Summer 2021 Permissible Travel Guidelines

Frequently Asked Questions

Updated as of March 31, 2021

General

How should department chairs, program directors, deans, and cabinet officers decide what travel has a critical purpose? How should this decision be documented?

The process for determining whether or not a proposed trip has a critical purpose may vary according to a department or office’s approach to administrative issues. Approving officials may designate a senior staff person to manage this process. However, all such entities should establish a review process that ensures the following conditions are true for a trip to be considered as fulfilling a critical purpose:

- There are no remote options for accomplishing the purpose of the trip to a sufficiently acceptable degree, or available remote options are otherwise ineffective;
- There is a time urgency involved such that the trip cannot be deferred until December 2021 without irreparable harm to a University affiliate’s academic progress or scholarship, or to the University’s scholarship, teaching, or operations;
- There is no form of stay-at-home order for the proposed destination(s); and,
- The logistics for the trip are feasible (i.e., commercial flights and accommodations are available, conditions in the destination(s) would not prevent carrying out the trip’s purpose, recommended quarantines would not interfere with the timing of the trip, etc.).

GS&S has created a decision guide to assist reviewers in determining whether or not a proposed trip meets the criteria for critical purpose. Reviewers may request a copy via email or find the current version for download in GS&S’s online resources.

Department chairs, program directors, deans, and cabinet officers may approve their own travel, so long as they determine it meets the appropriate criteria; in such instances, they are asked to notify GS&S of their self-approval by email to globalsafety@princeton.edu.

Each sponsoring and funding entity should maintain a record of its reviews and decisions, even if only by retaining the emails involved in the process.

Even if a trip is determined to be critical, the traveler should retain final choice of whether or not to travel, given their individual concerns regarding risks to their health.
International travelers must review and sign an advisement prior to their journey, which details more thoroughly the risks involved.

**Does attendance at conferences constitute a critical purpose for travel?**

For conferences that involve only domestic travel, the chair, program director, dean, or cabinet officer may determine if attendance meets the definition of a critical purpose. Where international travel is involved, conferences are not considered a critical purpose for travel and so University-sponsored travel to them is only possible if a specific exception is requested from the Associate Provost for International Affairs and Operations and granted.

**As an undergraduate faculty adviser or internship program director, what should I consider in reviewing and approving University-sponsored domestic travel for an undergraduate?**

Faculty advisers and internship program directors should ensure that the proposed domestic travel by an undergraduate is directly related to the student’s academic progress and is not travel that could be deferred until December 2021 or later without impacting the student’s academic advancement. Requesting students must also demonstrate that their proposed research or internship is actually possible and that their travel is feasible in light of pandemic-related restrictions, e.g., the archive to be visited is open for visitors or the internship is actually in-person at the proposed destination and in compliance with local public health rules.

GS&S has created a decision guide to assist in determining whether or not a proposed trip meets the approval criteria for purpose and feasibility. Reviewers may request a copy via email or find the current version for download in GS&S’s online resources.

**If an undergraduate is approved to travel domestically for an in-person summer internship, can the student use University funding to pay rent in a shared accommodation, such as an apartment with roommates?**

Yes. For the purposes of the summer travel guidelines, this is not considered group travel, provided the University is not directly arranging the shared housing. Internship program directors may wish to consider ways in which they can support students who, for medical reasons, might want to avoid living in a shared-accommodation setting while participating in an in-person internship.

Regardless of how a student chooses to use any approved housing stipend, students are required to comply with local, state, and federal public health regulations at all times while engaged in University-sponsored travel, including while participating in a University-sponsored, in-person internship.
Given positive developments and news about vaccines, can I plan or book University-sponsored travel or other international programs not permitted under the current guidelines, if they will take place in the fall of 2021?

Despite the approval and distribution of vaccinations in some countries, there remain substantial uncertainties regarding the timeframe within which worldwide vaccination programs can and will make travel safer and more feasible. Even under the most optimistic projections, international travel in particular is likely to remain significantly disrupted throughout 2021. Therefore, we discourage the booking of future University-sponsored travel not permitted under the current guidelines. In all cases, you should only make travel commitments where there is sufficient flexibility to prevent the loss of funds or other penalties if the travel must be canceled up until the date of planned departure.

I have been vaccinated, why is Princeton still restricting the places to which I can travel?

Vaccination dramatically reduces the risk that you will become severely ill with COVID-19, but public health officials have not yet determined definitively that vaccination prevents the spread of the SARS-CoV-2 virus. As such, governments have been slow to remove or modify travel bans and entry requirements for those who have been vaccinated, and individual vaccination is still not a sufficient tool for mitigating the substantial risks of travel.

I am an emeritus faculty member. What parts of the permissible travel guidelines apply to me?

For all emeriti, the same restrictions on University-sponsored domestic and international travel apply as those in place for all faculty members.

Emeriti who regularly work on campus are strongly encouraged to enroll the details of their personal travel under the same conditions as other faculty members.

Those emeriti who will only be visiting campus occasionally should ensure they are following applicable University guidelines for on-campus faculty prior to visiting campus.

Do the permissible travel guidelines apply to visitors coming to Princeton?

Before hosting any visitor on campus, you should carefully review the current visitor policy to ensure you are complying with its requirements.

If the visit is otherwise permitted under that policy and the visitor’s travel is supported through funds disbursed by the University or a University-affiliated entity, and/or, is related to or in support of University operations, including research and teaching, the permissible travel guidelines apply to the trip. This is true regardless of whether or not the visitor is normally affiliated with Princeton.
**Undergraduate and Graduate Students**

*If I am an undergraduate student, am I permitted to engage in University-sponsored or personal travel?*

**University-sponsored travel**

Undergraduates are permitted to engage in University-sponsored domestic travel that their faculty adviser determines is critical for their academic progress or that is approved by a University internship program director. Those undergraduates residing on campus for the summer must also inform their DSL of this University-sponsored travel.

**Personal Travel**

Undergraduates not residing on campus for the summer may engage in personal travel they feel is safe and appropriate, based on their individual circumstances.

Undergraduates residing on campus may not travel outside New Jersey or the areas immediately around Philadelphia and New York City, without making a request to their DSL. These travel requests will be approved only if due to a personal emergency, legal obligation, or medical or mental health appointment.

*Do the pandemic guidelines supersede the pre-pandemic policy that required undergraduate and graduate students to seek approval for travel to higher-risk locations?*

No. To the extent a trip is permitted under these guidelines, that travel is still subject to the [Policy for Travel to Higher Risk Locations](#).

**Travel Practicalities**

*How can I prepare for my travel? What information should I review before traveling, either for University-sponsored or personal reasons and what special items should I take with me to ensure I am prepared?*

To prepare for your trip, it is important that you understand and are prepared for the risks of travel, as well as for the public health requirements in your destination(s) and your home location when you return. At a minimum, all travelers should review:

- The latest [disease-status information](#) and [recommendations for travel-related precautions](#) from the Centers for Disease Control (CDC);
- The COVID-19 policies and requirements of your airline, if applicable, which should be prominently available on the airline website;
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- For international destinations, the latest COVID-19 reporting from the relevant U.S. embassy;  
- For domestic destinations, online COVID-19 resources from the applicable state or local government(s), which can be found through an internet search; and,  
- The local public health guidance in your home location, to which you will return at the end of your trip and which can be found through an internet search.  
- Current guidance and policies from Princeton’s University Health Service (UHS), Environmental Health and Safety (EHS), HR, and others, available on the University COVID resources site.

You should also consider consulting with your personal medical provider to evaluate your individual health circumstances and determine any additional measures you may wish to take to protect yourself and to prepare should you become ill while traveling.

International students, faculty, and staff in the United States on University-sponsored visas, who are considering travel abroad, should consult with the Davis International Center regarding potential implications for their U.S. immigration status.

For University-sponsored travel, you are encouraged to consult with UHS regarding relevant non-COVID vaccinations and other, non-COVID travel health information.

Please also take the time to review and familiarize yourself with the general travel planning information available in the GS&S travel toolkit. The downloadable ISOS app, which provides destination-specific safety and health alerts, is available for you to use even if you are engaging in personal travel.

You should always plan to travel with a sufficient supply of items necessary to comply with public health recommendations, such as face coverings and hand sanitizer, as these items may not always be available in your destination(s). For University-sponsored travel, you may contact EHS for further details on obtaining personal protective equipment for your trip.

*How should I go about booking University-sponsored travel, if I have been approved to do so under the permissible travel guidelines?*

The University has a dedicated team of travel experts who can assist with reservations, review pricing and penalties, and apply the University’s negotiated rates and complimentary amenities. As such, approved University-sponsored travel by faculty and staff should be made through the Concur Travel online booking tool or by calling the University’s travel management company, World Travel.

In the limited circumstances where University-sponsored travel for them is permitted, students may also make use of these booking resources and are encouraged to do so, given the complexities and uncertainties of travel arrangements during the pandemic.
As an additional benefit, booking through Concur or World Travel will automatically begin the required process of trip enrollment for you in the Enroll My Trip system by populating your itinerary in the online tool. For more information, see the Enroll My Trip resource page.

Concur can be accessed via the University’s travel website, and World Travel can be reached at 1-888-530-4087 or by emailing princeton@worldtravelinc.com.

The definition of “group travel” in these guidelines is not the same as that used by the group travel program in Finance and Treasury. Why the difference?

In these guidelines, group travel is defined strictly as a means to address the risks of disease transmission and individual health attendant on travel undertaken together by any number of University affiliates. The definition used by the group travel program continues to apply to issues involving booking and possible discounts.

If I am traveling for a University-sponsored purpose, will the University supply me with personal protective equipment (PPE) required for the journey?

Yes. Please contact EHS for further details on obtaining PPE for your trip.

What should I do if there is a health, safety, or logistics problem on my University-sponsored trip? Whom should I call?

Please review the GS&S online resources for responding to emergencies abroad. The guidelines and information provided there are up to date.

What am I required to do before returning to living, working, or studying on campus if I travel outside of Princeton?

No earlier than a week prior to returning to campus, you must complete the online COVID-19 Risk Assessment for Princeton University community members.

The UHS Global and Community Health team will review the submission and respond to you within 72 hours with guidance on whether or not you may return to campus and on what additional steps you may be required to take before doing so.
Personal Travel

Is personal travel prohibited?

For undergraduate students residing on campus for the summer, there are restrictions on personal travel beyond New Jersey and the areas immediately around Philadelphia and New York City.

Otherwise, the University is not imposing direct restrictions on personal travel. However, travel of any type continues to carry with it risks to you as a traveler and risks to the communities you visit and to which you return. The purpose of the trip is immaterial to these risks, and so it is important for all University affiliates — especially those who are part of or interacting with the on-campus community — to know and follow current public health guidance on travel.

Why are undergraduate students residing on campus for the summer required to enroll the details of their personal travel under certain circumstances? What happens with the data collected?

This information is meant to assist us in conducting contact tracing, complying with state and/or federal requirements around quarantines and other disease control measures, and monitoring adherence to our own travel guidelines. The data will be confidential and only be routinely available to those in GS&S, UHS, and governmental public health authorities, or by request from the Dean of Undergraduate Students and the Dean of the Graduate School. The details students provide will be retained until they are no longer living, working, or studying on campus or for 30 days, whichever is longer. After that time, individual data will be purged, although statistical abstractions of data may be retained.