

Important FAQs for Fall'20 OCS students - Whitman Registration & More

April 8, 2020 at 6:20 p.m. PST

Dear Fall OCS students

We hope you are adjusting to your circumstances doing Whitman courses online and recognize that this "new normal" may not feel very "normal" at all. In those moments when things feel difficult, the Off-Campus Studies staff is trying to remember that the sacrifices we are all making every day by staying home and practicing social distancing will save lives. We hope this brings you some solace too.

You are likely wondering whether you will be able to study off campus in Fall 2020 and we understand it is not easy not having definitive answers yet. First, please know that your safety and your education are our top priorities. Unfortunately, the trajectory of the COVID19 pandemic in the coming months is still very uncertain. While we do not have definitive answers yet, we want to help you navigate the planning process for both the possibility that you may be able to study off campus as planned this fall or you may be enrolled in Whitman courses this fall instead.

Please read through the following FAQ to help you with planning.

What steps should I be taking now?

All Fall 2020 OCS students need to register for Fall 2020 courses on the Whitman campus in addition to your fall OCS courses so that places will be reserved for you in Whitman courses if Fall 2020 OCS programs are cancelled. Whitman on-campus registration for Fall 2020 begins April 24. **Please consult with your major adviser soon to plan your Whitman on-campus course selection for Fall 2020.**

Will COVID-19 negatively impact my ability to study abroad in the Fall 2020 semester?

Possibly. There are many issues related to COVID-19 that could make it impossible for OCS students to study in some or all destinations in Fall 2020. In addition to the possibility of future COVID-19 outbreaks, most countries have closed non-urgent visa services at their embassies and consulates indefinitely and implemented travel restrictions or require quarantine of foreign nationals upon arrival.

Will Whitman withdraw approval for my Fall 2020 OCS program due to safety concerns?

Possibly. In mid March the US Department of State issued a **Level 3 Global Health Advisory - Reconsider Travel** and then elevated the warning to the highest advisory level, **Level 4 Do Not Travel**, due to the worldwide spread of COVID-19. For reasons of student safety, Whitman College does not approve off-campus studies for programs in locations in which there is either a Level 3 or Level 4 Department of State travel advisory. Therefore, Whitman approval for Fall 2020 OCS approvals will be withdrawn by June 1 if the US Department of State still has either a Global Level 3 or Level 4 Advisory, or a country-specific Level 3 or Level 4 advisory in place for your destination. Similarly, approval will be withdrawn by Whitman for OCS programs in countries designated by the Centers for Disease Control as **Warning Level 3 - Avoid Non-essential Travel**.

When will I know if Whitman has withdrawn approval for Fall 2020 OCS?

By June 1 for programs that commence late July or later. By May 1 for programs that commence in June through mid July.

Should I purchase my airline ticket for my fall 2020 program?

No. We recommend that you not purchase an airline ticket yet for your OCS program yet because of the uncertainties around the availability and approval of Fall OCS semester programs.

What about my program enrollment deposit?

Keep in mind that most OCS providers are very flexible about enrollment deposits at this time. If you have not yet paid your deposit, we suggest that you wait to do so, if your program will allow that.

Can I defer my study abroad to Spring 2021?

Because of the possibility that Fall 2020 programs will be cancelled, we encourage you to consider deferring your off-campus studies until Spring 2021. If you wish to defer study abroad until spring 2021, Whitman OCS will work with you to determine if deferring until Spring 2021 is a good option for you. Please contact your OCS adviser - Barbara Hoffman at hoffmabb@whitman.edu or Susan Holme at holmesl@whitman.edu - to discuss.

I no longer wish to study off campus this fall, what should I do?

If you no longer wish to study off campus in Fall 2020 and you don't want to defer until Spring 2021, please email offcampusstudies@whitman.edu to let us know of your change in plans. It is your responsibility to notify your program provider about your desire to withdraw from their program.

How do I request Whitman housing for the fall semester?

The Residence Life Survey for Fall 2020 housing is currently open and available for continuing students to complete. If you have questions, please contact Amy Bruner in Residence Life (brunerae@whitman.edu) about on-campus housing or Julie Sovereign (sovereja@whitman.edu) in Off-Campus Rentals about the availability of Whitman rental properties.

We know planning is not easy in these circumstances and we are here to support you, working regular business hours remotely from home.

Warm regards,
Susan

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