



Have coronavirus vaccines facilitated the return of international study?

Description

With the approval of several coronavirus vaccines, institutions hoped for a speedy return to international study. Have vaccines had the impact on higher education that was anticipated?

In [December 2020](#), the UK, USA and Canada became the first countries to approve emergency use of a COVID-19 vaccination: Pfizer-BioNTech.

Since then, a whole host of other [vaccinations](#) have been approved, including Oxford-AstraZeneca, Sinopharm-Beijing, Gamaleya (Sputnik V), Moderna and Sinovac.

After such a difficult year, the development of effective vaccinations offered hope that life would, one day soon, return to normal.

For the higher education sector, vaccinations were seen as the key to reviving travel and mobilisation.

Finally, campuses would be free to re-open and institutions could welcome back both domestic and international students.

Speaking to [CNN](#) in April 2021, Antonio Calcado, executive vice president and chief operating officer for Rutgers University, New Jersey, said: "We feel [the] vaccine is the game-changer for us to bring back as many people as we can in September."

For those countries where a significant number of the population are vaccinated, some international students have been able to return.

In the USA, where [nearly half](#) of the adult population are fully vaccinated, some universities decided it was now safe to accept international students, while still enforcing other safety measures.

For example, the [University of Pennsylvania](#) has made it a requirement that all students living on and off campus be fully vaccinated for the fall semester• and that international students arriving should upload their required vaccine records to their

Student Health Service portal as soon as possible?

While it is exciting to see vaccinations facilitating the return of some international students, others are still facing disruption to their study abroad plans.

Since April 2020, QS has regularly surveyed prospective and current international students to learn more about their experiences with the ongoing coronavirus pandemic.

These surveys have amassed more than 105,000 responses, and each month our coronavirus reports pull together some of the most valuable insights from these responses.

In our June coronavirus report, which you can download for free [here](#), we asked students whether the introduction of the coronavirus vaccine has affected their plans to study abroad.

For 42% of respondents, it had made no difference to their plans.

This may be due to many factors, including vaccine hesitancy or simply having no access to the vaccine in the near future.

One respondent wrote: *“My country does not have a vaccination plan settled yet.”*

In many countries, including the UK, young people have only just been offered their vaccination, due to priority being given to older members of the population who are most at risk of serious illness.

With many vaccinations requiring two doses, it may be some time before large numbers of the global student population are fully vaccinated and able to present proof of this which will enable them to travel and study abroad.

In addition to reduced access for young people specifically, the speed of vaccination rollouts has differed drastically according to country.

In [Japan](#), only 21% of the adult population are fully vaccinated, with the country slow to approve vaccines and encountering issues with vaccine importation and vaccine rollouts.

Despite the delays they might be facing with regards to receiving the vaccination, the majority of international students understand the important role vaccinations play in enabling the return of international education.

Our survey revealed that 59% of prospective international students think universities should require students to have had the vaccine before they can travel to the country of their chosen institution.

53% also feel that vaccine passports, a document that provides full vaccination status, should be a requirement too.