Dear Student,

You are receiving this message as according to our records you are currently undertaking an international placement and are doing so in the host country (rather than remotely from your home country). If this information is incorrect, please update us and complete the following survey - https://www.qualtrics.manchester.ac.uk/jfe/form/SV_1MjmSWLV3NYwzHv

We hope that despite all of the current challenges your time abroad is proving to be a positive experience.

We wanted to touch base regarding Easter/the holiday season, as we are conscious that the vacations are often a time when many students studying/working abroad travel within their host country region or indeed wish to travel home. There are a number of very important issues for you to consider in making any decision to travel this year:

General Considerations

- Think now about your plans for the holiday season so that you are not isolated – if you have a household bubble in your host country see if you can all plan something together;
- Personal travel that is not required as part of your placement is NOT covered by the University travel insurance.

Covid-19 Considerations

- The appropriateness of undertaking any unnecessary travel at this time and managing your safety and the safety of others if you need/choose to travel: https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-safer-travel-guidance-for-passengers#safer-travel-easy-read-guide (This is VERY UK focused but nevertheless has some useful points to note).
- Local travel restrictions in place in your host country that preclude/discourage travel and/or requirements that need to be met in order to travel in country;
- The rules and restrictions that will apply if you return to the UK/your home country eg. mandatory quarantine (potentially requiring your whole household in your home country to self-isolate) - Travel advice: coronavirus (COVID-19) - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)
- Will you be able to return to your host country if you leave and have you considered all the implications of this possibility with regard to accommodation arrangements/costs, returning belongings, study/work arrangements?
- Entry rules for your host country may have changed since you entered/may change whilst you are absent – entry by particular nationals may be restricted, you may be required to quarantine on your return to your host country (and may have to cover the costs of this depending on the local arrangements); provide a vaccine passport etc..
If the FCDO has moved to ‘advising against all but essential travel’ since you commenced your placement or changes its position to ‘advise against all but essential travel’ for your host country whilst you are absent then this may affect the validity of your travel insurance going forward;

When departing the UK you will need to complete the UK Governments Declaration Form for International Travel Coronavirus (COVID-19): declaration form for international travel - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk) You may be asked to show this declaration form at the port of departure. And you should carry evidence to support your reason for travel. Entering a port of departure to travel internationally without a completed form is a criminal offence, for which you could be fined.

If you are undertaking a placement in Europe, are in receipt of Erasmus+ funding and you are unable to return to the host country after the vacation period, you will no longer be eligible for further funding and you may be required to repay some or all of the funding you have already received.

Due to ongoing uncertainty and international travel bans, there may be limited flights available, or flights maybe cancelled at very short notice. PLEASE make sure that you have signed-up to receive updates from the FCDO for your location and look at the advice for securing your return. You are strongly encouraged to sign-up to the social media feeds for the British (or your own national) Embassy in your host country.

Reminder:

For any student who is studying/working in Europe, you need to make sure that you have secured the correct residency status/visa for that country.

Please see below some useful information concerning the Easter Holidays:

**UoM Closure & emergency contacts**
The International Programmes Office will close for Easter at 5.00 p.m. on Wednesday March 31st and will reopen on Wednesday 7th April 2021. If you need emergency assistance during this time, you should call our insurance company AIG on +44(0) 127 372 7416 or the University’s 24 hour emergency helpline on +44 (0) 161 306 9966

**Wellbeing**
During the Easter closure period, if you feel any heightened emotions or you are finding things difficult, there is lots of help available even though the university will be closed. Please take a look at the student support website where you’ll find plenty of resources to help you, from little things you can do to boost your wellbeing, to resources to help support your mental health, including the online community Togetherall: https://www.staffnet.manchester.ac.uk/wellbeing/big-white-wall/. If you are struggling to cope, Shout provides free, confidential support via text (text Shout to 85258), or you can speak to the Samaritans: https://www.samaritans.org/

Please do not hesitate to speak to your Placement co-ordinator/IPO Country Adviser if you have any questions or concerns.

Take care and stay safe,

Dr Caroline Whitehand
Manager, International Programmes Office