

Dear student,

Happy New Year! I hope this email finds you safe and well, and that you have had a restful break, although I realise that many of you are preparing for exams and completing coursework. I hope this is going well – remember there are [resources to help you study](#) as well as can be expected in these very challenging circumstances.

I am contacting you now following the Government's announcement yesterday of a new national lockdown. The Government guidance that was issued last week to universities, [which I wrote to you about](#), is still in place, and I have highlighted the key points in this new, latest guidance that relate to universities below. I would like to reassure you that our campuses remain open, including all our research facilities, and our residences, study space and catering outlets, which will remain open and available to any of you who need to use them. The specific points that are relevant to us in the new guidance issues last night include:

### **Education and student support**

Education will now be online for most subject areas until at least mid-February. Your teaching will start on the dates planned, but sessions will now all be online for most subject areas.

Subject areas that can start in-person teaching are mostly in our Faculty of Medicine and Dentistry, and in these areas Institutes either already have, or will shortly, communicate with their students directly. If you have not heard, or do not hear shortly, from your School or Institute, you should assume your education will be online until at least mid-February.

I realise this is disappointing news. I know that much as you have been enjoying your online education, many of you also really enjoy in-person educational activities and I am very sorry we have had to now temporarily move these activities online. If you are worried or anxious, about your education or anything else, remember we are here to support you. Have a look at our [wellbeing services](#), including our [mental health support](#), and remember there is also support available to you via your School or Institute, including via your Advisor. As well as scheduled Advising sessions, remember office hours are available for all students if you would like to virtually drop in on your Advisor.

### **Study space and campus facilities**

Our residences, study spaces and catering outlets are open and available for students who need to use them. If you have adequate study space, IT facilities and internet where you are, under the new lockdown guidance you should now avoid travelling where possible. However, I know many of you do not have access to adequate facilities and need to use the facilities we have on our campuses. If that is the case, or you feel that you need more support, you can travel onto our campuses under the new guidance and you are very welcome to do so.

### **Postgraduate research students**

Postgraduate research students, similar to our staff who are undertaking research, can come on to our campuses to access our laboratories or other research facilities if they need to do so to undertake their research. However, if it is possible to do your research from where you are, you should avoid travelling. Please contact your supervisor, School or Institute if you have any questions.

### **Covid-19 lateral flow testing**

Lateral flow testing is available for all students and staff on our campuses. If you are living on our campuses, or are on a course or placement that is starting in-person teaching, or are using campus facilities, please [book on our website](#) if you would like to be tested. Please note this form of testing is for people who do not have Covid-19 symptoms. If you have symptoms, please [book a test via the NHS](#).

Before I finish, I wanted to highlight the amazing work of many of our students and staff who have volunteered to help in the fight against Covid-19. I heard just yesterday about over 200 of our medical students who volunteered to work as health care assistants in our hospitals on Christmas Eve. I know also that many of our clinical staff are also now volunteering in the NHS. These stories, and other numerous stories of the way our staff and students are helping each other and our communities, make me and everyone else so proud to be part of our University.

Please do continue to look after yourselves and each other, and stay safe. I will write to you again next week with a further update, or earlier if necessary.

Best wishes,

Colin

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