



Spring 2022 Snapshot

ON INTERNATIONAL EDUCATIONAL EXCHANGE

Mirka Martel, Ph.D. and Julie Baer
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Mirka Martel, Ph.D.

Julie Baer

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About IIE

As an independent, 501(c)(3) not-for-profit founded in 1919, the mission of the Institute of International Education (IIE) is to help people and organizations leverage the power of international education to thrive in today's interconnected world. IIE's work focuses on advancing scholarship, building economies, and promoting access to opportunity. IIE publications and white papers can be found at <https://www.iie.org/Research-and-Insights/Publications>

Introduction

The *Spring 2022 Snapshot on International Educational Exchange* continues the commitment of the Institute of International Education (IIE) to map the effects of key current events, especially the COVID-19 pandemic, on international educational exchange to and from the United States. Since 2005, we have released the *Fall International Student Enrollment Snapshot* to understand the most up-to-date enrollment trends at the start of each academic year.ⁱ Since early 2020, we have released four COVID-19 Snapshot Reports to map the effects of COVID-19 on U.S. colleges and universities.ⁱⁱ This Spring Snapshot builds on both sets of snapshot surveys while expanding our analysis in the COVID-19 series to include other emerging trends affecting student mobility.

In the spring of 2022, most U.S. colleges and universities continue to rebound from the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. With increasing levels of international student and faculty mobility, our report analyzes the effects of this reopening on international students studying at U.S. institutions and U.S. students traveling abroad. In addition to COVID-19 effects, we include a special section on the Ukraine crisis and U.S. institutions' support to international students from Ukraine and Russia, as well as the realities of university partnerships with higher education institutions in the region. The Ukraine crisis, and its effect on international students and universities worldwide, remind us of the significant impact that conflict can have on international education.

The four sections of the report present data from 559 U.S. higher education institutions and analyze (1) international students studying at U.S. institutions in spring 2022 and application and selection processes for prospective students, (2) the effects of the Ukraine crisis on international student mobility and university partnerships, (3) the prospects of international students on U.S. campuses in fall 2022 and their mode of study, and (4) realities of U.S. study abroad in spring 2022 and academic year 2022/23.

Survey Respondent Institutions

IIE administered the Spring 2022 Snapshot Survey to U.S. higher education institutions from April 14 to April 29, 2022. We sent the survey to the *IIE Network* (a community of over 1,300 higher education institutions and other organizations in the United States and abroad) and respondents of the *Open Doors 2021 Report on International Educational Exchange*.ⁱⁱⁱ 559 institutions completed the survey. Most of these U.S. colleges and universities (95%) also completed the most recent *Open Doors* surveys. The respondent institutions represent 49% of all international students at U.S. institutions in 2020/21 and U.S. study abroad students in 2019/20.

Figure 1. Institutional Sector

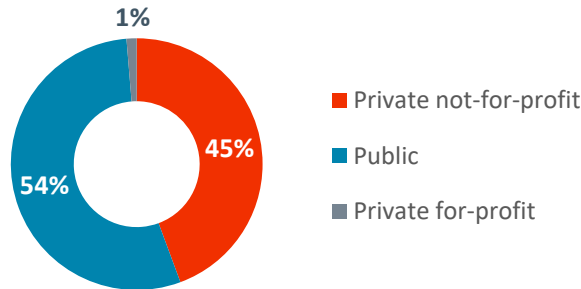
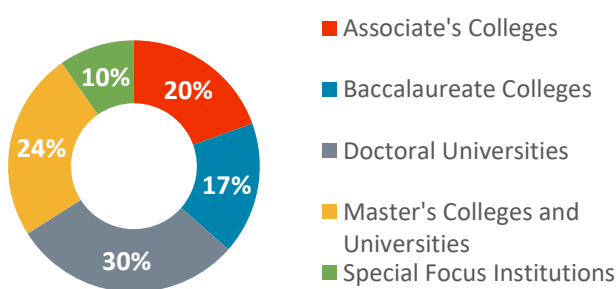


Figure 2. Institutional Type



Note: Percent distribution may not total 100 due to rounding

Key Findings

The *Spring 2022 Snapshot on International Educational Exchange* highlights the focus on in-person student mobility to and from the United States and support to current and prospective international students affected by COVID-19 and the Ukraine crisis.

Most International Students Are Studying In-person on U.S. Campuses in Spring 2022

- Over half of U.S. institutions (55%) report that *all* their international students attended classes in person in spring 2022, compared to just 8% one year ago. An additional 34% note that *most* of their international students studied in person.
- Institutions continue to communicate with their international students about their health and wellbeing (89%) and mental health (61%) amid COVID-19 concerns.

U.S. Colleges and Universities are Supporting International Students during the Ukraine Crisis

- 248 U.S. institutions (44%) report hosting international students from Ukraine in spring 2022. These institutions have supported Ukrainian students through written correspondence (87%), mental health counseling (81%), emergency student funding (59%), and housing (29%).
- 307 U.S. institutions (55%) report hosting international students from Russia in spring 2022 and noted similar support to these students: 79% offered written correspondence, and 71% provided mental health counseling. This speaks to institutions' support for *all* international students on their campuses.
- U.S. colleges and universities continue recruiting prospective students from Ukraine and Russia. Most (54%) are extending enrollment for prospective Ukrainian students amid possible visa delays.
- A small number of institutions (43) report having university partnerships with Russia. Over half of these institutions (56%) have suspended their university partnership amid the crisis.

International Student Applications Continue to Increase

- 65% of institutions report an increase in their international student applications for the 2022/23 academic year across all institutional types, up from 43% one year ago.
- Recruitment continues to be a priority; for the first time, 43% of institutions note in-person recruitment.
- Almost all institutions are offering in-person study to future international students (96%), with options for online study decreasing and only reserved for those who cannot travel or obtain a visa due to COVID-19.

In-Person Study Abroad Rebounds

- In summer 2022, 58% of reporting institutions are offering in-person study abroad programs, and an additional 31% are offering hybrid programs. The proportion of in-person study abroad programs increases to 65% in fall 2022 and 64% in spring 2023.
- 83% of institutions note an increase in study abroad numbers in 2022/23 compared to the previous year. This is across all institution types and geographic regions.
- 81% of the responding institutions indicated that students are required to have a COVID-19 vaccine to study abroad, mainly due to vaccine requirements already on campus, requirements of the study abroad provider or in-country partner, or the destination country.

I. International Students at U.S. Colleges and Universities in Spring 2022

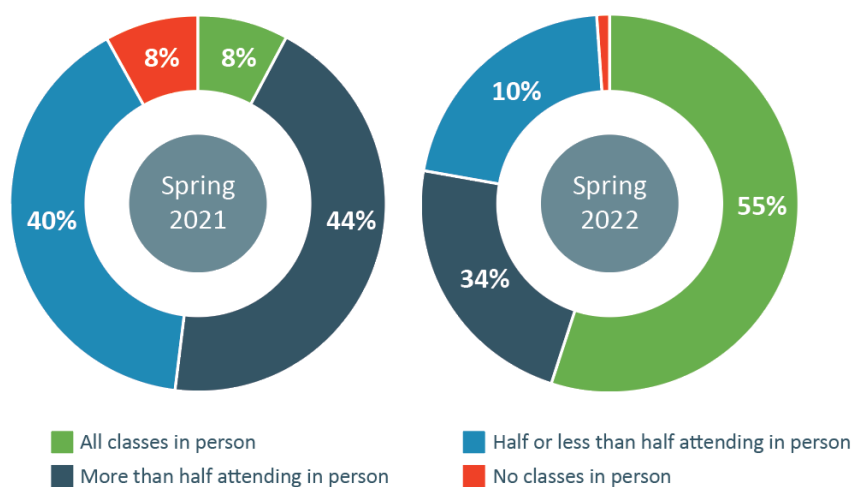
99% of U.S. higher education institutions report having in-person classes in spring 2022 and 89% report over half of their international students on campus.

Most International Students Attend Classes in Person

In the two years since the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, most U.S. higher education institutions report a return to in-person teaching and learning. Of the 559 institutions that reported to the Spring 2022 Snapshot, only four indicated providing virtual teaching only. The remaining 99% indicate that their mode of study is either hybrid (71%) or in-person only (28%). The rate of in-person study is highest among Baccalaureate colleges (59% in-person study only) and lowest among Associate's Colleges or community colleges (5% in-person study only). Three out of the four institutions that offer only virtual classes are Special Focus Institutions.

89% of U.S. institutions report that most of their international students are on campus in spring 2022 (Figure 3). Since 2020, and with the reopening of international student travel, the proportion of international students on U.S. campuses has continued to increase steadily. While in spring 2021, only 8% of reporting institutions indicated that all their international students were on campus, over half of all institutions (55%) reported all their international students on campus this spring. This is largely in line with the desires of international students, as many prefer in-person study for their U.S. educational experience.^{iv}

Figure 3. International Students on U.S. Campuses



Learnings from COVID-19 indicate that U.S. colleges and universities have maintained or increased their flexibility regarding mode of instruction. Before COVID-19, 85% of reporting institutions offered hybrid instruction (a blend of virtual and in-person classes). Almost all the institutions that reported hybrid teaching before the pandemic plan to continue this approach in future semesters. Of those that *did not* offer virtual

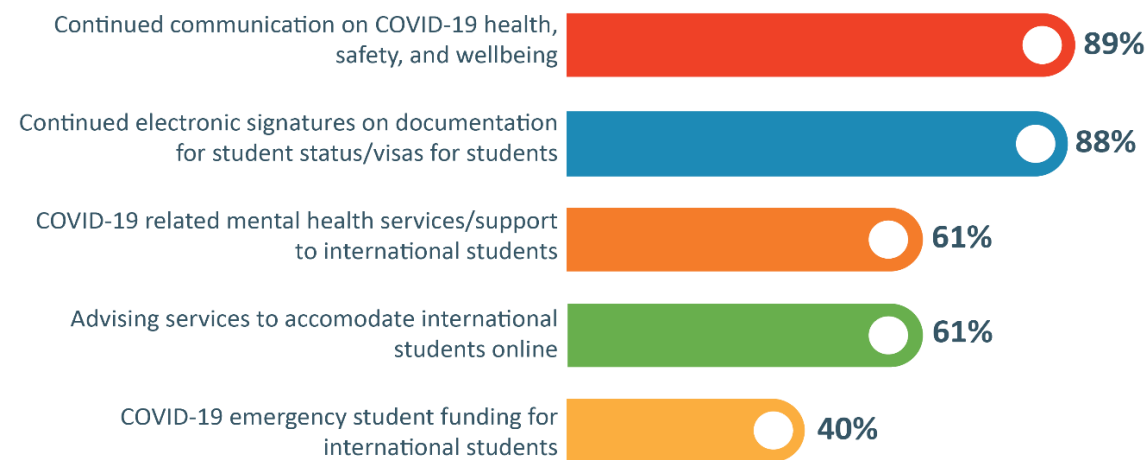
instruction before COVID-19, the majority (54%) plan to offer hybrid classes in future semesters or are not yet sure of their plans (40%). A decidedly smaller number (7%) do not plan to offer virtual classes in the future. This speaks to a broader shift to flexible teaching and learning that will likely remain at most institutions.

It is important to note that the findings above refer to the mode of instruction for *all* students, not just international students. Recent guidance from the Student and Exchange Visitor Program (SEVP) has extended the guidance first issued in 2020 that allows current international students to “engage in distance learning in excess of regulatory limits due to the continuing public health concerns created by COVID-19.”^v The same guidance indicates that *new* international students beginning enrollment for the 2022/23 academic year will not be able to enroll in fully virtual programs but will be able to enroll in hybrid programs “with some requirement for in-person learning.”^{vi} This guidance, updated for the 2022/23 academic year, provides some flexibility for international students who may not be able to attend all classes in person, allowing them to participate in hybrid study within the regulations for students in the United States on non-immigrant student visas.

COVID-related Institutional Support to International Students Continues

Throughout the last two years, U.S. colleges and universities have prioritized their international students’ health, safety, and wellbeing. As in previous Snapshot Reports, our findings indicate that reporting institutions have continued to provide COVID-19-related communication on health and wellbeing (89%) and have also provided mental health support and services (61%) (Figure 4). Slightly less than half of the reporting institutions continue to provide COVID-related emergency student funding to their international students (40%). Many institutions may also have added additional student funding in spring 2022 for emerging needs, including the Ukraine crisis (see next Section).

Figure 4. Institutional Support to International Students



With a decrease in virtual instruction of international students, 61% of institutions adapted advising services to accommodate international students online, a decrease from 80% last year. A lower proportion of institutions also adapted online course schedules and teaching methods to international students (33%). This aligns with the priority of placing and enrolling students in in-person classes in the United States. Institutions have noted

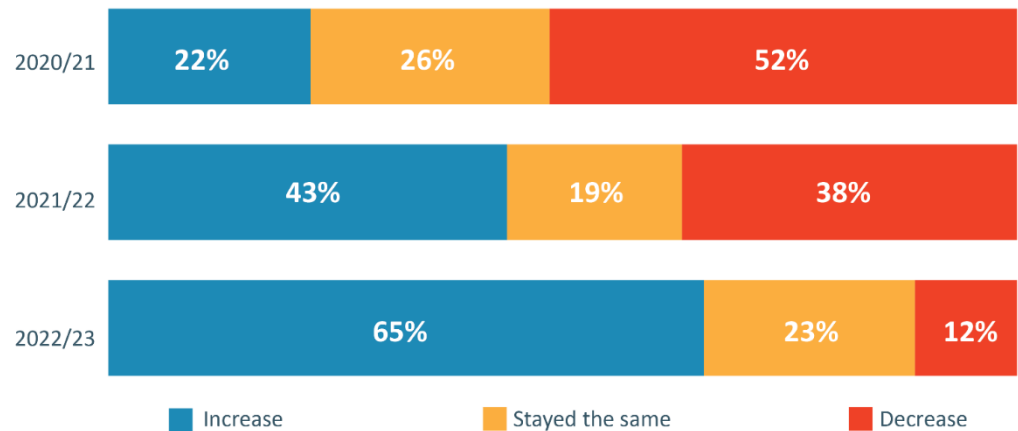
throughout the pandemic the challenge of adapting courses to international students still located in their home country. Our findings indicate that locating international students in the United States partially alleviates this challenge. It is important to note that academic and advising support for international students online is higher among institutions with a higher proportion of international students taking classes virtually.

International Student Applications for 2022/23 Increase

The *Open Doors Report on International Educational Exchange* tracks data on inbound international student mobility at U.S. higher education institutions.^{vii} Over the last 20 years, *Open Doors* has documented the increasing total of international students in the United States. However, as reported in the *Open Doors 2021 Report on International Educational Exchange*, the COVID-19 pandemic caused a 15 percent decrease in international student numbers to just over 914,000 in the 2020/21 academic year. The total number of international students decreased across all academic levels. Looking at the numbers more closely, we note that the decrease primarily happened among new international students or students studying at a U.S. college or university for the first time. The total number of new international students decreased by nearly half (46%) in fall 2020. As a result of closures due to the COVID-19 pandemic and overall uncertainty over the 2021/22 academic year, many international students chose to defer their studies or pause their studies completely in spring 2020, resulting in this decrease. Since then, we have been closely monitoring application numbers for a rebound of international students starting their studies amid reopened travel and in-person campus learning.

In the 2021/22 academic year, the *Fall 2021 International Student Enrollment Snapshot* reported a four percent increase in total international student numbers.^{viii} Though a snapshot of the full *Open Doors* population, this was the first indication of a rebound in international student numbers. This trend mirrors the application trends for the last two years (Figure 5). In 2020, over half of the reporting institutions (52%) noted a decrease in application numbers for the 2020/21 academic year. Since then, this trend has turned around. In 2021, 43% of institutions noted an increase in 2021/22 applications. And in spring 2022, 65% of institutions report an increase in applications for the upcoming 2022/23 academic year.

Figure 5. International Student Applications for Academic Years 2020/21 – 2022/23



U.S. colleges and universities remain committed to increasing the number of international students, primarily those on campus. The majority of responding institutions noted increases in applications for the 2022/23 academic year, particularly Master's Colleges and Universities (76%), Doctoral Universities (73%), community colleges (68%), and liberal arts colleges (51%). While a smaller number of Special Focus Institutions reported compared to other institutional types (38 in total), almost half of these institutions (45%) indicated that their application numbers were the same as last year.

Institutions continue to adapt application and selection processes to make the process easier for international students to study in the United States. As in previous application cycles, and especially since the COVID-19 pandemic, institutions report offering online submission of applications (84%) and immigration documentation (80%) to prospective students. Most institutions allow online results instead of in-person testing (54%). A quarter of institutions have extended application deadlines (28%) and deadlines to accept admission (25%) as necessary. These measures, some of which were adapted due to COVID-19, have made the application and selection process easier for international students and have streamlined processes to admit students.^{ix}

The findings in this section point to stabilization across U.S. institutions in the spring 2022 semester regarding the COVID-19 pandemic. As international student programs find their footing with pandemic protocols and student health and safety, the crisis in Ukraine in February 2022 has reminded institutions that support to international students requires continued adaptability and flexibility. The next section provides insights into how institutions supported international students amid this reality.

II. Effects of the Ukraine Crisis on U.S. Institutions and International Students

87% of U.S. colleges and universities provided support for international students from Ukraine and Russia studying in the United States.

Support for Ukrainian Students at U.S. Colleges and Universities

Since February 2022, the Ukraine crisis has led to an estimated 6.5 million refugees fleeing to neighboring countries and more than 7 million internally displaced people.^x The Ukrainian higher education system has been gravely affected by the conflict and, with it, the realities for international students studying in Ukraine and abroad, including in the United States. In the 2020/21 academic year, over 1,700 international students from Ukraine were studying at U.S. colleges or universities, according to *Open Doors*.^{xi} The Spring 2022 Snapshot sought to provide insights into how U.S. colleges and universities have responded to the crisis in Ukraine and supported international students from Ukraine studying at their institutions. It is important to note that this survey was administered in April 2022 and that the crisis continues to affect students, faculty, and staff at U.S. institutions and in Ukraine.

248 U.S. institutions reported hosting international students from Ukraine, slightly less than half (44%) of all institutions reporting on the Spring 2022 Snapshot. An overwhelming majority of these institutions cited reaching out and communicating with current Ukrainian students through written correspondence (87%) and one-on-one discussions (77%) (Figure 6). As students worked to process the unfolding events in Ukraine, 81% of institutions noted providing mental health counseling to these students, and 39% noted facilitating discussions between Ukrainian students and others on campus to discuss the crisis.

Figure 6. College and University Support for Current Ukrainian International Students



In addition to supporting Ukrainian students' wellbeing, there were several additional resources that institutions provided. Approximately 63% of colleges and universities encouraged Ukrainian students to seek legal advice about the relief that may be available to them, such as Temporary Protected Status and Special Student Relief available to Ukrainian students as of April 2022.^{xii} At least one institution noted that they paid for these legal fees and arranged one-on-one visits for their international students. In recognition of the needs of students who may be facing financial difficulties, 58% of institutions noted that they were providing emergency student funding to support Ukrainian students, and one in four (29%) provided housing support. In addition to campus efforts, several institutions noted that IIE had provided more than 225 grants to Ukrainian students this spring through our Emergency Student Fund (ESF).^{xiii}

U.S. institutions are also considering the realities facing international students from Ukraine who may not be able to return home upon graduation. These institutions have been encouraging students to seek legal advice about options to remain in the United States, applying for Optional Practical Training (OPT), and providing resources for students who may wish to continue their degree studies in the United States.

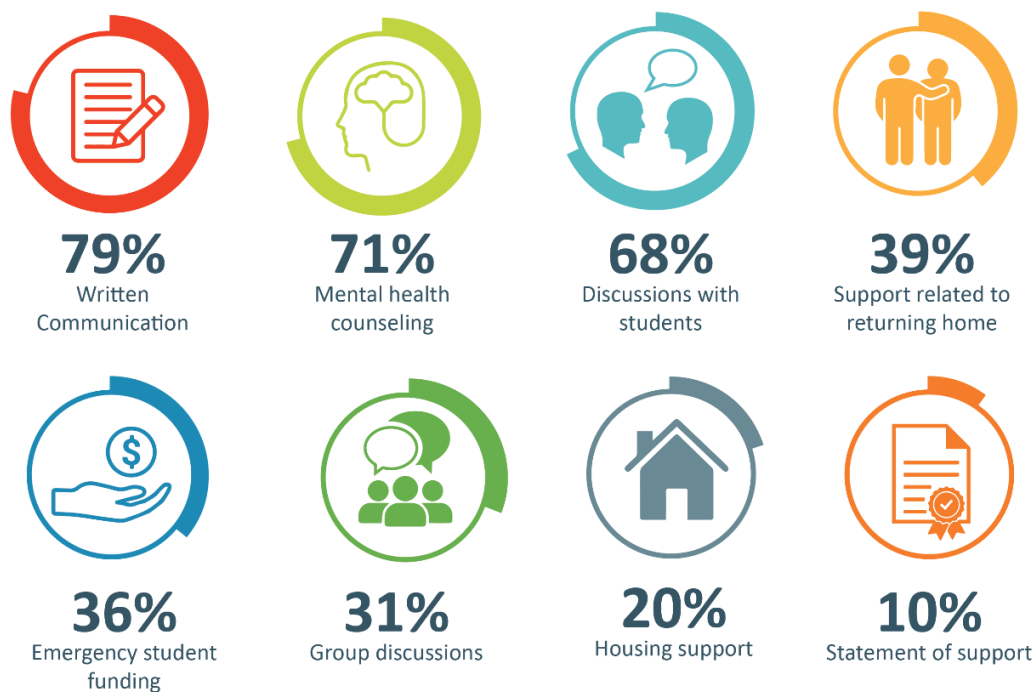
Finally, some institutions noted that while they may not have international students from Ukraine, many students have Ukrainian relatives affected by the crisis. With a Ukrainian diaspora of over one million in the United States, according to the U.S. Census, most institutions (54%) noted that they had written communication with all students, faculty, and staff regarding the Ukraine crisis, and 61% noted offering mental health support to all students, faculty, and staff.

Support for International Students from Russia at U.S. Colleges and Universities

International educational exchange, and the support that U.S. colleges and universities offer to students who choose to study on their campuses, is universal. Despite the ongoing conflict between Ukraine and Russia, a constant in our findings was that U.S. institutions provided equal support to international students from both places of origin. As of 2020/21, over 4,800 international students from Russia were studying in the United States, including students who may have publicly disagreed with their government's actions in Ukraine or may be facing challenges due to the economic sanctions. As such, many U.S. colleges and universities have continued to support international students from Russia in the same ways that they have supported international students from Ukraine, particularly by providing increased communications and mental health counseling.

307 U.S. institutions reported hosting international students from Russia in spring 2022, approximately 55% of all institutions reporting on the Snapshot. Most institutions reported the same support for Russian students as that offered to students from Ukraine, including written communication (79%), mental health counseling (71%), and support related to returning home (39%) (Figure 7). Institutions noted that they are also providing legal counsel to Russian students regarding their student status and future if they are graduating. At least one institution indicated that they have created a task force for the Ukraine crisis and are deliberating further support to be offered. Another institution noted that it had released an official statement countering political appeals to remove Russian international students from the United States.

Figure 7. College and University Support for Current Russian International Students



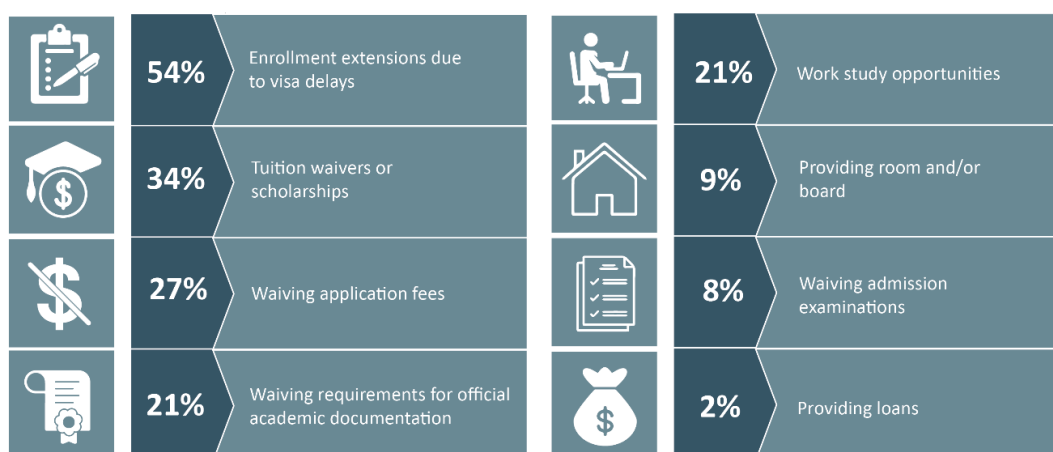
Finally, the Spring 2022 Snapshot also asked about university partnerships between institutions in the United States and Russia. Most reporting institutions (88%) did not have formal university partnerships with Russian higher education institutions. Of those that did—43 in total—the majority (56%) had suspended their partnership with the Russian institution.

Recruitment of Future International Students from Ukraine and Russia

The Ukraine crisis has affected future cohorts of international students who may have planned to study abroad in the United States. As with support to current students, our findings indicate that U.S. institutions are open to welcoming students from both places of origin.

U.S. colleges and universities have provided a range of responses to support prospective students from Ukraine (Figure 8). Approximately half of the reporting institutions (54%) noted providing enrollment extensions due to students who may be experiencing difficulty traveling due to visa delays. Based on prior research from IIE's Fall Snapshots, affording tuition or living expenses is one of the most frequently cited challenges for students from conflict areas.^{xiv} To address prospective Ukrainian students' concerns about the costs of pursuing higher education in the United States, 34% of institutions cited providing tuition waivers or scholarships, 27% noted waiving application fees, 21% reported providing work study opportunities, and 9% reported offering room and board. Another frequently cited barrier for international students from conflict areas is a lack of official academic documents needed for admittance or the ability to complete admissions placement exams. To address these concerns, 27% of institutions cited waiving requirements for official academic documents, and 8% noted waiving admissions examinations.

Figure 8. College and University Supports for Prospective Ukrainian International Students



When considering recruiting future international students from Russia, it is important to note that U.S. colleges and universities remain committed to offering Russian students opportunities to study. The vast majority of responding institutions that have an interest in international students from Russia are continuing their recruitment, as well as offering admissions to Russian students. Of the over 220 institutions that reported admitting international students from Russia, all but one are moving forward with admission. Similarly, over 110 institutions reported that they continue to recruit international students from Russia, and only seven institutions noted suspending recruitment of Russian students. Most institutions plan to move forward with their recruitment plans and welcome international students from Ukraine and Russia just like students from other places of origin.

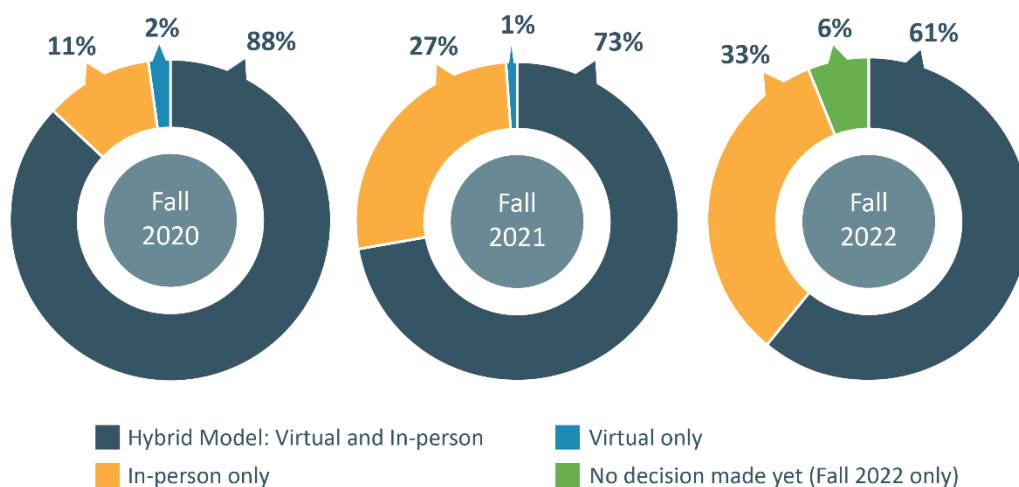
III. Looking Ahead to Fall 2022 and International Students

96% of U.S. colleges and universities are offering in-person study options to international students for the 2022/23 academic year. For the first time since the pandemic, 43% of institutions reported in-person recruitment events.

More Institutions Will Continue In-person Study in Fall 2022

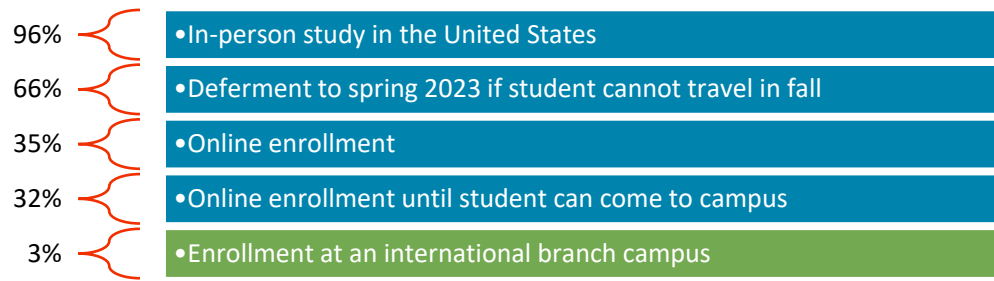
As institutions prepare to welcome a new cohort of international students for the fall 2022 semester, it is important to understand how institutions plan to support student safety on campus. For all students, including both U.S. and international students, almost all colleges and universities (99%) plan to offer in-person or hybrid instruction, with most institutions (61%) planning to offer hybrid instruction (Figure 9). One-third of institutions (33%) plan to offer in-person study only. In viewing the trends from the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, the findings demonstrate the flexibility of institutions to pivot between hybrid, virtual and in-person instruction within just two years.

Figure 9. Mode of Instruction, Fall 2020 – 2022



U.S. institutions are prioritizing in-person study for international students in 2022/23. Almost all reporting institutions (96%) plan to offer international students in-person study in the United States (Figure 10). While the percentage of institutions offering in-person study to prospective international students went up from this time last year, all other categories decreased.

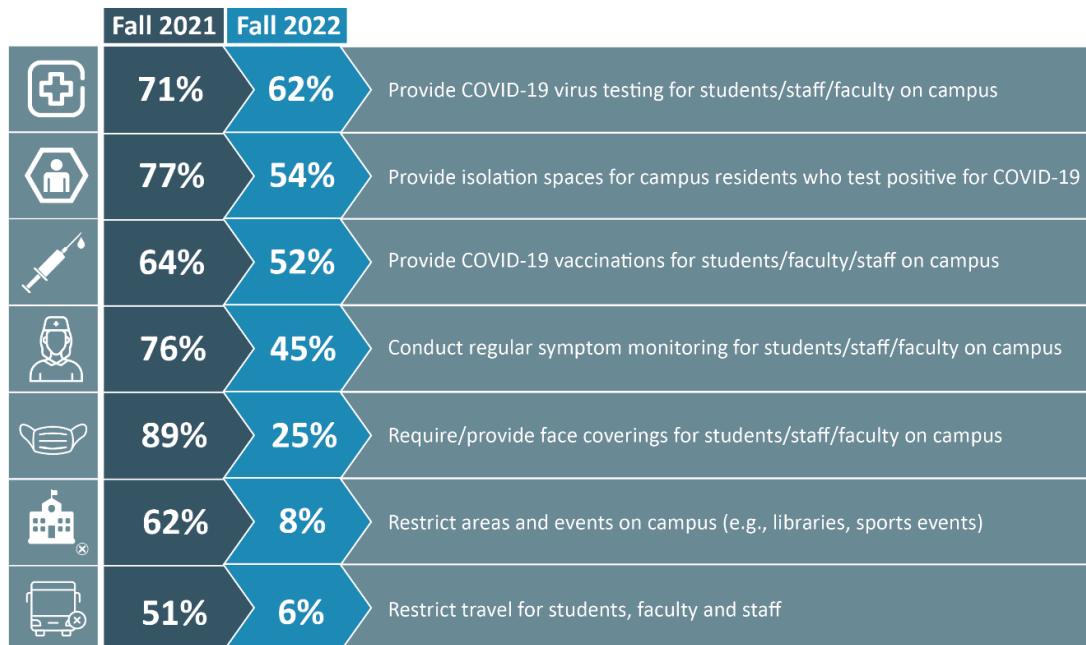
Figure 10. What will your institution offer to international students enrolled in fall 2022?



Approximately 66% of institutions noted offering students deferment to spring 2023 (down from 77% last year), while only 32% noted that they would offer online enrollment to international students until they could come to campus in person (down from 47% last year). Given SEVP guidance noted in the first section, it is unsurprising that institutions are less likely to offer online enrollment to their international students. Very few colleges and universities (3%) noted options for international students to enroll in branch or partner campuses abroad for the fall 2022 term, on par with findings from one year ago.

Institutions noted a shift in COVID-19 safety protocols on U.S. campuses in fall 2022 (Figure 11). Compared to last fall, most institutions do *not* intend to require face coverings for students, faculty, and staff on campus. This is in line with protocols already being implemented this spring 2022 amid loosening mask mandates throughout the United States. Most other COVID-19 safety protocols have been relaxed on campus, including regular COVID-19 symptom monitoring, restricting campus areas and events, and restricting students, faculty, and staff travel. Reporting institutions plan to continue offering COVID-19 virus testing (62%) and vaccinations (52%) for those on campus, though not at the same levels as in fall 2021.

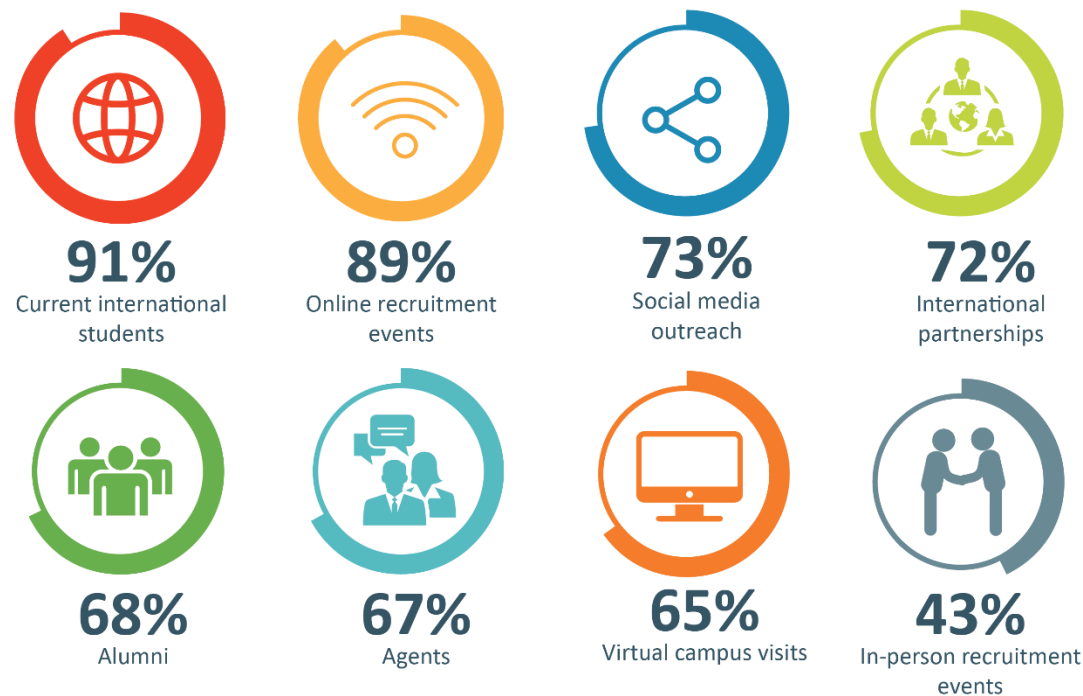
Figure 11. COVID-19 Safety Protocols on Campuses, Fall 2021 - 2022



Future International Student Recruitment

U.S. institutions continue to use various resources for their future international student recruitment, including working with current international students (91%), hosting online recruitment events (89%), and leveraging social media (73%) (Figure 12). Outreach to students through online events and social media has allowed institutions to recruit globally and access student populations that traditionally are not included in recruitment travel. Current international students can often provide personal, authentic testimonials about how international students can succeed on their campus and in the United States.

Figure 12. Resources for Outreach and Recruitment of International Students



In summer 2020, our COVID-19 Snapshot Report indicated that three out of four U.S. institutions had moved to virtual recruitment. With international travel paused, these institutions reported offering online campus tours, recruitment events, yield events, and continuing their work through agents. In spring 2022, we saw a rebound of in-person recruitment events for the first time, with 43% of institutions reporting in-person recruitment. What is interesting to see is the combination of virtual and in-person activities moving forward.

Finally, we asked what outreach and recruitment tools were the most *useful* for institutions. When considering this, reporting institutions most readily cited agents, online recruitment events, current international students, and international partnerships as the recruitment tools with the highest utility. Amid COVID-19, U.S. colleges and universities have diversified their outreach and recruitment, combining traditional and new strategies that have proven useful in converting prospective international students to enrolled students on their campuses.

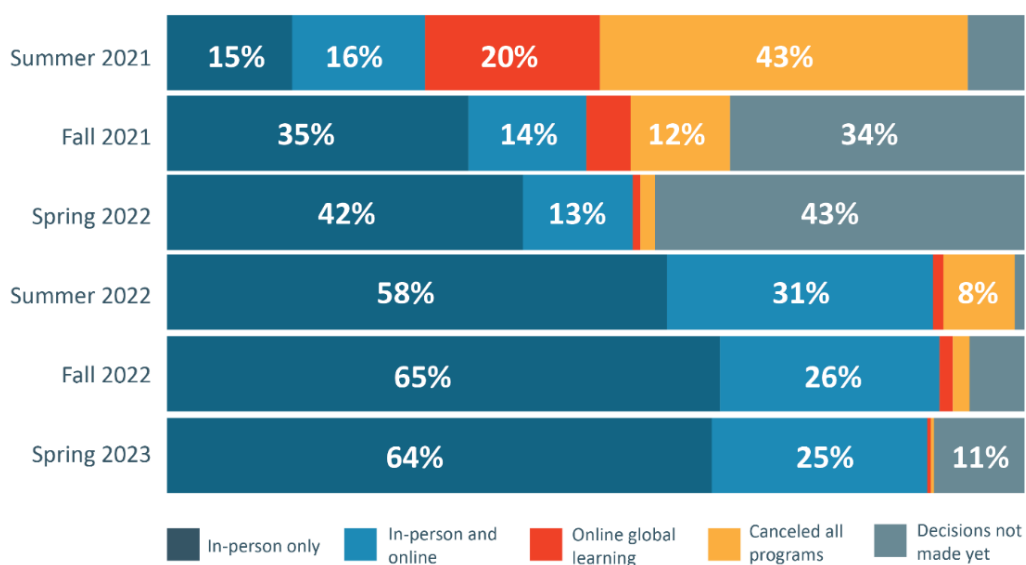
IV. U.S. Study Abroad in 2022/2023

U.S. study abroad is set to rebound, as 83% of responding institutions anticipate an increase in 2022/23 study abroad numbers compared to the previous year.

Most Institutions Plan to Offer In-Person Study Abroad

According to reporting institutions, most have returned or anticipate returning to in-person study abroad in the 2022/23 academic year. As of summer 2022, 89% of reporting institutions only offer in-person study abroad or in-person and online options (Figure 13). This proportion increases to 91% for fall 2022 and remains high at 89% for spring 2023.

Figure 13. Study Abroad Programs, Summer 2021 – Spring 2023



With the return of U.S. colleges and universities offering in-person study abroad, there have been notable shifts in other modes of study. We note a dramatic decline in institutions reporting that all study abroad was canceled. In summer 2021, 43% of institutions noted study abroad cancellations, whereas less than one percent of institutions anticipated that study abroad would be canceled in spring 2023. While many institutions indicated clear policies for study abroad for the forthcoming summer 2022 term, some institutions may be taking a more conservative approach to announcing plans for study abroad in future semesters due to uncertainty regarding COVID-19. Approximately 11% of respondent institutions had not made a decision about study abroad for spring 2023.

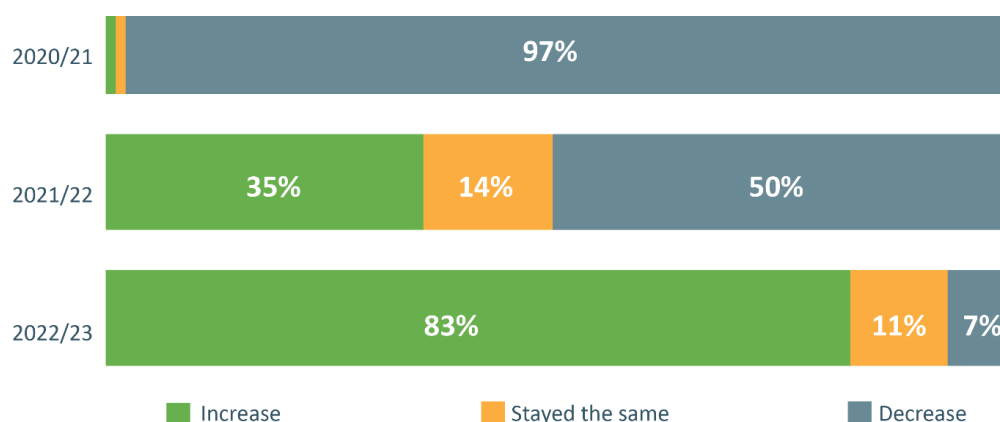
One learning from COVID-19 may be the expanded offerings of online global learning opportunities across institutions. As of summer 2023, nearly one-third of colleges and universities indicated that they plan to offer

online global learning, and this remains consistent as institutions plan for future semesters. However, it is notable that in 2022/23, less than 2% of institutions anticipate offering online global learning programs only. This indicates that many institutions are not viewing online virtual exchanges as a replacement for traditional in-person study abroad opportunities but rather an additional opportunity for students to gain global insights and perspectives.

More Students Anticipate to Study Abroad in 2022/23

Most U.S. colleges and universities report increased student participation in study abroad compared to the prior two years. Approximately 83% of institutions anticipate growth in study abroad numbers in the forthcoming 2022/23 academic year compared to the prior year (Figure 14). This is a significant improvement from 2020/21, when only 1% of colleges and universities expected numbers to increase. This number increased to 35% in 2021/22. This expected growth in study abroad participation was reported across all institutional types, sizes, and geographic regions.

Figure 14. Anticipated Study Abroad Numbers, 2020/21 - 2022/23



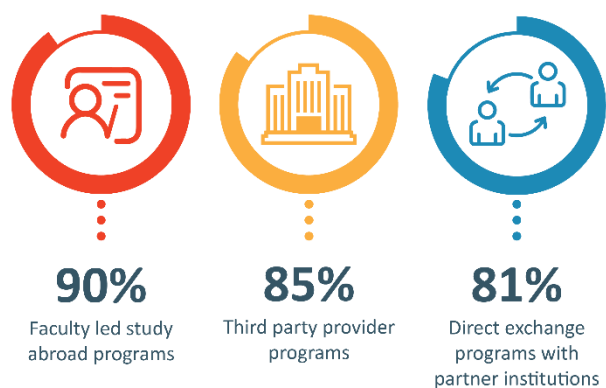
One of the big questions in the study abroad industry is when study abroad numbers will rebound to pre-COVID-19 trends. In the 2021/22 academic year, most institutions (82%) noted that the numbers had not yet rebounded fully and were still lower than before the pandemic. The multiple COVID-19 waves due to new variants have continued to affect the overall numbers during the 2021/22 academic year and will determine study abroad moving forward in 2022/23.

Study Abroad Programs and Destinations

As institutions begin offering in-person study abroad programs again, many colleges and universities note embracing different program options for study abroad (Figure 18). Approximately 90% of institutions cited offering faculty-led programs, 85% have options for study abroad through third-party providers, and 81% provide direct exchange programs. In addition, several institutions note their work in offering global internships

and research programs, and study abroad programs at their centers or campuses abroad. This new data showcases the wide variety of study abroad programs that institutions offer students.

Figure 18. Study Abroad Programs Offered in 2022/23



In recent years, institutions, sponsors of study abroad scholarships, and providers have made extensive efforts to diversify destinations and provide opportunities for students to have engaging learning experiences in other regions. Europe has long been the predominant destination for U.S. study abroad.^{xv}

When asked where institutions plan in-person study abroad in 2022/23, the popular destinations were the traditional European study abroad locations of Spain, Italy, the United Kingdom, and France, with over 75% of respondents intending to offer programs in each destination. Only four of the top 15 program destinations were outside of Europe: Japan, South Korea, Australia, and Costa Rica. Multiple factors influence the predominant destinations planned for study abroad in the 2022/23 academic year. For example, study abroad providers in less traditional destinations may have closed operations. In addition, destinations in less developed regions may not have robust health care facilities or high COVID-19 vaccination rates.^{xvi} Moreover, the evolving nature of COVID-19 outbreaks globally may affect safety conditions and travel restrictions in specific countries. For example, less than 25% of institutions noted plans to send students to China due to ongoing travel restrictions.

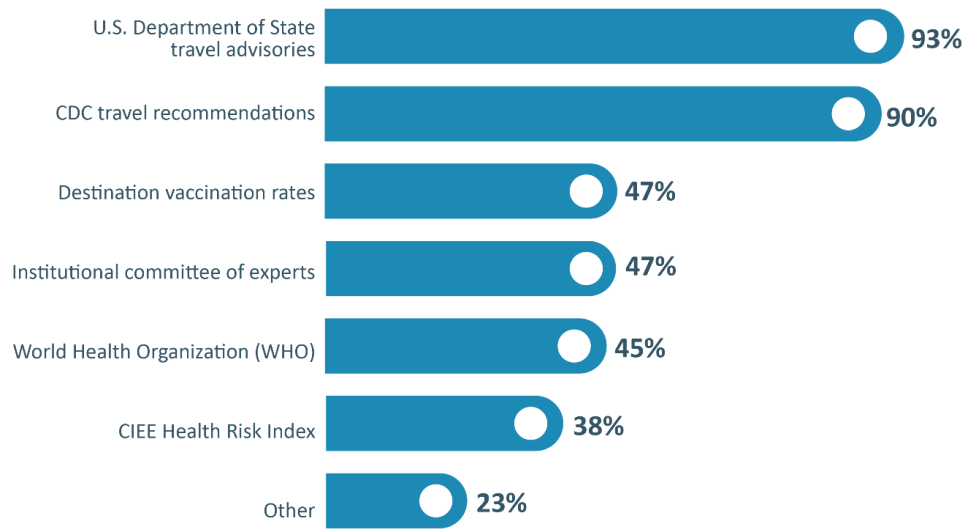
Overcoming Uncertainty and Ensuring Safety in Study Abroad

U.S. institutions weigh multiple complexities amid COVID-19 to ensure their students' and faculty's safety and wellbeing in study abroad. To date, U.S. colleges and universities have built robust risk management systems to navigate destination country COVID-19 outbreaks and travel restrictions. Additionally, many institutions evaluate the feasibility of students traveling to destinations with long-established partnerships or the availability of programming from study abroad providers.

Institutions rely on several resources to guide decision-making (Figure 15). The overwhelming majority of institutions report relying on the U.S. Department of State's travel advisories (93%) and the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) travel recommendations (90%). Since March 2021, the U.S. Department of State's travel advisories had been aligned to the CDC's COVID-19 Travel Health Notices (THN).^{xvii} However, as of April 2022, the State Department updated its framework to remove the automatic correlation with the CDC's THN levels, except for cases where the CDC assessed a country to be at a Level 4: Do Not Travel.^{xviii} At the time

of this report’s publication, there are no countries listed as a Level 4: Do Not Travel by the CDC, and only 10% of countries listed as Level 4: Do Not Travel by the State Department based on all risk factors, which is a dramatic decline from a year ago when the State Department did not recommend travel to approximately 80% of countries.

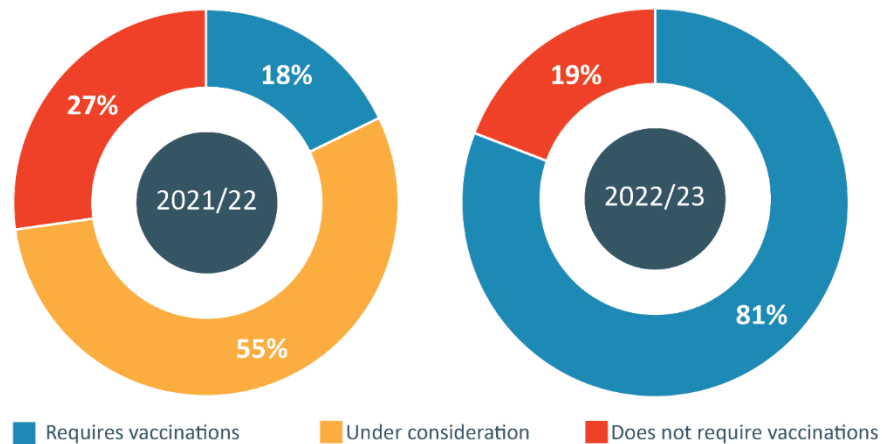
Figure 15. Resources for Determining Study Abroad Destinations



While most colleges and universities utilize these governmental indicators, 93% of institutions report using multiple resources to inform their decision-making. Nearly half of the reporting colleges and universities use destination vaccination rates, internal committees of experts, and data from the WHO to determine study abroad programming. In addition, institutions noted using the CIEE’s Health Risk Index, host country public health data, risk ratings from insurance providers, guidance from the Overseas Security Advisory Council, global emergency assistance companies (e.g., On Call International and International SOS), program provider recommendations, and benchmarking with peer institutions.

Additionally, institutions are establishing several measures and policies to prioritize making travel safe and secure. Approximately 81% of the responding institutions indicated that students are required to have a COVID-19 vaccine to study abroad (Figure 16). This is a notable increase from 2021/22, when most institutions were still considering COVID-19 vaccinations (55%), and only 18% had instituted a vaccination requirement. Respondent institutions indicated that the requirements were established for several reasons. Nearly half of all institutions (49%) noted that vaccines were already a requirement for all students on campus, and over a third reported that the requirement was due to a study abroad provider or in-country partner (38%) or a requirement of the destination country (36%).

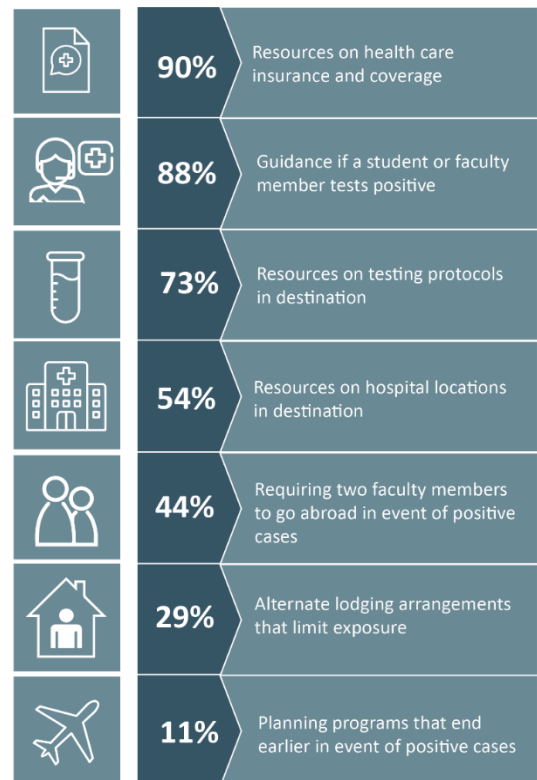
Figure 16. COVID-19 Vaccine Requirement for Study Abroad, 2021/22 & 2022/23



As institutions develop their programs, they are also committed to providing a range of risk resources and plans in the event of exposure to COVID-19 while students are abroad (Figure 17). Most programs reported that they were providing resources and guidance to students and faculty that go abroad, such as providing resources on health care insurance and coverage while abroad (90%), what to do if a student or faculty member tests positive (88%), testing protocols in the study abroad destination (73%), and hospital locations (54%).

It is notable that institutions also indicated that they were modifying the structure of their study abroad programs to mitigate risks associated with COVID-19. Approximately 44% of colleges and universities require at least two faculty or staff members to travel abroad, which would allow one member to stay with any students that tested positive while traveling. Similarly, another option noted in the comments was identifying a faculty or staff member who would travel abroad should positive COVID-19 cases require another chaperone. Finally, 29% of respondents noted providing alternate lodging arrangements that limited COVID-19 exposures, and 11% planned programs that ended earlier, which in the event of positive COVID-19 cases would allow students or faculty time to quarantine before returning to campus for classes. Institutions also noted paying and securing lodging for students with positive COVID-19 cases that needed to quarantine, facilitating COVID-19 testing, and providing masks. While there may be many approaches to how higher education institutions

Figure 17. Study Abroad COVID-19 Risk Mitigation Efforts



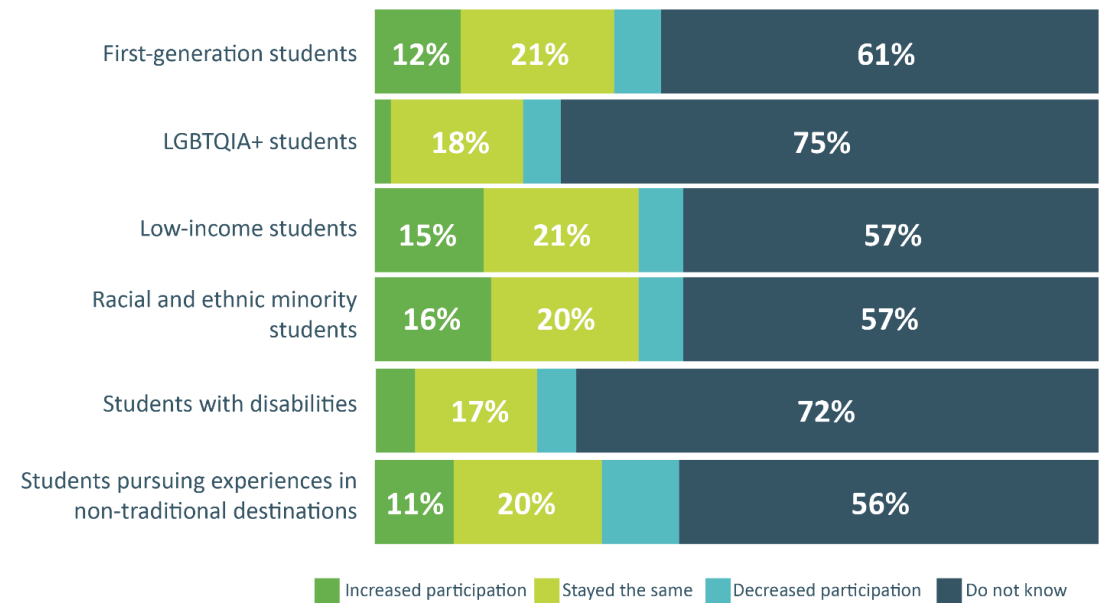
mitigate risks due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, it is clear from this data that U.S. colleges and universities remain committed to ensuring the health and safety of all individuals involved in studying abroad.

Online Global Learning

Like many other sectors, study abroad has adapted due to COVID-19, with institutions developing or expanding online global learning programs. According to the *Open Doors 2021 Report on International Educational Exchange*, over 10,000 U.S. students received academic credit for online global learning experiences in 2019/20.^{xix} There are many ways in which higher education institutions are encouraging students to engage in online global learning, with the most popular programs reported to *Open Doors* being remote internships or consulting opportunities with global companies, collaborative project-based learning (such as Collaborative Online International Learning (COIL)), and video conference dialogues.

Online global learning is not a replacement for traditional study abroad, but another means for students to engage in a global context. As such, institutions need to understand the profile of students that online global learning serves and whether it is increasing engagement across populations that may have not traditionally been served by study abroad. It is positive to see that across all populations surveyed, institutions noted either an increased or level rate of participation, particularly among low-income and racial and ethnic minority students (Figure 18). However, most respondents did not know what effect online global learning had on student participation in internationalization activities.

Figure 18. Online Global Learning’s Effect on Student Participation in Internationalization



This continues to be an area for further research to ensure that students across all underserved populations have access to and the opportunity to participate in traditional study abroad and online virtual exchanges. It will also be important to monitor whether increases in online global learning lead to increases in in-person study abroad.

Conclusion

For two years, the COVID-19 Snapshot Series has followed the effects of the pandemic on international student mobility to and from the United States. Our first reports focused on the ability of U.S. higher education institutions to pivot quickly, moving to virtual learning amid office and campus closures, offering support to international students in the United States and abroad, and supporting online study abroad opportunities for students unable to travel. Over time, we have seen the resilience of international educational exchange, confirming that students want to travel abroad. U.S. institutions are prepared and ready to host them or send them on exciting academic adventures. The return to in-person learning, whether among international students or in U.S. study abroad, also confirms that students and faculty will prefer in-person experiences when possible. At the same time, we have learned that hybrid options offer opportunities to complement, not replace, in-person study.

Despite the optimism emerging from the pandemic, ongoing and emergent conflicts in Afghanistan, Ukraine, and other parts of the world confirm that while we have reason to celebrate the achievements and resilience over the last two years, we cannot forget that educational exchange will continue to be affected by current sociopolitical events. The unwavering support for international exchange for all becomes even more solidified in the commitment of U.S. colleges and universities to keep their doors open, providing safe spaces for international students pursuing academic study.

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