

Dear student,

I hope this email finds you well and that you have had a restful summer break.

We are very much looking forward to seeing you back, and to welcoming our new students, in the coming couple of weeks. This has been an incredibly difficult six months for everyone. My heart goes out to any of you who have been particularly affected by the pandemic – by illness, job losses, feelings of isolation or worse. All of us at Queen Mary are looking forward to seeing you again and getting back to doing what we do best: providing you with a world-class education led by some of the leading academics in their fields.

As you know, the continuing Covid-19 pandemic and ongoing travel restrictions means that not all of you will be able to join us on campus for the start of the year. For those of you who can join us, we look forward to welcoming you in person. Wherever you begin this academic year, we are ensuring that you will have full access to your education through a blended offering that has world-class online learning as a golden thread throughout.

For those of you who are able to join us on our campuses, in addition to the online offering there is an exciting array of Covid-safe educational, social and sporting activities awaiting you. You will be able to enjoy the full University experience you expect and deserve: all our social facilities, including our cafes, sports and other social spaces will be open. We are of course ensuring that our premises and activities follow latest government guidance and that we are COVID-secure. We have spent the summer re-configuring our campuses to ensure that we can all maintain social distancing and the hygiene standards necessary to mitigate the risk of coronavirus.

When you arrive on our campuses, you will be given two washable face coverings and some hand sanitiser. You will see lots of information about social distancing, hygiene and other guidance and instructions, including our [‘six steps to keep Queen Mary COVID-Secure’](#). Please follow these steps along with the additional measures that are in place for specific spaces, including library and study spaces, teaching rooms, cafes, and other communal areas.

The use of face coverings is one of the more visible ways of helping keep our communities safe. We advise students and staff to wear a face covering in all common indoor circulation spaces such as corridors, stairwells, toilets and lifts and in other inside areas where 2 metres social distancing cannot be maintained, if it is reasonably practical to do so. There is no need to wear face coverings on campus when sitting to study in designated study areas, sitting to listen to a seminar/lecture in a designated lecture theatre or teaching room, or in our designated canteens, unless advised to do so. You won’t need to wear a face covering whilst walking outside on our campuses, unless you want to.

Finally in relation to face coverings, some of us will have legitimate reasons for not wearing a face covering. We are offering an optional lanyard to help people identify themselves as exempt from a face covering. I would ask us all to be mindful and respectful of people who are exempt from wearing face coverings.

There is lots more information about our response to coronavirus, and what to expect when you return to our campuses, on our website. I am very excited that term is nearly upon us, and look forward to seeing you in person very soon.

Best wishes,

Colin

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