



# Harvard University

**RE: Travel Guidance Regarding the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19)**

**Date: March 4, 2020**

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Harvard University continues to monitor the evolving outbreak of the 2019 Coronavirus (COVID-19) and will continue to provide guidance on restricted travel as necessary (see [Harvard Coronavirus Website](#)).

For those travelling on University business, the [Harvard Travel Policy](#) allows for reimbursement of cancellation or change fees with a valid reason. **The current Coronavirus outbreak meets this requirement.** The policy also allows the purchase of refundable tickets where there is a high likelihood that the itinerary may change. For travel that has yet to be booked, it is recommended that travelers purchase refundable tickets instead of trip cancellation insurance since trip cancellation insurance does not provide coverage in all situations. Travelers should also use preferred vendors where possible, because these relationships can provide additional support and flexibility. See Harvard's list of [preferred vendors](#).

We encourage travelers to discuss upcoming travel plans with their manager to determine whether travel is necessary and if there are alternative methods to participate in existing obligations (Zoom, Skype, etc.).

**In all cases, travelers must contact the agency or hotel as soon as they know they will not be traveling in order to reduce cancellation penalties.**

**Can I be reimbursed for my trip if I cancel due to concerns about the Coronavirus?**

***Non-Sponsored Funds***

If Harvard has restricted travel to a certain country ("restricted country" - see [CDC Level 3 Countries](#)), then Harvard will reimburse airfare, room charges and conference registration fees that are not refunded or covered by a penalty waiver from the airlines or hotel.

If a traveler has booked travel to a non-restricted country, but the traveler elects to cancel their trip due to individual safety concerns, Harvard will reimburse cancellation, change fees or similar charges at the discretion of the Department or Tub Finance Office.

***Sponsored Funds***

Current OSP guidance<sup>1</sup> is that cancellation fees on grant-related activities can be charged to sponsored funds if the travel was cancelled as a result of Coronavirus related cancellations or CDC travel restrictions (see [CDC Level 3 Countries](#)). Otherwise expenses should be charged to non-sponsored funds. Authorized approvers must ensure any change or cancellation fees charged to sponsored funds are reasonable and allowable.

**Travelers should retain documentation of their cancellation request with the vendors.**

If a traveler has booked travel to a non-restricted country but the traveler elects to cancel their trip due to individual safety concerns, **these charges cannot be charged to sponsored funds. However**, Harvard will reimburse cancellation, change fees or similar charges at the discretion of the Department or Tub Finance Office.

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<sup>1</sup> Pending further guidance from federal agencies. OSP will issue additional guidance as appropriate.



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## How do you cancel the trip?

### ***Booked Through a (Preferred) Travel Agency:***

Contact the agency directly for assistance canceling the trip, regardless of ticket type. If travel was booked through Egencia and the ticket was a refundable ticket, request that the agent refund the ticket as opposed to placing the value in your (the traveler's) travel bank. Travelers should use preferred vendors where possible for greater flexibility around cancellations. See Harvard's list of [preferred vendors](#).

### ***Booked Directly with the Airline/Vendor:***

If booked directly with the airline, hotel, etc., contact the vendor as soon as possible to cancel the trip. In some cases, the airlines and hotels may waive cancellation penalties. If you have purchased a nonrefundable ticket directly through the airline and no penalty waiver exists, you will be given a "credit" (minus any cancellation penalty) which can be used for a future Harvard business trip. Unused tickets cannot be used for personal travel.

### ***Conference Registration:***

Contact the event registration office or association to see if they will grant a refund for the conference, even if the conference was not cancelled. If Harvard has already reimbursed for registration fees, any refunds must be returned to Harvard.

### **Other Helpful Information:**

- See: [Advice for Harvard Travelers](#) and [Harvard Coronavirus Website](#)
- **Register all international travel** in Harvard's International SOS MyTrips [registry](#) and review travel advice from [Harvard Global Support Services](#).
- Keep in mind that any **travel may be disrupted** in the coming months. Other countries may be added to the [CDC's Level 3 Travel Warning](#) due to Coronavirus and would face similar University restrictions.
- Contact [fad\\_travelmgr@harvard.edu](mailto:fad_travelmgr@harvard.edu) with general travel questions or [christyne\\_anderson@harvard.edu](mailto:christyne_anderson@harvard.edu) for questions around travel on sponsored funds.

## Travel FAQs

### ***Are refundable tickets allowed?***

In this case, yes, if budget allows. Harvard Policy allows refundable tickets where there is a high likelihood that the itinerary may change. See the [Harvard Travel Policy](#) for additional guidance.

### ***What if I cannot get a refund for my hotel room?***

Harvard will reimburse hotel cancellation charges for restricted countries (see [CDC Level 3 Countries](#)). If the traveler elects to cancel their trip to a non-restricted country due to personal safety concerns, Harvard will reimburse the cancellation at the discretion of the Department or Tub Finance Office. See guidance for sponsored funds on preceding page.

### ***What if my trip was combined business and personal?***

Harvard will reimburse for only those expenses that were related to Harvard business.

### ***Who do I contact about my trip?***

Travelers should contact their school or unit's organizer regarding travel guidance. For schools or units with concerns about restricted travel sites (Level 3), contact the Vice Provost for International Affairs at [international\\_affairs@harvard.edu](mailto:international_affairs@harvard.edu).