in each of the locations in which we operate. Cost, type of test available, testing requirements, and processing time for results vary across the regions and are subject to change. Tests typically cost \$100-200. When warranted by CDC guidelines, SFS staff will support a student in getting tested for COVID-19. This includes

scheduling the appointment, transportation, in-person guidance, translation, and documentation. Students pay for symptom-based testing.

All air passengers arriving to the US from a foreign country are required to get tested no more than 3 days before their flight departs. Students will cover the cost of testing required for their return to the US, but SFS will assist all students in obtaining a test at the appropriate time for their return to the US.

## **QUARANTINE GUIDELINES**

SFS will follow CDC [Interim Public Health Recommendations for Fully Vaccinated People](#). Symptomatic individuals will be isolated until they are able to be evaluated and tested for COVID-19. At that time, SFS will work with local public health officials, local physician(s), and within CDC guidelines to determine length of isolation. If a student requires treatment in a medical care facility, SFS staff will support them in compliance with local laws, restrictions, and protocols. Students or staff in close contact with the positive case may refrain from quarantine as long as they remain asymptomatic, and they will be monitored for symptoms daily. Testing may be recommended for roommate(s) or close contact(s) as per CDC guidelines.

In the event that a student requires isolation, each SFS campus has a designated room, and provides all personal needs including meals, snacks, water, medical care, cleaning products, and laundered items. An SFS staff member will be assigned to attend for the individual for medical evaluation, wellness checks, and personal care. The individual will be able to immediately contact an SFS staff member 24/7.

## **MEDICAL CARE**

In most instances, positive cases will be allowed to isolate on campus on all SFS programs. If an SFS student requires treatment in a medical care facility for COVID-19, SFS will support the student by all means possible within the hospital's COVID-19 policies, including drop off of personal care items and provision of means of communication for local and long-distance calls. Similarly, SFS staff will ensure that translation services are being offered, where needed and possible.

Sending schools will be notified if students are taken to emergency medical care, hospitalized, or isolated on campus.

## **ACADEMIC CONTINUITY**

If an individual must be isolated for an extended period of time, academic continuity will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis, depending on the individual's condition and in coordination with the Center Director, Faculty, Staff and SFS Dean.

## **RISK MITIGATION**

SFS continuously monitors a variety of sources: analysis from Overseas Security Advisory Council (OSAC); guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), World Health Organization (WHO), and US Department of State; reports from local and national governments, US embassy services, and news outlets; and intel from trusted community members. These resources are evaluated for indications of potential impact on our programs, such as increasing community transmission, escalating political tension, possibility of border closures, or decreasing availability of medical resources.

Impacts that compromise the safety of the student group or integrity of the program may result in the suspension or cancelation of the program.

SFS will address any violation of our health and safety policies. Violations will lead to a range of responses including mandated quarantine or isolation and up to expulsion. Negligent transgressions that compromise the safety of SFS students, staff, or the local community will result in immediate expulsion.