The American College of the Mediterranean &
The Institute for American Universities (ACM-IAU)

COVID-19 Preparedness Plan
Updated October 2022

Subject to change without prior notice

INTRODUCTION AND GOALS

ACM-IAU's goal is to provide a safe learning environment for its students, faculty, staff, and administrators. In the face of an evolving COVID-19 pandemic, ACM-IAU is implementing plans to best respond to the needs of its community. Through transparent protocols and measures, ACM-IAU's goal is institutional preparedness that inspires confidence in international education amongst partner universities, students, and families. ACM-IAU successfully resumed in-person programs in fall 2020 and is confident it can continue to safely offer in-person programs (with in-person teaching). We implemented a vaccine mandate for all students in January 2022 and continue to ensure social distancing, testing, and contact tracing when necessary. ACM-IAU bases our COVID-19 protocols on best practices in the United States along with the guidance of national and local government officials and health professionals in France and Spain. We reevaluate and update our COVID-19 Preparedness Plan every semester. It is important to note that governments around the world are continuously updating regulations, local restrictions, and entry protocols as the COVID-19 situation evolves. ACM-IAU regularly monitors these updates and adjusts our policies and protocols accordingly.

PLAN

1. **Vaccination**

The U.S. Center for Disease Control and Prevention encourages all international travelers to be fully vaccinated against COVID-19 prior to travel. To continue to support the health and safety of the ACM-IAU communities abroad, ACM-IAU requires all program participants to be fully vaccinated. Vaccination is the key to providing a healthy and safe learning environment. ACM-IAU considers a student fully vaccinated if they have received a complete set of injections, including booster shots if eligible. Students are required to submit proof of COVID-19 vaccination to ACM-IAU prior to the program start date.

ACM-IAU also highly encourages ACM-IAU faculty, staff, administrators, and homestay hosts abroad to be fully vaccinated.

Currently, Spain allows entry to fully vaccinated travelers, defining fully vaccinated to include a booster shot no later than nine months after completing a full vaccination series. France has dropped its vaccination requirement for entry; but this does not affect ACM-IAU's policy/requirements for vaccination (including booster).

2. Travel

France: The U.S. Embassy of France released the following health alert: "The government of France has announced that, as of August 1, it has ended all COVID-related entry requirements for France. Travelers no longer require proof of vaccination or a negative test to enter France. In addition, the health/vaccine pass has been eliminated for all locations. Masks are no longer mandatory, but French authorities highly recommend them for public transportation and entry into medical facilities. Businesses, including medical facilities, may still require visitors to wear masks." Please read more detailed information on the [U.S. Embassy of France's website.](#) It is highly recommended that students avoid booking flights that have layovers in a country other than France (layovers within France are OK). As rules for countries differ, students who have layovers in others countries must check the requirements of those countries before traveling. Students are responsible for the cost of all testing related to entry (including layover) requirements, as well as the cost of testing required to return to their home country.

Note that this change does not affect the ACM-IAU requirement of all students to be fully vaccinated (including booster).

Spain: Effective September 6, 2021, U.S. citizens can travel from the United States to Spain if they show proof of vaccination. Please read more detailed information on the [Spain Ministry of Health's website.](#) Additionally, students traveling from the United States will need to present the QR code generated through the [Spain Travel Health Portal](#) prior to boarding their flight to enter Spain. U.S. citizens who are traveling to Spain from a country that is not the United States should make sure they follow the guidance published by Spanish authorities on their local [Spain Embassy website.](#) It is highly recommended that students avoid booking flights that have layovers in a country other than Spain (layovers within Spain are OK). As rules for countries differ, students who have layovers in others countries must check the requirements of those countries before traveling. Students are responsible for the cost of all testing related to entry (including layover) requirements, as well as the cost of testing required to return to their home country.

3. Testing Protocols

During Program: Students will be tested upon showing COVID-19-related symptoms or if they are contact cases, following the guidelines recommended by local and national health authorities. ACM-IAU sites maintain a supply of self-tests students can use if they are showing symptoms or suspect exposure to COVID-19.

If a student receives a positive test, ACM-IAU will enact self-isolation and contact tracing protocols recommended by local health officials. We will work with the student (and host family, if applicable) to identify the best approach. Although sanitary protocols regularly change, ACM-IAU is guided by the principle that a student will never be kept in an unsafe situation. When self-isolation is required, students may be relocated during the self-isolation period, and if so, students will not incur any additional costs. Students in self-isolation will be able to continue their studies remotely, assuming their health allows them to do so.

After Program: Students returning to their home country at the end of the program may be required to present a negative COVID-19 test upon entry. Currently (August 2022), students returning to the United States at the end of their program are NOT required to present a negative COVID-19 viral test result.

For homestay hosts: ACM-IAU recommends to all host-families that they perform self-tests upon showing COVID-19-related symptoms. If a host receives a positive test at any point during the semester, the residing student may, if needed, be removed from the homestay and placed in an alternative homestay, residence hall, apartment, or hotel room at no cost to the student. ACM-IAU will work with the student and host family to identify the best self-isolation approach.

For faculty/staff/administrators: ACM-IAU recommends that all administrators, faculty, and staff test upon showing COVID-19-related symptoms. If anyone receives a positive test, ACM-IAU will enact quarantine and contact tracing protocols recommended by local health officials.

For outside vendors including internship agency personnel: Any outside vendors with whom ACM-IAU contracts for student services will be pre-screened to ensure they follow local health guidelines. In the event any vendor tests positive, they will be removed immediately from contact with any ACM-IAU students and personnel.

Contact Cases: If, through contact tracing or other means, someone in the ACM-IAU community has been identified as having been exposed to the virus, ACM-IAU will engage in the following measures:
- Provide self-tests for use following the guidance of national and local government officials and health professionals.
- Monitor health of individual for COVID-19 symptoms.

NOTE: ACM-IAU requests that all students and staff members who show signs of respiratory illness wear a mask when they are in ACM-IAU buildings, so as to prevent the spread of their illness to others. It remains imperative that students inform the local ACM-IAU staff if they test positive or are presenting any symptoms commonly associated with COVID-19.

4. Health/Vaccine Passes

France: Students should carry their CDC proof of vaccination with them, though this is not required for entry into any establishments at this time. This proof of vaccination may be required, however, for entry into healthcare establishments, retirement homes, and establishments for vulnerable and disabled persons. ACM-IAU staff keeps up-to-date with any possible regulation changes, and students can access the [French government's website](#) to check for any updates. We also advise that students keep a picture or pdf of their CDC proof of vaccination in their mobile device and carry the original with them.

Spain: Spain implemented a vaccine pass system in 2021; however, because students are not eligible to apply for the Spanish vaccine pass, they should instead use their CDC proof of vaccination. Since February 2022, a pass is no longer required to access public places in Spain. ACM-IAU staff keeps up-to-date with any possible regulation changes, and students can access the local government's website to check for any updates. In Barcelona (Catalonia), that site is https://web.gencat.cat/en/activem/restriccions-territorials/catalunya/index.html. We also advise that students keep a picture or pdf of their CDC proof of vaccination in their mobile device and carry the original with them.

5. Facilities Maintenance, Supporting Physical Distancing and Wellness Protocols

ACM-IAU has implemented protocols that help provide a safe learning environment for the entire community, including:
- Installing air purifiers in high-density areas. Classrooms are ventilated between classes.
- Practicing ongoing health monitoring of the community. Students, faculty, and staff should self-monitor their well-being daily. Students are advised to bring a thermometer for self-monitoring. Those experiencing COVID-19-related symptoms are asked to self-isolate immediately and contact the ACM-IAU administration for support.

- Cleaning and disinfecting all building facilities daily. Hand sanitizers and cleaning wipes are available in all facilities, including entrances, common areas, and classrooms.
- Providing signage and informational information throughout facilities (reinforcing good hygiene, awareness of COVID-19 symptoms, protocols to follow, etc.).

6. Regular Updating of Policies

ACM-IAU constantly monitors the sanitary environment and updates guidelines as needed. ACM-IAU may implement policies, restrictions, and requirements to protect the well-being of the ACM-IAU community. For example, ACM-IAU may prohibit students from traveling outside a certain geographic area or be subject to local self-isolation regulations upon return to campus. ACM-IAU provides regular updates to the community of any changes in our guidelines as well as local and national developments.

7. Ongoing Communication with ACM-IAU Community

Paramount to this plan is the communication ACM-IAU pledges to execute, as necessary. In ACM-IAU's Dean's Council meetings, held bi-weekly, any changes to the regulations/restrictions in our host countries are discussed. If these result in a change to this Preparedness Plan (or other policies and/or protocols), those changes will be immediately communicated to our students and partners.

Although we are no longer communicating with partners about individual COVID cases, we will continue to do so in any case of severe illness or injury.

ACM-IAU's COVID-19 Plan is available on IAU's website (www.iau.edu) and ACM's website (www.acmfrance.org).