

Carleton

OFFICE OF OFF-CAMPUS STUDIES

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Carleton Global Engagement Programs

Fall 2021 COVID Protocols and Practices for Buddhist Studies in India

May 7, 2021

1) Carleton Global Engagement Programs Requirements and Commitments

Requirements:

- a) All students and core staff must have completed the vaccination regimen for an approved COVID vaccine of their choice. Students who have a medical exemption for receiving an approved COVID vaccine will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis with the understanding that entry requirements may stipulate that visiting non-citizens be vaccinated.
- b) Students and staff must read, commit to and abide by the Carleton Global Engagement Programs covenant of behavior and practice as the international community emerges from the pandemic.

Commitments:

- a) Create program itineraries and practices that minimize risks to students and staff resulting from the pandemic and other issues of health and well-being
- b) Communicate with students and partner institutions about on-site conditions and preparations, and possible program modifications
- c) Respect and address the policies and concerns of students and partner institutions as issues are discussed and decisions are made
- d) Comply with restrictions and recommendations of the countries in which Carleton's programs operate
- e) Respect and respond to the policies and concerns of local populations where Carleton's programs operate

2) Program Overview and Current Situation

Thailand – DOS Travel Advisory Level 2 (April 30, 2021)

India – DOS Travel Advisory Level 4 (April 30, 2021)

In-country start date: Saturday, Sept 4, 2021

In-country end date: Friday, Dec 17, 2021

Pre-Program

Please note that pre-program arrangements and requirements are subject to change. Carleton will inform students of changes.

- a) Carleton will monitor COVID infection and vaccination rates, Department of State Travel Advisory Level, and CDC Travel Recommendations in Thailand, India, and neighboring countries.



- b) Carleton Off-Campus Studies provide updates to students and sending institutions throughout the course of the summer.
- c) Summer orientation sessions instruct students on policies for staying safe while living and studying in Thailand and India.

Program Travel and Events

Please note that arrangements and requirements for program travel and events are subject to change. Carleton will inform students of changes.

- a) Students fly to Bangkok, Thailand, for orientation. Carleton will research and recommend flight itineraries with the fewest layovers, and encourage students to coordinate their flight itineraries with one another when possible and convenient.
- b) Orientation is held concurrently with six-day quarantine in Bangkok. Thailand waives the two-week quarantine requirement for travelers entering with proof of COVID vaccination. A negative PCR test is required before release from quarantine.
- c) Students and staff travel as a group from Bangkok to Chiang Mai, and on to Wat Tom Doi Toan by safest mode of transport, commercial airline and/or chartered bus.
- d) Students and staff quarantine at Wat Tom Doi Toan upon arrival. Students and staff use COVID testing kits before engaging with the temple community.
- e) Carleton continues to monitor COVID infection and vaccination rates, Department of State Travel Advisory Level, and CDC Travel Recommendations in Thailand and India. When the U.S. DOS Travel Advisory Level in India decreases to Level 3, Carleton will make preliminary plans for students and staff to fly directly from Bangkok to Gaya, India. Carleton will update sending institutions about preliminary plans.
- f) When the DOS Travel Advisory Level in India decreases to Level 2, Carleton will confirm plans to fly directly to Gaya, India, and take up residence in the Burmese Vihar in Bodh Gaya. The Gaya airport is a 30-minute drive from Bodh Gaya. In the event that DOS Travel Advisory Level in India **does not** decrease to Level 2, the program will remain in Thailand.
- g) Staff will continually monitor ISP locations during the first 10 weeks of the program to identify locations in South Asia where projects can be carried out in safe and meaningful ways. Students will only be allowed to conduct ISPs in countries with DOS Travel Advisory Levels of 1 or 2. Students will have an alternative ISP location in the event that the risk level in their first ISP location exceeds acceptable levels for safe travel and habitation.
- h) Students return to Bangkok at the end of the program to continue their international travel home. Carleton arranges for PCR COVID test prior to departure.
- i) In the event that a student is not allowed to depart from Bangkok due to a positive COVID test, a program staff member will remain with the student until they are able to depart.



3) Government Requirements and Restrictions

Please use the following websites for information about current entry and quarantine requirements.

- U.S. Department of State – Thailand
<https://th.usembassy.gov/u-s-citizen-services/covid-19-information/>
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) – Thailand
<https://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/notices/covid-1/coronavirus-thailand>
- Royal Thai Embassy in Washington, COVID Situation in Thailand
<https://thaiembdc.org/covid-19inthailand/>
- U.S. Department of State – India
<https://in.usembassy.gov/u-s-citizen-services/covid-19-information/>
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) - India
<https://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/notices/covid-4/coronavirus-india>
- Government of India, Bureau of Immigration, Travel and Visa Restrictions
<https://boi.gov.in/content/advisory-travel-and-visa-restrictions-related-covid-19-1>

4) Measures to Mitigate COVID-19 Risks

General

- a) All student and core staff required to be vaccinated for COVID. Students who have a medical exemption for receiving an approved COVID vaccine will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis.
- b) Wearing of masks by students, faculty, and staff in accordance with recommendations of local medical and public health professionals.
- c) Daily monitoring of student and staff health with specific attention to COVID symptoms. Temperature checks are conducted a) during quarantine periods, b) when COVID symptoms are present, and c) on a surveillance basis.
- d) COVID testing kits are available and can be used for surveillance testing or in the case of a local outbreak.

Accommodations, Dining, and Classroom Spaces

- a) Public areas, e.g. dining tables, washing stations, etc. are sanitized at least once daily.
- b) Students are trained in hand washing multiple times per day, as well as sanitizing rooms with Dettol or equivalent.
- c) Students and faculty do not share eating implements, e.g. dishes, cups, utensils.
- d) Students and faculty do not touch common food sources.
- e) Residences: singles and doubles only, while maintaining empty rooms in case of suspected infection in a double room.



Excursions

- a) Staff will monitor conditions for excursion destinations. Excursions to destinations that represent a greater risk for coronavirus spread will be postponed or cancelled.

Transportation

- a) Students and staff will follow local regulations for travel on public transportation.
- b) Carleton will only contract with transport providers which have documented plan for sanitizing passenger spaces.

5) COVID-19 Incident Response

All students are covered by Carleton College's CISI emergency health insurance policy. In advance of the group's arrival in Thailand and India, Carleton Off-Campus Studies will work with CISI/AXA to outline practices and recommended facilities for responding to COVID incidents.

In case of program interruption in either Thailand or India, Carleton has contingencies in place to ensure academic continuity and full-credit completion.

Student or Staff Member

- a) A student or staff member presenting COVID symptoms will meet with the program's Wellness Coordinator and be quarantined in a designated space at Wat Tom Doi Toan.
- b) The student will participate in course work remotely as the student's health permits.
- c) The program staff will communicate with Carleton Off-Campus Studies.
- d) Carleton Off-Campus Studies will notify the student's home institution. The home institution is responsible for notifying others as per its internal protocols.
- e) A local medical doctor to visit Wat Tom Doi Toan on a regular basis. If symptoms require examination at a local clinic or hospital, program staff will contact CISI/AXA for next steps.
- f) Carleton Off-Campus Studies and the program staff will provide updates to the student's home institution.

Surrounding Community

- a) Alerts of a surge in COVID cases among the local population will be shared with program staff, students, and the Carleton Off-Campus Studies Office.
- b) Students and staff will quarantine as a group within Wat Tom Doi Toan campus. Course work will continue on-site. Excursions will be postponed or cancelled.
- c) Program staff will consult with local health resources about COVID case trends.

6) Carleton Off-Campus Studies Contact Information

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