

Subject: Spring 2021 OCS Participants Enrollment Deposit & COVID Impacts

Dear Spring 2021 OCS Students,

Please read this email completely prior to paying your enrollment deposit, as it contains important details about your OCS semester.

PART I - Enrollment Deposit Policies

We are writing to alert you to some changes regarding OCS enrollment deposits as a result of the COVID19 pandemic so that you can make an informed decision regarding paying your deposit.

1. **OCS program enrollment deposits are usually non-refundable.** We are aware of a few programs that are being more flexible for the spring 2021 semester due to COVID19 as follows:
 - o **DIS** and **SIT** have informed us that they will refund enrollment deposits for spring 2021 students if a student changes their mind due to COVID19 or if Whitman cancels spring 2021 OCS.
 - o **IFSA-Butler** will refund enrollment deposits if students withdraw 30 days prior to the program start date.
 - o **SFS** will refund enrollment deposits if students withdraw 20 days prior to the program start date.
 - o **University of St Andrews** and **University of Otago** do not require an enrollment deposit.
2. **If your program provider is not listed above, you should assume that the enrollment deposit is non-refundable** even if Whitman College cancels spring 2021 OCS (but the program is still operating). We suggest you check with your OCS program provider directly about their policy.
3. **If you do not have the financial resources to pay your enrollment deposit now, we suggest that you contact your program provider** to find out if you can delay payment or pay in installments. We regret that, due to Whitman's budgetary constraints at this time, we are not able to assist students by temporarily covering enrollment deposits as we have in the past.

PART II - How could my semester be impacted due to COVID19?

Your myOCS includes the "**COVID19 Risks**" post-decision document with key information about the possible impacts of COVID19 on your semester away. We want to make doubly sure that all students have read and considered these points prior to committing to OCS, so we have pasted it here below. Please review it carefully. (We recommend you review all of the post-decision documents in your portal as soon as possible. Due date for completion is November 1, 2020.)

COVID19 Risks (Post-decision document in myOCS)

Off-Campus Studies wants you to be aware of how your experience and finances may be negatively impacted during Spring 2021 off-campus studies if the COVID19 pandemic persists through the coming year. We will continue to monitor health and safety conditions abroad, including US Department of State and Centers for Disease Control guidance on whether travel is recommended.

Whitman OCS intends to notify students in November if we need to cancel Spring 2021 OCS for health and safety reasons. Please know that if you are unable to study off campus in Spring 2021

because of COVID19 or other reasons, you are always welcome back at Whitman and Whitman OCS will guide you through the process if you need to remain at Whitman.

Possible impacts of COVID19:

- I understand that my **OCS program could be suspended** by Whitman College or the program provider due to the COVID19 pandemic and that courses would have to be completed online and/or that only partial credit would be earned.
- I understand that if my OCS program is suspended after the program has started, there will be **no tuition refunds** from my OCS program provider or from Whitman.
- I understand that if my OCS program is suspended and I need to return home early, **my room (or room and board) fees will likely not be recoverable** and not be refunded by my OCS program or Whitman College and I will need to bear this expense.
- I understand that there **may be a change in program housing** that may include elimination of homestay options
- I understand that study abroad programs will likely implement safety measures in the 2020-21 academic year in response to COVID19 that may result in **significant changes to the standard study abroad program**. These changes may include but are not limited to:
 - restrictions/prohibitions on student independent travel,
 - reduction or elimination of academic trips to other countries
 - reduction or elimination of program-sponsored field trips
 - elimination of in-person internships
 - banning attendance at large group events
 - limitations on use of public transportation, etc.
- I understand that if I need to evacuate my host country due to COVID19 that this could happen on short notice and I would be **responsible for booking and paying the cost of my new flights home**.
- I understand that I should **wait to purchase the airline ticket** for my OCS Spring semester until as late as possible or try to purchase one that is fully refundable in case my program is canceled.
- I understand that I should **register for Spring 2021 courses on the Whitman campus**, in case my spring OCS program is canceled by the program or my Whitman approval is withdrawn due to COVID19.

Please do not hesitate to contact your OCS Adviser or email offcampusstudies@whitman.edu if you have any questions.

Sincerely,
The OCS Team

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