

Dear student

I hope this email finds you safe and well.

Further to my email last week, I wanted to give you some more information about arrangements for the end of term, and about the possibility of offering voluntary Covid-19 tests for students and staff who do not have coronavirus symptoms.

Plans for the end of term

As I mentioned in my [email](#) last week, for the majority of courses all education activities should be online from 9 December until the end of term. Your School/Institute will let you know when your last in-person activity is timetabled for. If you live away from home during term-time and are looking to travel home, please aim to travel around this time to reduce the risk of you possibly needing to self-isolate in your term-time accommodation due to Covid-19 over the Christmas period. However, as I mentioned previously, it is your choice when you travel provided you follow all [Government guidance](#) that is in force at the time.

Our University campuses will be open as normal until 18 December, including our research facilities, with some facilities remaining open throughout the holiday period.

Covid-19 tests for students and staff who do not have coronavirus symptoms

Last week, the Government announced a scheme to make voluntary Covid-19 testing available to students and staff at some universities from early December to the end of the semester. As long as we receive the promised testing supplies from Government, we will be taking part in this scheme, as the opportunity to be tested could provide some reassurance to students and staff (at the time of the test) who are looking to visit friends and relatives over the Christmas period.

Please note that these tests will be for students and staff who do not have any coronavirus symptoms. If you have [symptoms](#), you should visit an [NHS Covid-19 testing facility or arrange for a postal test](#) as soon as possible. You must not attend the on-campus testing facilities if you have any coronavirus symptoms, as this would put other students and staff at significant risk.

This voluntary testing will be particularly aimed at students living on our campuses, and students and staff who travel regularly to our campuses. We will be setting up testing sites on three of our campuses at Mile End, Whitechapel and Charterhouse Square. We will be sending further information on the testing shortly, including how to book a test. Please note that taking part is entirely voluntary; you will not have to be tested if you do not want to.

Support for students over the Christmas break

If you live near our campuses or are planning to stay in our accommodation over the holiday period, please note that Queen Mary will be open throughout the period and you are very welcome to stay, and to come onto our campuses to use the facilities available. Our facilities will be open as normal until 18 December. After that, bookable study space will continue to be available every day and other University-run campus facilities, including our Mile End Library and catering outlets, will be open at specific times. The Curve, for example, will be open up to 23 December, and will reopen on 28 December. We are currently finalising opening hours for all our facilities and will be publishing them shortly.

I realise whilst we live with these greater restrictions, the opportunity for socialising outside your household in person is limited. We are working with our Students' Union to develop a [calendar of social activities](#) from 9 December through the holiday period and into next semester, which we will modify as needed in the light of Government guidance once this period of greater restrictions end.

Living with these greater restrictions is very difficult. Remember we are there to [support](#) you. Our full range of wellbeing services remain available through to 18 December. For those of you living on campus, our residences team will be available for you throughout the holiday period and for all students, support is available for those who need it from our estates teams.

Plans for next semester

We are looking forward to welcoming you back in [January](#) and offering you a blended education, similar to this semester, with a mix of online and in-person activities. Please aim to join us back on our campuses in January, if you are able to travel safely. If you can't travel, you should be able to continue to follow your course online. Your School or Institute will inform you about in-person activities. This will also include any in-person activities that are critical to your course.

I will write to you again next week, or earlier if there are significant developments. In the meantime, please do look after yourselves and each other and stay safe.

Best wishes

Colin

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