



International Sustainable Development Studies Institute
สถาบันการศึกษาการพัฒนาที่ยั่งยืนนานาชาติ

COVID-19

Protocols and Emergency Response Plan

February 26, 2021 Revision

COVID-19 presents a number of new and unique challenges for study abroad. This document lays out some of the key issues regarding COVID-19, how to appropriately manage the risk during the COVID-19 pandemic, and specific challenges within the context of operating in Thailand.

These protocols and plans are appropriate to Thailand, and its specific situation of zero to low local transmission currently, and would not be appropriate in other countries or contexts.

Awareness and Staying Current

Throughout the pandemic, from the first cases in China and onwards, a key part of preparing for and responding to the risk terrain of a global pandemic requires being aware of what is going on, making well informed decisions, and keeping communication open with stakeholders.

To this end, ISDSI has developed relationships with both Thai and US government officials concerned with public health. Daily updates from both Thai and international experts are reviewed and assessed.

We regularly consult with our American medical advisor, Thai public health experts and epidemiologists, and others for guidance and insight into the risks and best practices appropriate to Chiang Mai and Thailand more generally. ISDSI has medically trained staff who have worked in public health and COVID testing, and we also work through informal networks of public health and medical professionals to assess risk.

Our guiding framework for ALL of our protocols and emergency response is informed by:

1. Thai government policy and guidelines
2. US Consulate and Department of State advice and guidelines
3. US CDC and WHO guidelines and protocols

Our role is to help implement Thai, US, and international guidelines in our specific context, with our students and staff, taking care to respond appropriately to the situation in Thailand, Chiang Mai, and other areas where we operate courses.

Student Travel and Daily Life

- Students traveling to Thailand are required to be tested with RT-PCR 72 hours before boarding the flight to Thailand. In the case of a positive COVID test they cannot board the flight nor participate in the program and will be refunded all non-recoverable costs.
- Students are required by Thai policy to have health insurance that specifically provides a minimum coverage of 100,000 USD for COVID-19 treatment in Thailand for their entire duration of stay.
- We recommend all students isolate 14 days prior to departure, and do a COVID test before leaving home.
- All students are provided with masks and hand sanitizer before their US departure.
- Following current Thai government requirements, students are in supervised quarantine for two weeks on arrival in Thailand at a hotel approved by the Thai government, and in partnership with a Thai hospital.
- Students are tested two times during the quarantine.
- Following Thai government protocols, all students are required to wear masks in public, check in and out of buildings and markets, use hand sanitizer, and maintain social distancing.

- COVID protocols are covered during orientation on arrival to Chiang Mai, and include avoiding crowded indoor spaces with poor ventilation, following posted COVID protocols in malls and restaurants (mask wearing, use of hand sanitizer, temperature checks, and checking in and out online).
- Students use Thai government tracking apps as required to stay current on possible COVID exposure.
- Students are housed in single occupancy apartments.
- ISDSI does not use urban home stays, and only uses village home stays where there is not recent history of transmission and the houses are open and well ventilated.

ISDSI Campus and Classes

- Classrooms and public spaces are regularly cleaned and sanitized.
- All classrooms have windows that can be opened. Thai government policy is followed with regards to open windows or the use of high flow air-conditioning.
- The entrance to campus has a temperature check station and hand sanitizer.
- All classes offered have the ability to offer fully virtual or mixed modal classes if needed or required by Thai government policy.

COVID-19 Testing and Response

- The context of Thailand is unique, with no local transmission in Chiang Mai for months as of this writing, and only localized transmission in specific locations that are being aggressively tracked, traced, and isolated.
- Following Thai government guidelines on testing, students are tested for COVID-19 if they meet the current criteria for a COVID-19 test — recent exposure to a known carrier, or symptoms (e.g. fever) that match possible COVID-19.
- Thai government policy is to only test when necessary and not to do routine screening testing, as testing uses resources that would be required if there is a resurgence of COVID-19. ISDSI thus does not do student wide screening on a routine basis, in line with Thai government policy.
- If a student meets criteria for exposure or symptoms, they are able to isolate with food delivery until their test results are returned.
- If a student tests positive, we follow Thai government regulations for anyone testing positive for COVID. All people testing positive are isolated in a hospital and are not allowed to quarantine at home.
- If a student tests positive, coursework will continue via video conferencing (Zoom) as appropriate.

Program Required Travel

- ISDSI assesses COVID risk in local communities that we travel to based on Thai Ministry of Public Health data, as well as our own network of NGOs and health care professionals.
- ISDSI stays current on and checks inter-provincial travel restrictions and protocols (e.g. tracking and screening) prior to travel and throughout the semester.
- ISDSI consults with local partner communities to find out if they have any specific community requirements, and only travels to communities that are comfortable with hosting outsiders.
- During any public transportation (e.g. plane or boat travel) students are required to wear masks and use hand sanitizer.
- If a student or group of students test positive, they will be taken to the appropriate hospital for testing and assessment.

Program Continuity and COVID Resurgence Plans

- All courses have a backup plan to operate virtually if necessary.
- All courses and programs can operate through Thai government mandated stay-at-home orders or lockdown if necessary.
- ISDSI will work closely with the Thai government on quarantine, isolation, or other protocols as required, and communicate these to students.
- ISDSI will work closely with home institutions and the US Consulate if evacuation back to the United States is advised by the US State Department or required by the student's home institution.

Additional resources, FAQs, and online links can be found at <https://isdsi.org/covid-19/>