

UFIC Notice Spring 2020 Study Abroad Program Cancellations in Europe - March 12, 2020

Dear Students,

As you have probably heard by now, significant changes have taken place in the past 24 hours due to the worldwide spread of COVID-19. I am sorry to report that, in this context and after careful consideration and consultation, and with the health and safety of our students being our first priority, the **University of Florida International Center is suspending all Spring 2020 Study Abroad programs in Europe**. This decision was based on several factors, including:

- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) issuing a Level 3 travel warning for the majority of Europe
- The U.S. Department of State issuing a Global Health Advisory of Level 3 to Reconsider Travel
- The continued evolution of U.S. and foreign government actions and travel restrictions that may complicate students' returns home

Despite these changes, your academic progress is important, and we want to ensure you have the resources to complete your semester coursework. It is our understanding that most (if not all) universities and program providers in Europe are implementing changes to accommodate students needing to complete the semester remotely. Please speak with your program provider or host institution if this option has not been made available to you.

We ask that you proceed with making arrangements to leave and book travel back to the United States as soon as possible. For non-U.S. passport holders, we strongly recommend leaving by Friday, March 13th at midnight, as President Trump's proclamation has different restrictions for these individuals.

We are aware that it may be hard to get out on a flight; therefore, we recommend the following:

- Take action as soon as possible - airlines and travel agents are experiencing a high volume of calls. You may need to wait on hold for an hour or more to speak with an agent. When possible, try to make changes online to expedite the process.
- Make changes directly on your airline website, or call them directly, rather than changing your flight on a third party website such as Expedia.
- Ask your airline if they are offering an updated flight change policy - many airlines are waiving extra fees and charges for flight changes, especially for travel to/from regions affected by Coronavirus.
- Change your flight rather than cancelling it. This can possibly avoid fees.

Please note that any students who decide to remain in Europe despite our instructions are doing so of their own accord. We kindly request that you update your [study abroad advisor](#) on your plans as soon as possible.

As you return from abroad, it is important to follow the safety guidelines from the [CDC](#). As reiterated on the CDC's Travelers' Health Page: "Stay home for 14 days from the time you left an area with widespread, ongoing community spread (Level 3 Travel Health Notice countries) and practice social distancing." If you have concerns or questions, you may call the Student Health Care Center (352) 392-1161 and the nursing staff can advise you if you need to be seen. All of the latest COVID-19 updates from the University of Florida can be found here: <http://www.ufl.edu/health-updates/>

We know this email may generate additional questions from many of you. Please know that the study abroad team is working tirelessly to assist our students. Thank you for your understanding in these difficult times.