Important International Travel Considerations & Reminders

December 16, 2021

Winter recess is around the corner and many of you might be thinking of traveling internationally. We understand that these break periods are a chance for many of you to reunite with your families, loved ones, and friends. However, please keep in mind that based on university travel guidelines, travel is still identified as a significant risk for exposure to COVID-19 and the university urges travelers to assess risks prior to travel and deploy safe practices during travel.

On November 30, 2021, the World Health Organization issued additional cautions for travelers, and the U.S. government is likely to do so in the very near future. You should stay informed of changes in federal travel requirements and guidance by consulting the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and university websites when planning holiday travel.

In addition, due to the continued uncertainty in the availability of international flights and various travel restrictions (see recent announcement about recent travel restrictions in Southern Africa) that are still in place in countries you might travel through, please note that if you choose to travel, your return to the U.S. might be delayed temporarily or for the whole semester.

If you are still considering travel over winter break, be sure to check our Travel Guidance. You should also make sure you have all of your documents and that they are valid for travel (check the specific requirements for your specific visa category on our Traveling to the U.S. page).

Additional Reminders Before You Travel Over the Upcoming Breaks
Check your travel signature and make sure it will be valid for your re-entry to the U.S.

The travel signature is on the second page of your I-20 or first page of your DS-2019 and is valid for a year from the date it was given. If you need a new travel signature you can either come to OISS any time between 9 am and 5 pm from Monday to Friday, or you can email your OISS adviser [7] with the subject line “Need new travel signature” if you need a new travel signature. Your adviser will then communicate with you directly to see that you obtain one before you return to the U.S.

Print and sign your electronically signed and transmitted I-20

Please note that on November 1st SEVP published a guidance permitting OISS advisers to electronically sign and transmit I-20s, so your adviser will be able to email it directly to you. Although your adviser is allowed to send your I-20 electronically, you still need to print it (double-sided) and sign it in ink yourself. Please note that this provision is only for F-1 students and I-20s; OISS advisers are still not allowed to electronically sign or transmit DS-2019s.

Pay close attention to Travel and Quarantine Requirements for International Travelers [8]

On October 25, 2021, President Biden issued a Proclamation [9], effective November 8, 2021, removing most travel restrictions on entry to the U.S. by nonimmigrant air travelers. However, in light of the new Omicron variant, a new restriction was introduced for non-citizens traveling from 8 African countries.

Obtain Proof of Negative COVID-19 Test

Effective December 6, 2021, all air passengers, regardless of vaccination status, must show a negative COVID-19 test taken no more than 1 day before travel to the United States. More details about negative testing may be found here [10]. The CDC has also prepared a quick reference guide to help explain requirements and restrictions [11].

It can be challenging to obtain a negative COVID-19 test 24 hours prior to your travel, so please make sure to understand how you can obtain this test result within the given time frame at your destination well in advance of your scheduled return flight to the U.S. We recommend that you contact your airline to inquire what the exact requirements are and what kind of tests they would accept. Some airlines only accept certain type of tests or from certain vendors, so make sure that you are informed and can obtain proof of negative tests to avoid any delays in your return.

Register your travel [12] with Yale so that in the event of a major emergency, Yale will be able to contact you

Contact International SOS travel assistance [13] if you need it

All members of the Yale community are automatically enrolled with International SOS (ISOS), which provides pre-travel consultations and 24/7/365 domestic and international emergency medical, security and travel assistance for Yale travelers and accompanying family while more than 100 miles from home. Install the International SOS travel app [14] on your smartphone for easy access to the services.

Check your medical insurance [15]

Check with your medical insurance provider before you travel to verify coverage of routine medical needs and coverage limitations while you are outside the U.S. For students enrolled in Yale Health Basic and Hospitalization/Specialty Coverage, your Yale Health insurance coverage is good worldwide in the event of a health emergency.

Check out Travel Health Resources [16] for consultations and vaccinations for traveling outside the U.S.

Leave electronics that you don’t really need at home [17]

Before you get on a plane, train or in an automobile consider protecting your electronic devices while away. Take a quick look at these travel tips and look into registering a secondary or alternative phone for multi-factor authentications.
U.S. sanctions and embargoes may require you to have U.S. government approval before you travel to an embargoed country or may restrict your activities in that country.

See the Yale World Toolkit [18] for more information. This includes travel to Cuba. Please review the guidelines for travel to Cuba [19] as they apply to anyone, regardless of citizenship, traveling from to Cuba directly from the U.S. or anyone traveling to Cuba using Yale funding or in connection with a Yale activity, where they travel to Cuba directly from the U.S. or from another country.

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[7] https://oiss.yale.edu/about/connect-with-oiss
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