

Policy on University-connected Travel for Faculty, Staff, and Students: Spring/Summer 2021

Avoiding travel is one of the best ways to protect yourself and others from COVID-19. At the same time, the university recognizes that some travel may be necessary in connection with requirements for degree completion or for research activities. This policy updates the University travel policy dated October 21, 2020 **to allow for travel for research and scholarly activities in limited circumstances only**. In addition to the university-wide guidance outlined below, any school or unit-specific policies, procedures or restrictions must be followed.

Tufts University not changing its essential-only travel policy at this time.. This means that **all travel should be avoided if possible**. However, recognizing the greater availability of vaccines within the US (and elsewhere) and the differential implications of summer travel on the health and safety of our communities on campus, the University is permitting exceptions in limited circumstances for specific research, scholarly and educational activities, during the summer. Personal travel (in region and out-of-region) continues to be strongly discouraged except in the most exceptional circumstances, such as family emergency or death.

In cases of approved university-related travel, all travelers must adhere to policies of the states/localities they are visiting—including all quarantine/isolation/stay-at home advisories/or shelter in place orders, should they arise.

We will continue to monitor the public health situation and government travel advisories and adjust our guidance accordingly should the situation change. *Please note that based on CDC or Massachusetts Department of Public Health guidelines and or any possible future increase in incident COVID-19 cases in the Commonwealth, the United States or world-wide (i.e., due to new and emerging variants), our policy may **change without advance notice**.*

As of March 24, 2021:

- **Domestic travel may be permitted if required for university-related purposes**, on condition that a) all required approvals from the University and the traveler's relevant school have been obtained, and b) upon return to campus, all travelers must abide by the [Massachusetts COVID-19 Travel Advisory](#) **and** Tufts' requirements described below. University-affiliated *group travel and school or unit-organized domestic programs* (in which activity is conducted under a single program—i.e., with significant university involvement, such as awarding of credit or provision of operational support in addition to financial support) will require review and approval by the relevant Dean, EAD or their designee and the Office of the Infection Control Health Director (at Occupationalhealth@tufts.edu) prior to the start of the program, to ensure that standard [CDC-recommended precautions](#) are being implemented (e.g., social distancing, masking, and cleaning/hygiene/organization of

space at the destination locations).¹ Travelers in group and school or unit-organized domestic programs will be required to acknowledge and sign a COVID-19 Traveler pledge and an Assumption of Risk and General Release. Any additional school or unit policies or restrictions on travel will continue to apply.

- **International travel by university-affiliated groups (including student groups) and school/unit-organized programs will not be permitted during the summer of 2021.** Individual international travel by faculty, staff or students will be allowed on an “essential only” basis, as determined by the Dean (or their designee) of the school or unit and must meet the following three criteria:
 - The activity (research, internship, study, etc.) cannot be done remotely;
 - Postponement would cause significant harm or damage (e.g., compromise research results, prevent degree completion, etc.);
 - The activity is needed for degree completion/capstone or for career or tenure advancement.

For international travel, the rapidly changing circumstances inherent in the COVID-19 situation around the world give rise to risks related to international travel above and beyond those inherent in domestic travel. If circumstances change when a traveler is in country, they may become stranded indefinitely (either because of quarantines and other restrictions, lack of access to testing, or lack of means of transportation to return home), at potentially significant personal and financial cost. Moreover, if travelers became ill, access to healthcare may be limited. In such situations, the support Tufts University would be able to offer would be limited, as costs would not be covered by insurance or Tufts. Moreover, a civically-minded university, it is our responsibility to consider the burden travel by Tufts affiliates may impose in host countries – from endangering local populations to taking resources that would be used better to care for their own communities.

- **All travel for the purpose of conducting research activities** (domestic or international) must be reviewed and approved by the [Integrative Safety Committee](#).
- **All international travelers will be required** to acknowledge and sign a COVID-19 Traveler pledge and an Assumption of Risk and General Release and to abide by the [Massachusetts COVID-19 Travel Advisory](#) and Tufts’ requirements described below upon return. All international travelers are also highly encouraged to book through the university’s preferred travel provider, Travel Collaborative and to try to find airlines, hotels or rentals that are offering flexible cancellation and refund policies.

¹ In the case of travel for athletics, varsity athletic team travel will be permitted when approved by the Office of the Infection Control Health Director. Club sport team travel is not permitted.

Additional travel requirements:

- For students (undergraduate and graduate):
 - International travel must adhere to the existing [International Travel Policy](#). Students traveling internationally must obtain approval from the International Travel Review Committee for travel to countries with a US Department of State Level 3 rating and higher (currently the entire world) and must register their travel in the [Tufts Travel Registry](#).
- For faculty and staff:
 - Faculty and staff are required to register their international travel in the [Tufts Travel Registry](#).
 - Most Tufts work-related travel remains subject to the no discretionary spending directive, which remains in effect; however, exceptions may be granted by school deans when travel is essential. A notification of any staff/faculty international travel on non-sponsored funds will be sent to the appropriate EAD to account for potential for financial exposure.

Requirements upon return from out-of-region travel (domestic or international)

Upon return from travel—both university-related and personal—Tufts faculty, staff and students must abide by both the [Massachusetts COVID-19 Travel Advisory](#) and [Tufts' requirements](#). This means that travelers returning from out-of-region may not come to campus (except for surveillance testing) until they have completed 10 days' quarantine or have received a negative COVID-19 test result, and must take a second test (and receive a negative result) within a week of the first. Faculty, staff and students who participate in routine COVID-19 surveillance testing and those who need to come to campus to work but are not in surveillance testing may test immediately on return from travel but must wait for a negative result before returning to campus to work.

Travelers working exclusively remotely are not eligible for Tufts' COVID-19 testing but are still required to abide by the [Massachusetts COVID-19 Travel Advisory](#).