

Dear Colleagues,

The Forum on Education Abroad and Pulse have worked together to issue this joint statement regarding COVID-19.

The US Centers for Disease Control (CDC) issued [Guidance for Student Foreign Travel for Institutions of Higher Education](#) on Sunday, March 1, 2020.

We want to point out that the CDC has never before issued guidance like this regarding student mobility. We have reached out to the CDC and asked for more insight into why they issued this statement. Additionally we want to reiterate:

- Both The Forum and Pulse strongly urge colleagues to read this statement as it is written – as *guidance*. It is not a directive that is being handed down. Instead, the CDC is asking our field to *consider postponing or canceling student foreign exchange programs*.
- Students are not typically members of the population who may succumb to a virus like COVID-19. Those populations have often included the elderly and those with compromised immune systems.
- Unlike typical travelers, students are supported on the ground at their various study sites by professional staff, faculty, and others who work to assure that students are provided information, assistance, guidance, and help when necessary.

We also want to acknowledge that different institutions will have different capacities to manage a complex issue such as COVID-19. Not every organization can be expected to react in the same way as those with professional staff devoted to addressing international health and safety considerations. We urge those institutions to reach out to your colleagues through professional networks. Look to what they are saying and recommending and then scale it so that it fits your context.

Looking to the [Standards of Good Practice](#), particularly Standard 8, is one of the best ways to assess where your institution is in managing this situation. All decisions should be based on measured, careful thought that is consistent with your established emergency action plans. Triggers should have been established in that plan and those triggers ought to be heeded.

Be sure to triangulate your sources of information so that you can create a much more complete picture of what is being recommended during these trying times. Look to multiple sources of information to inform your decision making. Advice provided by [the World Health Organization](#) is measured and practical. Other places to seek information include the

- [Overseas Advisory Council \(OSAC\)](#)
- [WorldAware COVID-19 Hub](#)
- [The Italian Ministry of Health webpage](#)
- [The European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control](#)
- [U.S. Department of State's COVID-19 Travel Alert](#)
- [British Foreign & Commonwealth Office](#)

Your colleagues at The Forum and Pulse stand ready to assist in providing credible updates as they become available.

Best regards,

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