



SUBJECT: Message for Study Abroad Students in South Korea

Dear Students and Families,

As you know from other recent correspondence, Ithaca College staff are actively monitoring the Coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak. We are reaching out to provide some relevant information that we hope you find helpful in making an informed decision about next steps.

HEALTH AND TRAVEL INFORMATION

College officials have been closely monitoring the situation in each country where Coronavirus Disease has been reported and where there are currently IC students studying abroad, including South Korea.

At this time, the [U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\)](#) has provided the following travel health notice for **South Korea**:

Warning Level 3—Avoid Nonessential Travel

- *The CDC recommends that travelers avoid all nonessential travel to South Korea.*
- *There is a widespread, ongoing [outbreak of respiratory illness](#) caused by a novel (new) coronavirus that can be spread from person to person.*
- *Older adults and people with chronic medical conditions may be at increased risk for severe disease.*
- *There is limited access to adequate medical care in affected areas.*
- *A novel coronavirus is causing an outbreak of respiratory illness (COVID-19) in South Korea. Illness with this virus has ranged from mild to severe. Signs and symptoms of infection include fever, cough, and difficulty breathing. Sore throat also has been reported in some patients. Some patients also have reported diarrhea without other symptoms. This new coronavirus has caused severe disease and death in patients who developed pneumonia. Risk factors for severe illness are not yet clear, although older adults and those with chronic medical conditions may be at higher risk for severe illness.*
- *For individuals who are in South Korea, the CDC recommends that you take the following steps:*
 - *Avoid contact with sick people.*
 - *Avoid touching your eyes, nose, or mouth with unwashed hands.*
 - *Discuss travel to South Korea with your healthcare provider. Older adults and travelers with chronic medical conditions may be at risk for more severe disease.*
 - *Clean your hands often by washing them with soap and water for at least 20 seconds or using an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains 60%–95% alcohol. Soap and water should be used if hands are visibly dirty.*
 - *It is especially important to clean hands after going to the bathroom; before eating; and after coughing, sneezing or blowing your nose.*

In addition, the [U.S. Department of State](#) has provided the following travel advisory for South Korea:

Level 3--Reconsider Travel

- *A novel coronavirus is causing an outbreak of COVID-19 in South Korea. On January 30, 2020, the World Health Organization determined the COVID-19 outbreak constitutes a Public Health Emergency of International Concern (PHEIC). The South Korean government has reported cases of the COVID-19 in the country and has upgraded its response level to “grave,” its highest response level.*

Because the situation with respect to the coronavirus is so fluid, we encourage you to regularly review the latest information from the [CDC](#), from the [U.S. Department of State](#), from the [World Health Organization](#), and from the [South Korean government’s website](#).

Given this context, and the fact that you traveled to South Korea in advance of this heightened warning level, we are reaching out to ensure that you are fully aware of the current risk assessment of South Korea by the CDC and the U.S. Department of State.

CURRENT STATUS OF YOUR PROGRAM IN SOUTH KOREA

We understand that your programs in South Korea are currently scheduled to offer their courses as planned, though this may change over the course of your semester as conditions in the country evolve.

Because we know plans might change, we are staying in touch with Ithaca College’s affiliated/exchange partners to learn more about their options for online/distance learning opportunities for students in the event a program must be suspended. If such options are offered, you would hear from the host program and may be connecting with us as well. Because these are not our programs, we cannot dictate the decisions they will make about their curriculum if situations shift.

ACADEMIC OPTIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

If you would like to discuss the academic options and implications of a decision to voluntarily depart your program, please reach out to the following individuals as soon as possible:

- (1) The staff in the international office at the university you plan to attend for information about possibly completing the coursework from a distance;
- (2) staff in the Ithaca College Office of International Programs and Student Financial Services for information about any financial aid implications; and
- (3) the Assistant/Associate Dean of your School within Ithaca College for information about any implications regarding your academic progress.

Because every student’s academic situation is different, a choice to discontinue coursework will impact each student differently, and the individuals listed above would be able to offer you the most appropriate information and support.

Because the classes you intend to complete are not Ithaca College courses, we cannot fashion a plan to simply replicate and continue them here at IC or online with our own faculty. However, we will support you in whatever ways we reasonably can.

AN INFORMED DECISION

We want you and your family to be able to make an informed decision about whether to remain in South Korea for the planned study abroad experience or to return to the United States. This is an important decision for you to make with your family, and we encourage you to do so with the latest information available. We also want you to know that regardless of the decision you make, Ithaca College will continue to monitor the situation and will support you to the best of our ability.

If you have any questions or need to talk, please reach out to your support team in the Office of International Programs (OIP) at studyabroad@ithaca.edu or 607-274-3306.

Sincerely,

Dr. Tanya Saunders, Assistant Provost, International Programs and Extended Studies
Dr. Jeane Copenhaver-Johnson, Associate Provost for Academic Programs