

# InterExchange Career Training USA COVID-19 FAQs

For current interns and trainees on-program in the United States:

- + **As a current participant, if I travel outside the U.S. after the new vaccination requirements go into effect, can I still return to the U.S. if I'm unvaccinated?**
  - Unfortunately, no. Once the new vaccination requirements go into effect in early November, only those participants who are fully vaccinated with an approved vaccine will be able to re-enter the U.S.
  
- + **If I contract COVID-19 while in the U.S., is this covered by my insurance?**
  - Your accident and sickness insurance will cover the coronavirus the same as any other illness. Please find more information on the insurance company's website:  
<https://www.envisageglobalinsurance.com/student-zone/interexchange/coronavirus.php>.
  
  - Steps on visiting a doctor can be found here:  
<https://www.interexchange.org/handbooks/career-training-usa/participants/insurance/>. If you suspect that you've contracted COVID-19, please contact InterExchange as soon as possible.
  
- + **Will my accident and sickness insurance cover a COVID-19 test or an antibody test?**
  - Testing for COVID-19 and the antibody test will only be covered if medically necessary and ordered by a physician. Some cities and states, however, offer free testing to all residents. Check with your local health department for more details on their policies.
  
- + **Does my insurance cover the COVID-19 vaccine?**
  - Your accident and sickness insurance does not cover routine exams or preventative care, such as vaccinations. Therefore, the COVID-19 vaccine is NOT covered by your insurance. You are welcome to receive the COVID-19 vaccine if it is available to exchange visitors in your area, but you may be responsible for the cost. Vaccination procedures vary by state in the U.S., so please check with your local health department for more details on their vaccine rollout policies and costs.
  
- + **My company will continue to operate remotely for the time being, but my supervisor is able to continue my training remotely. My training plan will**

**continue to be followed as expected, and my hours and compensation will remain the same. Can I stay in the U.S. to finish my program?**

- Yes, you may remain in the U.S. to complete your program. However, once your office reopens, you will be expected to return to the office to resume in-person training. Please stay in contact with InterExchange and alert us of any changes to your program or situation.
- + My company moved to remote work during COVID. Though I am training from home, I would feel more comfortable in my home country with my family. Am I able to fly home and return to the U.S. once the crisis has passed?**
- You cannot be outside of the U.S. for more than 30 days. If you would prefer to continue your remote internship from your home country, that is ok, but we will need to shorten your program in SEVIS. You may finish projects with your host employer remotely but you will no longer need InterExchange's visa sponsorship for this, and any arrangements made will need to be between yourself and your host employer. Please contact InterExchange to inform us of your plans, and we will send the final program evaluations for you to complete.
- + I've been temporarily furloughed due to COVID-19, but my company hopes to bring me back once the business reopens. I have enough funds to support myself in the meantime. Can I remain in the U.S. until I am able to begin interning again?**
- You cannot remain in the U.S. without training. If you've been furloughed, you will either need to apply for a Change of Host or return to your home country. Please contact InterExchange as soon as possible to discuss your situation.
- + I've been laid off. Can I try to find a new host employer to continue my program with?**
- Yes, you may apply to transfer to a new host employer for the remainder of your program. You have 30 days to find a new host company, submit a Change of Host Application to InterExchange, and begin interning with your new host after approval from InterExchange. If you've been laid off, please contact InterExchange as soon as possible to discuss your situation and to receive more information on the Change of Host process.
- + I am nearing the end of my program, but flights to my home country have been suspended and I am unable to depart the U.S. What should I do?**
- If your home country has suspended flights from the U.S. entirely, please let InterExchange know immediately and contact your [Consulate or Embassy](#) here in the U.S. They will be able to assist you with returning home if a travel ban is currently in place.

- It is extremely important that you let InterExchange know if you're unable to leave the U.S. before the end of your 30-day grace period so that you are not listed as an overstay, which could negatively impact your ability to travel to the U.S. in the future. If flights are still operating to your country, you should be able to leave on time if you plan accordingly. If flights are suspended, tell InterExchange AND your Consulate or Embassy right away so we can begin to assist you with repatriation.
  
- + **I was laid off and had to return to my home country. Can I get a refund of my program fees?**
  - Unfortunately, there is no refund for departing early.
  
- + **I've been laid off/furloughed from my internship. Am I eligible for unemployment?**
  - J-1 participants are not eligible for unemployment benefits.
  
- + **Does the continued COVID-19 crisis affect my ability to travel internationally during my program?**
  - If your J-1 Visa remains valid, you may re-enter the U.S. However, InterExchange cautions against travel outside of the United States unless you are prepared to depart the U.S. permanently. Once you leave the country, you are not guaranteed re-entry, even if you have a valid J-1 Visa. All travel is undertaken at your own risk. Please contact InterExchange if you have plans to travel internationally.
  
- + **Can I travel within the U.S.? Do I need permission from InterExchange to do so?**
  - You are free to travel and don't need to get a travel validation signature for travel within the U.S., but we highly encourage you to reconsider any travel plans you may have in the near future. COVID-19 remains a risk throughout the country and is even increasing in areas where restrictions have been lifted. While we want you to enjoy your time in the U.S., your safety is our top priority.
  
  - If you do decide to travel, please ensure that you are following [CDC guidelines](#) and taking the necessary precautions to limit your exposure to the virus. Make sure to check quarantine requirements at your destination, as some local governments are requiring newly-arrived travelers to quarantine for 14 days at their own expense.

For interns and trainees pending arrival in the U.S.:

**+ When will I be able to come to the U.S. to start my program?**

- In order to begin your program in the U.S., your host employer's office must be physically open and operational, your country must be issuing J-1 Visas, and travel from your country must be permitted. InterExchange will contact participants and hosts individually to discuss each program in more detail and to ensure these conditions for participation can all be met.
- Visa issuance may be limited or entirely unavailable in your country. Emergency appointments are sometimes available, but you will need to contact the Embassy/Consulate directly to discuss availability and the procedure and conditions for requesting an emergency appointment.
- Please note that [entry bans](#) for a number of countries, including China, Brazil, Iran, South Africa, UK, and the Schengen area remain in effect until early November. Due to anticipated delays at the embassy, we suggest planning for no earlier than December 1, 2021 for your start date, though delays may require you to push your start back later as embassies increase visa processing. Please remain in communication with your host employer and InterExchange to discuss program feasibility and probable future start dates.

**+ I need to cancel my program due to the delays caused by COVID-19. What is the refund policy?**

- Applications submitted April 1, 2020 or later will be subject to our published refund policy. If you applied prior to this date, please contact InterExchange to discuss your refund options.

**+ I have a valid J-1 Visa and am able to safely arrive in the U.S., but my host company is not physically open - they're only operating remotely. Can I arrive in the U.S. and start my program remotely?**

- You cannot begin your internship remotely. If your host company is still operating remotely, then we will need to delay your arrival until after your host employer has resumed physical operations at their office.

**+ Can I begin my program remotely from my home country and arrive in the U.S. once it is safe to do so?**

- You cannot begin your internship remotely. We will need to delay your arrival until you are able to train at your host's physical workplace in the U.S.