

Dear student,

I hope that this email finds you safe and well, and that you are beginning to enjoy the reopening of non-essential retail, gyms, outdoor hospitality and the other activities as part of the Government's Step 2 in the roadmap out of lockdown. It is great to see so many people now meeting up with friends and family, playing team sports, socialising and using all the local hospitality venues.

This is a short update following the Government's announcement yesterday afternoon regarding the date from which all remaining university students on non-practical courses in England can return to some face-to-face education activities inside our University Covid-secure campus premises.

I am very sorry to inform you, that in line with [my message last week](#), the Department for Education confirmed yesterday that face-to-face on campus teaching for students on non-practical courses in England will now be considered as part of Step 3 of the Government's roadmap out of lockdown. This means that we still cannot have face-to-face education within our Covid-secure University buildings, for these students, before 17 May at the earliest.

As I explained last week, this is very disappointing news, and seems at odds with the Government's stated commitment to prioritise education in the lifting of Covid-19 restrictions. I, along with other Vice-Chancellors, have over the past months made the case very strongly to Government for higher education and university student welfare to remain at the top of the priority list, in line with the rest of the education sector. We will continue to make this case strongly.

Although we cannot resume in-person on-campus teaching for all our students, we have always been clear, and remain so, that all students can return to our campuses, irrespective of the course you are studying, if you feel that your wellbeing would be better served by being here. There are [a range of social and sporting activities](#) on offer, and we are working hard with the Students' Union to increase these further within the government guidelines. You can also meet in groups of six outside, including to study, as well as use all the local hospitality venues in line with government guidance. Do come and get involved in the sport and entertainment activities on campus as well as use all the study facilities, including our marquees, which are available!

Keeping safe on and off our campuses

I am very glad to tell you that we continue to have very few cases of Covid-19 in our communities. It is of course important that we all continue to keep safe on and off our campuses. If you are on our campuses please follow our [Covid Code](#), and continue to [book a Covid-19 test](#) at one of our centres twice a week.

Taking public transport is a necessity for many of you and may also be a concern. I would therefore like to share [the latest study \[pdf\]](#) by Transport for London (TfL). Established to investigate whether coronavirus could be detected in the TfL network of stations, underground trains and buses between September and December 2020, the study took frequent samples of air and at touch points, and found that all sample results were negative. The authors considered this a reflection of the enhanced cleaning approaches adopted by TfL, the widespread wearing of face coverings and lower passenger numbers on the network. Up-to-date information about the safety of public transport is can be found [on the TfL website](#).

I know many of you will be facing assessments soon: please do look after yourselves as you study; it is really important to take breaks, meet up with friends and exercise if you can. I will write to you again soon.

Best wishes,

Colin

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