

**From:** Provost Kotlikoff and Vice Provost Wolford intl@safety@cornell.edu  
**Subject:** Coronavirus Update: Guidelines, travel restrictions and accommodations, summer programs  
**Date:** February 27, 2020 at 9:03 AM  
**To:** ebg44@cornell.edu



Cornell University

Dear Cornell Community,

As you are aware, Cornell University has been closely monitoring the coronavirus (COVID-19). While there are still no confirmed cases of COVID-19 in New York state, the World Health Organization (WHO) has confirmed cases in more than 30 countries.

We realize there is uncertainty about the situation, and we would like to share updates and guidelines. Cornell is following Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) guidelines for decisions about travel and programming abroad. Our principles, therefore, are as follows:

- Cornell considers any country with a CDC Level 3 Travel Health Advisory, “**Avoid Nonessential Travel,**” an elevated-risk destination. Cornell-related student travel to those countries will be prohibited and staff and faculty must petition for [approval from ITART](#) prior to travel. Cornell-run programs in those countries will be expected to suspend their programs and send the students back to campus, whether in Ithaca or New York City. Students engaged in independent research or study, or in a non-Cornell, partner-university program that continues to run will be allowed to stay on, but the university will work with students to finish out their semester on campus if they choose to return. If a partner university

semester on campus if they choose to return. If a partner university or program is closed down due to coronavirus-related circumstances, we will work with those students to return to campus and complete their semester through coursework provided by either the partner or by Cornell.

- For any country with a CDC Level 2 Travel Health Advisory **“Practice Enhanced Precautions,”** Cornell will alert students in the country and advocate for adoption of enhanced precautions (listed below). Cornell-run programs will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis to determine an appropriate course of action. Should the CDC increase the warning level for these countries from level 2 to level 3 status, Cornell will restrict travel as described above.

While health and safety are our primary concerns, we are also mindful of the academic burdens that students face as more travel destinations and study abroad programs are affected by the spread of the virus. Academic units will make their best efforts to support students whose semesters may be disrupted due to coronavirus concerns such that they can complete their semesters online or on campus.

At this point, although we do not know whether the Level 3 Travel Health Advisories for China and South Korea will remain in place over the summer, we strongly suggest that Cornell students, faculty, or staff planning to participate in or lead organized programs of study, work or research in those countries this summer make alternate plans. We are developing contingency plans for students who might be required to stay on campus this summer, including meaningful programming opportunities and housing.

We are also aware that staff, post-doctoral fellows and faculty may

we are also aware that staff, post-doctoral fellows and faculty may find their work disrupted due to travel restrictions, and we urge supervisors to be flexible and generous in establishing alternative responsibilities. We will work across the university to provide emergency relief as possible.

Given the uncertainties of this quickly evolving situation, we cannot predict when the CDC will lift current restrictions on countries with Level 2 and 3 Travel Health Advisories, or if additional countries will be impacted by future advisories. We will continue to monitor the situation around the globe, and we'll update you should the situation change.

Please see below for our recommendations for specific countries. We also encourage you to review [Cornell's coronavirus webpage](#) for related updates and information.

Sincerely,

Michael Kotlikoff  
Provost

Wendy Wolford  
Vice Provost for International Affairs

### **Further details**

- Prohibited Cornell-Related Student Travel (Level 3)
- Areas of Elevated Risk: Cornell-Related Student Travel (Level 2)
- Cornell-Related Faculty and Staff Travel
- Non-Cornell Related Travel Guidance

- Recommended Actions and Resources

### **Prohibited Cornell-Related Student Travel (Level 3)**

Earlier this week, the CDC issued a [level 3 notice for South Korea](#), as was already the case for mainland China. Based on this guidance, Cornell has designated South Korea as an [elevated-risk destination](#): undergraduate, graduate or professional students will not be permitted to travel to South Korea for Cornell-related study, work or research. Cornell's international affairs team communicated this information to impacted students earlier this week.

Though students currently outside of South Korea are not allowed to travel to the country on Cornell business, students already there MAY stay if they feel safe and well but should check in with us via email, [intlsafety@cornell.edu](mailto:intlsafety@cornell.edu), and provide a status update. Academic units will work to support students if they choose to return to campus mid-semester.

Restrictions for Cornell-related travel to [mainland China](#) went into effect on Jan. 29 and remain in place.

Cornell is exploring options for spring break and summer programming for students who may be impacted by the programs that have been canceled in these two locations.

### **Areas of Elevated Risk: Cornell-Related Student Travel (Level 2)**

The CDC has issued Level 2 [travel notices for Italy, Japan and Iran](#), urging travelers to practice enhanced precautions when visiting these countries. We understand that the recent news may be a cause of

heightened concern for you, your classmates or colleagues, and your families.

There are currently no Cornell restrictions on travel to these countries; however, should the CDC increase the travel notice on these or any other countries to Level 3 status, Cornell will follow those guidelines and impose travel restrictions.

As long as risk of infection remains low, and authorities are taking all precautions against the possible spread of the virus, students participating in non-Cornell run programs will be given the option to remain in country and complete their experience abroad. All students currently studying in, or with planned travel to, these areas have been contacted directly by the international affairs team.

Students who may be uncomfortable remaining abroad or whose programs have closed down should contact their home departments to explore options for completing the semester coursework.

### **Cornell-Related Faculty and Staff Travel**

Faculty and staff who wish to travel to mainland China or South Korea for Cornell-related scholarship or business [must receive approval from ITART](#) prior to travel.

### **Non-Cornell Related Travel Guidance**

Cornell is only limiting travel that occurs on the university's behalf, such as research, study, teaching or other business activities. If urgent or personal travel to mainland China or South Korea is necessary in the coming weeks, please exercise caution and review the latest health and travel information from the [CDC](#) and [Department](#)

the latest health and travel information from the [CDC](#) and [Department of State](#) so you are fully informed of potential health risks and travel restrictions or screenings that may be in place upon your return.

Cornell's spring break begins on March 28. While it is too early to know how this public health issue may evolve over the coming month, students who are considering traveling internationally over the break should also monitor travel alerts and avoid areas of elevated risk.

### **Recommended Actions and Resources**

- Put into practice every day personal and public health preventative actions recommended by the [CDC](#). These include hand washing, covering your cough or sneeze with a tissue, among others, many of which are the expected steps you would take to protect yourself from the common flu or other transmittable viruses.
- We encourage you to follow the instructions and recommendations put forward by your host organization/local authorities regarding any precautions that support the prevention of a community outbreak.
- The symptoms associated with coronavirus are similar to the common flu. Symptoms include mild to severe respiratory illness with fever, cough and difficulty breathing. If you experience any of these symptoms, inform your program staff or local partner and take care of yourself – stay hydrated and rest. If the symptoms worsen or you have concerns, seek medical attention through program staff on site or your local partner.
- Reach out to Cornell International Travel Health and Safety at any point with questions or concerns at [intlsafety@cornell.edu](mailto:intlsafety@cornell.edu) or you may call our travel assistance provider, International SOS, for advice and information from medical professionals at +1-215-942-

8478.

- Reach out to [International Services](#) with any questions or concerns related to immigration status that might be affected by new travel plans.
- All Cornell travelers have [free access to mental health professionals](#) who are there to support them by phone or Skype for up to five sessions/incident/year, in more than 60 languages. To reach these counselors, travelers may call International SOS, 24/7 at +1-215-942-8478.