

Covid-19 Communications Toolkit

For Universities and Higher Education Institutions in England

3 March 2021



Department
for Education



Test and Trace

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Covid-19 Communications Toolkit

Introduction

The government has announced that all University students on practical or practice-based (including creative arts) subjects and require specialist facilities and equipment, can return for face-to-face study from **Monday 8 March**. HE providers have been asked to review and arrange who comes back.

This toolkit has been produced to support communications professionals in universities and higher education institutions across England share this message, along with essential Covid-19 advice to help prevent the spread of coronavirus. It contains key messages to help students travel back to university safely, information about rapid asymptomatic Covid-19 testing when back on campus, and advice for those students who will continue to access their course online.

It also contains links to the latest Covid-19 information online and a suite of communications assets to download and use in your own student-facing channels. Please use this information to ensure that students are fully aware of the latest Covid-19 guidance and to help amplify these messages to a wide student audience.

Thank you.



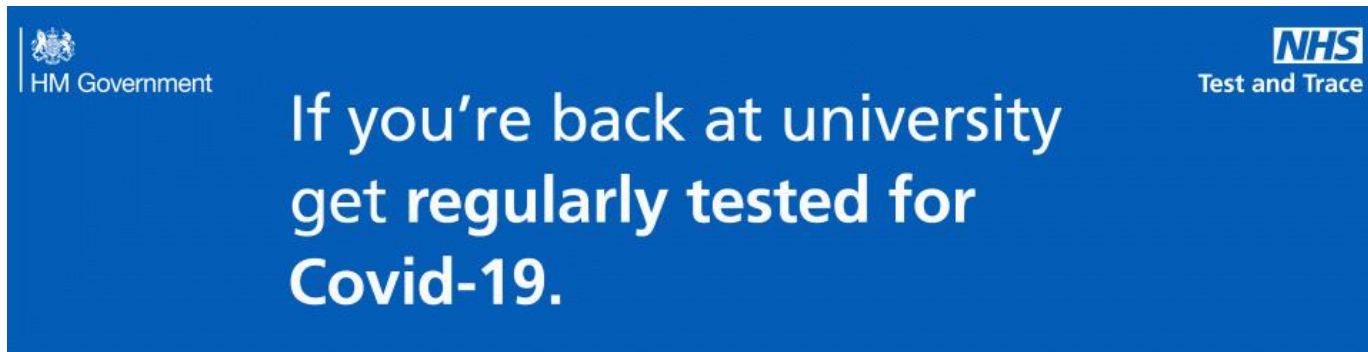
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Returning to University

Key messages for those students due to return to face-to-face learning from 8 March.



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Returning to University

Guidance for students returning to campus

- To reduce the risk of Covid-19 transmission there has been a staggered return to university this spring. **From Monday 8 March**, students on practical or practice-based courses (including creative arts) and need to access specialist facilities and equipment will be able to return to in-person teaching and learning if this is set up by their provider.
- Your university will let you know which courses should return and when your face-to-face teaching will resume.
- The government will review the timing for the return of remaining students after the easter holidays. Until then, these students should **stay where they are** and continue to study online. This will help to reduce transmission of Covid-19.
- It is important to remember that while levels of Covid-19 infection remain high, students returning to face-to-face education after negative tests must still exercise caution and follow national guidance on social distancing, wearing face coverings and hand hygiene.
- If you need to return earlier or need any other support, let your university know so they can help.



Student Covid-19 Testing

Covid-19 testing messages for students returning to university, those who are already back on campus, and why it is important that all students get regular Covid-19 tests.



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Student Covid-19 Testing

For students planning to return to campus

- Students are encouraged to get tested for Covid-19 before they travel back to university, where [community testing facilities](#) are available to them.
- All students eligible to return to university should get two tests – one immediately on return to university and then again three days later. You should then be tested twice weekly after that. Your university should share guidance with you, setting out how and where to access asymptomatic testing.
- If you are a student who has arrived from overseas and have completed a period of quarantine – either in a hotel or in their own accommodation – you are not expected to be tested when they return to campus. Students should, however, follow instructions on regular asymptomatic testing as set out by their university or higher education provider.



Student Covid-19 Testing

For students already back on campus

- Higher Education providers will continue to offer twice weekly rapid asymptomatic testing to students eligible to attend. So you can be reassured more quickly that you are not infectious or isolate yourself more quickly if you are.
- Students that receive a positive LFD test or a positive PCR (Polymerase Chain Reaction) test are required to self-isolate immediately along with their household contacts.



Student Covid-19 Testing

Why testing is important

- About 1 in 3 people with Covid-19 do not have any symptoms. LFD tests can detect the virus in people without symptoms and prevent them unknowingly passing it on to others.
- By identifying more people with the virus we can better mitigate the transmission of Covid-19 which will help protect your friends and lecturers, and will allow your university experience to improve more quickly and your education to continue uninterrupted.
- Lots of people taking LFD tests allows us to detect positive cases, take quick action to prevent the spread of coronavirus and break chains of transmission.
- LFDs have been through a rigorous validation programme. [Evaluations from Public Health England and the University of Oxford](#) show these tests are accurate and sensitive enough to be used in universities.
- Antigen LFD tests are highly specific, meaning that only a small proportion of people who do not have coronavirus will receive a positive result.
- More information about [understanding lateral flow antigen testing for people without symptoms](#) is available on www.gov.uk/coronavirus.



Student Travel Advice

Key messages for students about travelling back to their university accommodation safely

HM Government 

Travel checklist

- 
Take a face covering, unless exempt
- 
Take your hand sanitiser
- 
Take a contactless payment option
- 
Plan ahead and use a direct route
- 
Socially distance at all times
- 
Protect yourself and others, download the NHS app

STAY ALERT ► CONTROL THE VIRUS ► SAVE LIVES

 HANDS  FACE  SPACE



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Student Travel Advice

Returning to University

When your return date is confirmed, plan your journey and avoid busy times and routes. Check your journey to avoid disruptions and follow the [safer travel guidelines](#). If you plan to drive, only travel with members of your current household or the household you are going to join to decrease the risk of transmission to others. When using public transport, you must wear a face covering (unless exempt), sanitise your hands regularly, social distance where possible and use the [NHS COVID-19 app](#).

Car sharing

- Avoid sharing a car with anyone outside of your household or support bubble.
- If you have to share a car with someone outside of your household or support bubble, you should open the windows, wear a face covering unless you are exempt, and leave some seats free to social distance.



Student Travel Advice

Using Public Transport

When your return date is confirmed, if you are using public transport, don't forget to:

- Plan ahead and allow more time for your journey.
- Wear a face covering unless you are exempt for age, health or equality reasons. It is important you wear them for the entirety of your journey, whether inside a bus or train station, and when travelling on public transport.
- Social distance where possible.
- Wash or sanitise your hands regularly.
- Be considerate to fellow passengers and staff.
- Download the [NHS COVID-19 app](#) before you travel.

Active travel

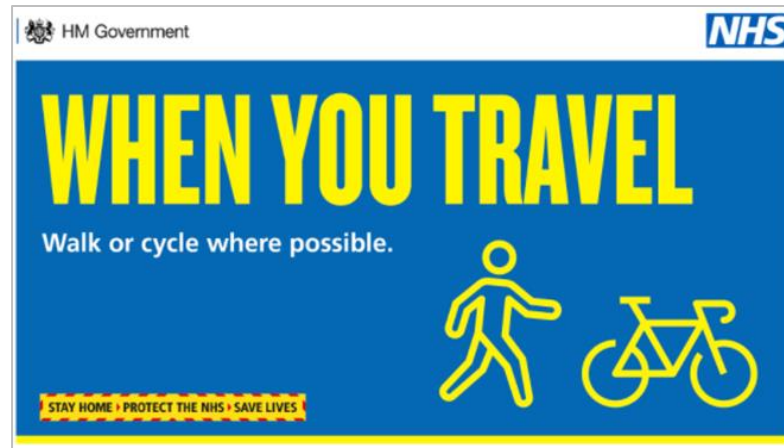
- If you live a short distance from your university, you should consider walking or cycling.



Student Travel Advice

How to travel safely if you test positive for Covid-19

- Before getting tested, you should make sure you have arrangements in place to travel home safely in the event you test positive. You should walk, cycle or drive wherever possible.
- If driving, you should try to be the only person in the vehicle, but can share a car with your household or support bubble if necessary. You should open windows, wear a face covering and sit far away from others if sharing a car.
- Plan their journey ahead in the event you test positive, and you should not use public transport, a taxi, or a private hire vehicle to return home after testing positive.



Student Travel Advice

Advice for students travelling to the UK from overseas (1/3)

It is **vital** that international students arriving in the UK have followed the correct arrival procedure to avoid additional costs.

There are reports that some students arriving from overseas mistakenly think their university's asymptomatic testing process exempts them from having to book and pay for a travel test package.

We are asking for your support to get the right information to your international students.

Before travelling students should:

- Check the latest information about [entering the UK](#).
- Note that all inbound UK travel corridors have been temporarily suspended to protect against new international variants of Covid-19. **All passengers** are now required to self-isolate for 10 days on arrival.
- Note that certain countries are now on a 'red list' – students arriving from these countries may need to quarantine in managed quarantine hotels (see slide 15).
- Remember to follow the [safer travel guidelines](#), and plan ahead to avoid busy times.
- Speak to their travel insurer.



Student Travel Advice

Advice for students travelling to the UK from overseas (2/3)

Students must follow the law on international travel, which means before they travel they should:

- [Take a coronavirus \(COVID-19\) test](#) and get a negative result 3 days before they travel.
- Complete a passenger locator form detailing where they will quarantine upon arrival.
- [Book and pay for a travel test package](#), which will include Covid-19 tests to be taken on or before day 2 and on or after day 8 of quarantine.
- Be ready to present proof of study documents on arrival to the UK.
- British or Irish nationals, or third country nationals with residence rights in the UK, who have been in or passed through a [red-list country](#) in the 10 days before their arrival **will need to quarantine in a [managed quarantine hotel](#)**, unless they are [exempt](#).



Student Travel Advice

Advice for students travelling to the UK from overseas (3/3)

- Third country nationals with residence rights include those with student entry clearance (i.e. student visa), those with EUSS leave, and those with biometric residence permits, among others. If an individual **does not** have residence rights, they **cannot** travel to the UK if they've visited or passed through a 'red-list country' in the last 10 days.
- Even those who have not been in or through a 'red list' country **will need to [quarantine in their own accommodation](#)** for 10 days if they are travelling to the UK, unless they '[test to release](#)' and receive a negative test result.
- **Everyone must [book and pay for a travel test package](#)**, which will include Covid-19 tests to be taken on or before day 2 and on or after day 8 of their quarantine.
- Travel advice may change while individuals are overseas. Everyone intending to travel to the UK is advised to regularly check all relevant guidance pages for www.gov.uk/coronavirus for updates.



Student Travel Advice

Travel advice for students currently in the UK travelling abroad

- Foreign nationals resident in England, including international students, are subject to the current 'stay at home' regulations.
- International students should remain at their term time accommodation and should not leave it to travel within the UK or abroad, for either short term trips or holidays. You should only travel for a [legally permitted reason](#).
- If you are travelling abroad:
 - Check www.gov.uk/coronavirus for advice on travelling from the UK.
 - Check the COVID-19 entry requirements for your destination country.
 - Speak to your travel insurer.
 - Check with your carrier for latest developments at your destination.
 - Plan ahead to avoid busy times and routes.



Online Advice and Guidance

Detailed information about students returning to university, Covid-19 testing, and how to travel safely is available on the [Student Guide to Coronavirus](#) page on the Office For Students website or by seeing the [latest government advice for students and higher education providers](#). Wider information about Covid-19 is available at www.gov.uk/coronavirus.

The screenshot shows the Office for Students website. The header is orange with the text 'Coronavirus (COVID-19) - guidance for providers and students'. Below this is a navigation bar with links: Home, Advice and guidance, For students, News, blog and events, Publications, Data and analysis, and Get involved. The main content area is titled 'Student guide to coronavirus' and includes sections for 'Overview', 'Student FAQ', and 'Returning to university in 2021'. A sidebar on the right lists 'Sections in this guide' with links to '1. Overview', '2. Student FAQ', and '3. Returning to university in 2021'. The 'Returning to university in 2021' section provides advice for students returning for the Spring term 2021, mentioning a national lockdown and the need to self-isolate.

The screenshot shows the GOV.UK website. The header is black with the GOV.UK logo and a search bar. The main content area is titled 'Coronavirus (COVID-19)' and includes a 'STAY HOME' button. The page features a 'National lockdown: stay at home' section with text about the virus spreading fast and advice to stay at home. A yellow arrow points to a link 'Find out what the rules are'. Below this is a section titled 'Recent and upcoming changes' with a date 'From 15 February' and text about the 'travel ban list' and self-isolation requirements. A 'Get a test and stay at home' link is also visible.



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Communications Assets

A range of communications assets have been produced to help universities and HE institutions communicate these important Covid-19 messages to their students.

These include:

- Posters
- Social media animations
- Postcards
- Email signatures
- Web banners

These assets are available to download for free [here](#). Assets from the government's Safer Transport Campaign are also available to download [here](#). Please use and share these through your own student-facing channels.



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University Advice Service

Coronavirus (COVID 19) Helpline (1/2)

Public Health England has launched a dedicated advice service, managed by a team of trained NHS Business Services Authority advisors, for universities and higher education providers. The advice service is an optional additional channel of support to provide advice to university coronavirus leads and management teams on the action to take in response to a positive case of coronavirus among staff and students who live in halls of residence, or the wider community in private rented or family accommodation. Advisors can work through a risk assessment to identify close contacts and then inform you what action is needed based on the latest public health advice.

University coronavirus leads and management teams can access the advice service by calling:

0800 046 8687 (option 2)

Monday to Friday – 08:00 to 18:00 and weekends – 10:00 to 16:00



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University Advice Service

Coronavirus (COVID 19) Helpline (2/2)

When calling the advice service, the coronavirus lead should try to have the following information to hand:

- The details of the organisation, including postcode where relevant.
- The date of onset of the symptoms and the test for the confirmed case so that the infectious period can be identified.
- If the confirmed case is a student, information about their accommodation and details of their university course so that contacts can be identified.
- If the confirmed case is a member of staff, information about their role and the times they may have come into contact with others in the university setting so that contacts can be identified.



For more information

**If you have any questions regarding this toolkit,
or require any more information,
please email:**

universities.comms@education.gov.uk



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