

Following Wednesday's [announcement by Chancellor Gow](#) regarding campus operations and activities, as well as the World Health Organization's declaration of COVID-19 as a global pandemic, UWL is taking immediate steps to secure the well-being of UW La Crosse students with particular attention to those students who are currently participating in study abroad programs.

In accordance with the guidelines and measures outlined by the Chancellor, UWL is instructing the director of International Education & Engagement to cancel all of the study abroad programs already in progress. A decision on study abroad programs planned for the summer will be forthcoming.

Students will be instructed to return to their home of record as soon as possible and not to campus. Students will not be given the option of staying abroad under university sponsorship. International Education & Engagement will be contacting the students and providing the necessary guidance. We are sensitive to the fact that a good number of these students have been in locations exposed to the virus. We strongly recommend that upon their return to their homes, students comply with public health directives to prevent potentially exposing others to the virus, which may include self-quarantine for 14 days (please see <https://www.uwlax.edu/info/covid-19/> for more information).

The decision to cancel study abroad programs for the spring was made in consideration of several factors. Given the magnitude and scale of the COVID-19 pandemic, campus would not be able to provide the necessary assistance to all students abroad should they be impacted by the virus. The staff we rely on for support at study abroad locations around the world may not be available since many universities are temporarily closing their facilities. In addition, future travel restrictions could limit options for students' safe and accessible return. Furthermore, there are no assurances that normal activities will be able to resume in the near term.

IEE staff will immediately begin working in close coordination with host institutions, partners, and providers. After ensuring the safety of our students, our main goal is to secure the continuation of academic programs through online alternatives like those we were able to put in place for some students in programs in Italy. We cannot guarantee this will be available to all students but we will do our very best.

We acknowledge that these are dynamic circumstances and will seek to provide more information on programming options and answer student questions as the situation unfolds. Your cooperation and support are appreciated as we work to secure the safety of students and find solutions so that they may continue their academic activities, with as little disruption as possible.