

Kyoto Consortium for Japanese Studies
Fall 2021 COVID Planning Protocols
Date: April 30, 2021

Below please find information and links to resources about how COVID-19 might impact your upcoming study abroad experience so that you can remain informed as the situation evolves. Please note that these planning protocols as well as participation policies are still being finalized and may be modified at any time prior to your departure or while you are in-country.

1. Flights, arrival and orientation

- Entering Japan will be subject to official Japanese regulations. Currently non-degree study abroad students are considered short term travelers and are not allowed to enter Japan. KCJS will continue to monitor this situation. Students must be responsible for understanding these regulations which include testing and quarantine protocols.

- Useful websites:
 - <https://jp.usembassy.gov/u-s-citizen-services/covid-19-information/>
 - <https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/international-travel/International-Travel-Country-Information-Pages/Japan.html>
 - <https://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/notices/covid-2/coronavirus-japan>
 - <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/travelers/international-travel-during-covid19.html>

- Students should not book any flights until they receive further updates from Columbia University's Center for Undergraduate Global Engagement. Students may be asked to arrive at a specific airport in Japan or join a group flight in order to prepare for the two week quarantine that is currently in effect.

- As of April 2021: regardless of the international point of origin, all travelers entering Japan remain subject to a 14-day self-quarantine upon arrival and are prohibited from using public transportation to include domestic flights, taxis, and rail. A negative COVID-19 test (PCR and/or serology) is currently required for entry. Travelers arriving without proper documentation of a negative COVID-19 test taken within 72 hours of flight departure may be asked to quarantine for a period of time in a facility designated by the Government of Japan. (<https://jp.usembassy.gov/health-alert-april-9-2021/>). Travelers are also being asked to sign a written pledge upon arrival to confirm they will honor the rules of self-quarantine. The pledge states individuals must stay in their accommodation, not have contact with others and not take public transportation.

- KCJS is preparing for the required two week quarantine period that the Japanese government currently requires for all travelers arriving in Japan. KCJS will partially subsidize the fees related to the two week quarantine such as transportation and accommodations but students should be prepared to cover their own meals. More information will be forthcoming about these arrangements as soon as it is available.
- If students must quarantine for the first two weeks of the program, the program orientation and the first week of classes will be conducted online. The KCJS staff will check in daily with the students during this time. Additional virtual activities will also be organized to help students get to know each other and to provide support during this period.

2. Student accommodation

- All students will be placed in single apartments, and host families will not be a housing option for Fall 2021. KCJS will try to place groups of 2-3 students in the same building where possible. The apartments are generally equipped with essential furnishings, household and kitchen appliances (microwave, stove, refrigerator, TV, washing machine, bed linens, pillows, dishes, silverware, cookware, etc.). Students must bring or purchase their own towels. The apartments have internet connections but are usually not equipped with telephone lines, so students will need to have a working cell phone.
- If students need to self-isolate or quarantine while the program is in session, they will be able to do so in their single apartment. Meals can be cooked on the premise, and food can be ordered in. Online instruction will be provided. KCJS staff will support students via phone, email, text, etc. as needed.

3. Daily life and public transportation in Kyoto

- Students are strongly urged to continue to take personal health measures to protect themselves, including socially distancing, wearing masks, and avoiding crowded areas with poor ventilation.
- Normal services are available throughout Kyoto, including grocery stores, schools/universities and religious services. Local transportation is running on normal schedules. Many schools have moved to an online or hybrid system. Most retail shops and restaurants are open although they may have reduced hours.
- Face masks are almost universally worn in public, especially in urban areas, indoors and on public transportation. U.S. citizens should be aware that failure to adhere to mask-wearing norms reflects poorly on foreign residents. Foreign

residents found to disregard quarantine instructions may have their residency status canceled and face deportation.

- As of April 9, 2021: COVID-19 numbers in many parts of Japan are rebounding, causing the national and some prefectural governments to announce new infection mitigation measures. Osaka, Hyogo and Kyoto prefectures recently received authorization from the Government of Japan to place specific municipalities under a medical emergency status, which allows authorities to fine restaurants and bars that do not comply with closure orders. This is in response to record numbers of COVID-19 cases and rapidly diminishing hospital capacity in these prefectures. This state of emergency is in effect April 25 to May 11.
- Government and media sources also report that similar measures will go into effect beginning Monday, April 12 for Tokyo, Okinawa and Kyoto. Restaurants and other nightlife establishments will be asked to close by 8 p.m. with non-compliance punishable by fine under recently enacted Special Measures legislation. In many parts of Japan, prefectural authorities are again requesting citizens to refrain from non-essential travel across prefectures.
(<https://jp.usembassy.gov/health-alert-april-9-2021/>)

4. Program activities, Doshisha University protocols and personal travel

- Please note that the pandemic causes restrictions with respect to events and activities involving larger groups of people, such as sports games, concerts, club life, etc. Access to various cultural activities and events is curtailed, restricted, regulated via online tickets only, etc. The program expects all staff and participants to act responsibly and in accordance with clearly announced regulations and policies with respect to the pandemic, both on- and off-campus. Any extracurricular activities will be contingent upon COVID-19 restrictions and considerations in Kyoto.
- Doshisha University provides information about when COVID testing is required or not to enter campus
(<https://www.doshisha.ac.jp/en/news/2021/0203/news-detail-1197.html>) as well as guidelines for preventing the spread of COVID-19
(https://www.doshisha.ac.jp/en/information/covid19_guideline.html).
- The Fall 2021 schedule will not include overnight trips or a regular week-long fall break due to COVID risks.
- KCJS is discussing the independent travel policy. Currently students will not be permitted to travel internationally and if travel is permitted within the city or country, they will be required to follow local and national requirements. If travel is allowed, students must discuss their personal travel with the Resident Director (RD) with information about the trip such as itinerary and contact

information. This is necessary in case there is an emergency and the student needs to be contacted. The RD will also direct the student to ISOS and other resources to learn more about the local situation. The student would be required to update their travel in Columbia's ISOS MyTrips. Independent travel should be limited to days during which there are no program activities planned. Missing class or class activities because of travel plans is not permitted.

5. COVID Testing & Vaccines

- Currently there is no vaccine requirement to enter Japan. The Japanese government continues to vaccinate front-line medical personnel and began vaccinating senior citizens on April 12. At this time, It is unclear if international students will have access to vaccines in country should it be required. As such, the KCJS has made the decision to require the COVID-19 vaccination for all students participating in the fall semester program. This decision was made to ensure the health of students, staff and faculty on the program. More specific information, including exemptions, will be provided in the coming weeks.
- KCJS and Doshisha University are currently not requiring mandatory regular testing but students will be expected to do daily symptom self-monitoring and obligatory observing of pandemic risk mitigation policies.
- Students will be briefed during orientation by KCJS staff on COVID testing protocols and testing locations. The U.S. Embassy in Tokyo also offers a list of testing facilities for various cities in Japan, including Kyoto, that have indicated they can conduct COVID-19 testing within the 72-hour turnaround time (<https://jp.usembassy.gov/u-s-citizen-services/covid-19-information/pcr-testing-facilities-in-japan/>).
- If a doctor from the Kyoto Medical Association instructs a student to take a COVID test, there will be no cost to the student. If a student decides on their own to take a PCR test, the student would need to pay out of pocket approximately \$300 USD.
- Students who test positive will be sent into quarantine and connected with appropriate medical care which will be covered by Japanese health insurance. Any student suffering from respiratory illness or problems (flu, cold, or cold-like symptoms) should not come to campus or the KCJS building, even if they have not tested positive for COVID.

6. Academic Policies

- Should general pandemic developments or an individual COVID infection interfere with the completion of the semester, the program will ensure that all students or the affected individual participant can continue his/her/their coursework and studies in order to complete the full semester, including the use

of online resources and/or directed self-study. To prepare for this, all students should bring their own laptops or PC to use.

- All KCJS language and disciplinary courses can move online or be offered in hybrid form. All instructors will be prepared to provide alternative assignments as needed in case a student is not able to attend class due to COVID-19 diagnosis or exposure.
- If pandemic-related developments, such as a renewed lockdown, impact the program in its entirety, arrangements will be made for all students to complete the semester via online instruction. The program will make every effort to enable participants to remain in Kyoto and complete the semester successfully on-site, most likely via online instruction. If the situation necessitates students' departure from Kyoto in order to return home, the KCJS will assist where it can but students will be responsible for organizing and paying for their own flight arrangements.

7. Health insurance and Healthcare

- Students will be enrolled in the Japanese National Health Insurance Plan for the duration of the semester. This will help to lower up-front costs for medical care while students are in Japan (students are responsible for paying 30% of all medical bills).
- It is essential that students also carry medical insurance with overseas coverage purchased in the U.S., so they are covered traveling to and from Japan and while in Japan. Please note the Japanese health insurance plan does not cover any consultations or ongoing treatment related to mental health, so it is important to develop a plan to care for your mental health before you leave the U.S.
- Students needing medical attention while in Kyoto will receive support and recommendations about local medical facilities from the KCJS Staff. Students needing medical attention while in quarantine at the start of the program will be connected with a remote helpline specific to their location and will have transportation arranged from/to a local clinic or hospital to receive care. The Japan National Tourism Organization (JNTO) has a dedicated COVID-19 page with additional information, including information on [how to seek medical care in Japan](#). JNTO also operates a 24-hour hotline for visitors.
- For mental health support, students as Columbia University travelers are eligible to receive up to five emotional support sessions through International SOS, the 24/7 emergency assistance provider for individuals on Columbia Travel (<https://globaltravel.columbia.edu/content/what-international-sos-isos>).
- A small number of English speaking counselors are available to KCJS students by appointment. KCJS staff can assist in scheduling a free initial consultation. Students should be prepared to cover the cost of any subsequent counseling sessions or inquire with their U.S. based health insurance provider to find out if this is included in their plan. For students who are already working with a

counselor in the United States, we recommend that you inquire before you leave about the possibility of continuing consultations online after you arrive in Japan.

8. Fall 2021 Adapted Refund and Withdrawal Policy

- Due to the unique circumstances of restarting study abroad while the global pandemic continues, we are adapting the refund policies to provide, where possible, an opportunity for students and their families to have as much time to make decisions before committing to studying abroad during Fall 2021.
- The full policy can be found on our website:
<https://global.undergrad.columbia.edu/program/kcjs-semester>