

SUPPORTING INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS IN REMOTE LEARNING

As our international students continue to transition to their new dorm rooms, to their home countries, and/or to temporary housing locations throughout the United States, Global Programs asks faculty and staff to please let all your students know that you are asking them to reach out if they are having any concerns. These concerns can include accessing your course or needing your academic support however international students are confronting other unique challenges which we have explained below:

INTERNET CONNECTIVITY/ACCESS



Students may lack consistent access to high-speed internet due to government restrictions, broadband availability, or cost

TIME DIFFERENCE



for many students, attending remote classes synchronously means being up in the middle of the night due to the scheduled class time

AVAILABILITY OF WEB-BASED LEARNING TOOLS



Some countries restrict access to certain platforms like Google Docs and YouTube, and use of Zoom or Canvas, which may mean having to buy a VPN

GRADE RECOGNITION CONCERNS



international students are subject to additional requirements for coursework/degrees; the shift to pass/fail grades may not be recognized in some students' home countries

LOCAL QUARANTINE REQUIREMENTS



Many students are in countries that have imposed government-mandated quarantines, which may restrict their movements and access to necessities and internet

IMMIGRATION CONCERNS



Current U.S. government policies prevent entry of foreign nationals coming from countries with severe spread of COVID-19, many U.S. diplomatic posts worldwide are no longer offering routine consular services, such as issuing visas

LACK OF BASIC NECESSITIES OR HEALTHCARE SERVICES



Healthcare services are being stretched in all countries, and students may not have local insurance coverage or finances for healthcare in their home countries

DISCRIMINATION



Backlash against non-U.S. citizens - especially those from China - has been on the rise, which could carry over into bias toward them in remote class participation & group projects

Global Programs continues to support the University's foundational principle of Global Engagement. Our commitment to the academic success of our international students reflects our collective aspiration to continue this vision. For questions or to discuss ways to help your international students, please contact Natasha Soulé (nta7@psu.edu), Global Safety Manager with Global Programs

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES & EXAMPLES

INTERNET CONNECTIVITY/ACCESS

Example: India

- Civil society organization Access Now reported 121 internet shutdowns in India in 2019, the most of any country

For further information:

- [World Bank data on fixed broadband subscriptions \(per 100 people\)](#).
- [UK study on the cost of fixed broadband internet services around the world](#)
- [Data on countries with frequent internet shutdowns](#)

AVAILABILITY OF WEB-BASED LEARNING TOOLS

Example: China

- Google Docs and YouTube are blocked in China

DISCRIMINATION

For further information: [Study conducted in March 2020 by USC](#)

LOCAL QUARANTINE REQUIREMENTS

Example: Saudi Arabia

- The suspension of all international flights to/from Saudi Arabia until further notice; all land crossings remain restricted to commercial trucks only; Saudi authorities shut down domestic flights and public transport for 14 days starting 3/28. A night curfew between 7pm & 6am imposed for 21 days starting 3/23 (3pm in Riyadh, Mecca, & Medina); a lock-down in Makkah, Madinah and Riyadh - no residents may enter or leave these cities - beginning 3/25; a lock-down on circulation between the kingdom's 13 regions

For further information:

- U.S. Embassies are reporting on entry restrictions, foreign quarantine policies, & urgent health information provided by local governments on individual embassy websites, found at [U.S. Department of State country pages](#)
- [International Air Transport Association \(IATA\)](#)- current entry restrictions and quarantine requirements worldwide
- [International SOS](#)- current entry restrictions and quarantine requirements worldwide

IMMIGRATION CONCERNS

Example: Immigration concerns

- Applying for temporary employment authorization for practical training directly related to a student's major field of study from outside the United States is a violation and there are penalties for doing so, but it is unclear when or if U.S. immigration authorities will change this provision given many international students now in their home countries

For further information:

- Foreign nationals who have visited one of these countries in the past 14 days may not enter the United States [Centers for Disease Control](#)
- [U.S. Department of State announces suspension of routine visa services on 3/20](#)

LACK OF BASIC NECESSITIES OR HEALTHCARE SERVICES

Example: Sub-Saharan Africa

- Other factors impacting the response to COVID-19 in [Sub-Saharan Africa](#)