FAQ’s on Travel

1. What is the current travel policy for students?

GPSC throughout the summer was strongly opposed to any travel restriction that required graduate students to report the precise details of their travel prior to taking that travel. The policy that GPSC strongly advocated for is the current policy. In this policy, you are not required to register or ask permission for personal travel before you depart. If you have a family emergency, if you have compelling reasons for personal travel for health, personal, social, spiritual reasons, then you do not have to ask Duke for approval. The only place where a formal policy comes into play is when you return from travel. The policy requires you to report where you have traveled to. If you've traveled to an area where there is a high prevalence of COVID or if mechanism of travel is associated with contracting COVID, then you may need to have a COVID test or be isolated on your return.

There is a separate process for students traveling for official Duke business, which you can find at this website: https://travel.duke.edu/travel-policy-july-2020

2. What is the ban or requirement on isolation if you leave the state for personal travel during the school year?

The key determination is not whether or not you leave the city or the state is the specific destination that you travel to. Student health will essentially be keeping a registry of locations that are high risk. We are working with student health to obtain more details about this component of the policy. Student health will work with individual students who have reported a travel history to ensure that they receive the appropriate protective measures against COVID, whether that would be isolation, testing, or normal activity.

GPSC is not aware of any hard and fast rule stating that if you travel X number of miles to X location or via X method, you will have to isolate for a certain number of days.

To answer another common question, concerning visitors from other states, the policy does not mention or prohibit visitors from other States. We are trusting in the fact that our graduate and professional student population are adults who can make rational, reasonable, informed decisions. That includes whether to accept a visitor to your home or place of residence. You should absolutely, no matter where you are living or whether you are coming to campus or not, avoid unnecessary personal travel. You should also avoid unnecessary travel of any kind.

Additionally, it is important to clarify that the policies that we have been discussing with regard to travel, symptom monitoring, reporting, and testing, do not apply to students who are off campus.
3. What is the policy around day trips around the state? What does remain in the Durham community mean? For example, are hiking and camping trips and the Blue Ridge mountains or surrounding areas allowed? Will there be quarantines mandated on return from travel?

We're still working with student health to get a more concrete answer on this. We regret that we can't answer this question specifically yet, but this is something that we're going to work with student health to make sure that we can get a very accurate, precise and correct tailored answer about this.

4. If I were to record travel, the next question, for personal reasons overnight and record that in my symptom monitoring survey, will I be required to quarantine for two weeks before I come back? Or will that info strictly be used for contact tracing in the event I developed symptoms and, or test positive?

It absolutely can be used for contact tracing efforts.

There are some cases, where per student health, you would need to be quarantined because of travel. This is also something we're working with to try and get more concrete and specific guidance about, to help students make these decisions reasonably.

We’re working with student health to develop a way that students can get access to that guidance, to allow them to make informed, conscientious, healthy, and reasonable decisions. Remember if you are not coming to campus, the policies about quarantine isolation, testing symptom tracking, symptom monitoring are not going to be directly applied to you. It is still great guidance to follow for your own personal safety. We would absolutely recommend that you follow social distancing procedures and self-isolate and wear a mask and do all the things you should do to be a responsible member of our broader community. However, the policy is only applied formally to students who are coming onto campus.

5. Would taking any flight automatically trigger a 14-day quarantine upon return regardless of destination?

We're following up with student health to specifically talk about air travel as we are aware that this is question on many students' minds. We don't have an answer for you yet, but we will get an answer on this question as soon as possible.