Dear students,

We are all living through incredibly difficult times with Covid-19 and the impact it is having on every part of daily life. We are writing to you together as your Students' Union and University for two reasons. First of all, we want to thank you for the resilience and flexibility you continue to show as we all adapt to new ways of living, studying and working. Secondly, we want to reiterate the most important things you need to know and do to help ensure we all remain as safe as possible.

Follow the Covid Code

The safety of students and staff on our campus is our top priority. The University and the Students' Union are working together to keep us all as safe as possible, but everyone also has an individual responsibility to keep each other safe. It is absolutely vital for all of us to follow the University's Covid Code and national guidelines from the Government at all times – both on and off campus.

Keep safe on campus

The University and the Students' Union have worked hard to make sure that all our campus buildings and facilities are operating in Covid-secure ways, so that students can enjoy a positive campus experience. For these facilities to remain open, we must all follow the instructions that ensure these spaces remain Covid-secure. That includes maintaining social distancing, sanitising your hands regularly, using face coverings and following one-way systems. Full details about how to behave responsibly on campus are available on a new dedicated section of the University website.

Keep safe off campus

Whether you live on campus, off campus or commute, you will be spending time out in our local communities. Here you must ensure you're following the local and national guidelines, including the recently announced local Covid alert levels. London is now classified as being on high alert, meaning that different households can no longer mix together indoors. In light of this, students living in Queen Mary accommodation are no longer permitted to have guests. We will keep you updated on the alert level and what it means for our campuses but you should also follow local guidelines and take them into account when planning any visits and trips during breaks.

Contain the spread

The number of staff and students with confirmed, active cases of Covid-19 is updated daily on the University website. Fortunately, only a small number of our students have been confirmed with Covid-19 so far and the symptoms for the vast majority of people have been very mild. Nevertheless, we treat every case very seriously, ensuring that isolation measures are implemented and that track and trace procedures are effective.

If you are suffering Covid-19 symptoms it is important that you immediately:

- isolate yourself from other students and staff. If you need to travel to do so, wear a mask, wash your hands regularly and avoid interacting with anyone. Anyone in your household should also come home and start isolating immediately.
- if on a Queen Mary campus, call 0207 882 3333 for assistance
- book a Covid-19 test by calling 119 or visiting the NHS website
- alert the University via studenthealth@qmul.ac.uk

Once notified, the University will ask you to complete a track and trace form as soon as possible. If needed, the University will also draw from a range of other information and data to identify any staff and students that may have had close contact with you. All students who need to self-isolate should do so for the full period required, as advised by the University, public health authority or in accordance with national guidelines. Students isolating on campus can be assured of full support in making sure that all of their requirements are met, including help with shopping, extra cleaning and any other welfare requirements.

It is absolutely vital that anyone contacted as a result of this follows the guidance they are given and isolates appropriately. We recognise that this is not easy, but help is on hand for all students – whether isolating or not – who are struggling with stress and anxiety. You can access a range of support services through the University's Wellbeing pages and on the Students' Union Advice and Support page. The University's Financial Assistance Fund is also available for students facing financial hardship.

Help us stop unsafe behaviour

All efforts are being made to help ensure your safety, including clear guidance on how to behave around campus and an increased security presence. Residences staff are also working hard to ensure that all students that need to isolate have the support and guidance they need to do so. All students can be reassured that the University and the Students' Union take the need to act responsibly very seriously and will act together to take the strongest possible action in response to behaviour that puts our community at risk. This includes sanctions against students who do not self-isolate when they have been requested to do so.

We recognise that despite this, not everyone will behave in a Covid-secure way all the time and that it can be difficult to call out that behaviour when you see it. Please be reassured that the University has processes in place to monitor the way in which safety guidelines are being adhered to. We have also put in place a way for you to alert us to any concerns you have about activity which breaks safety guidelines – whether that's the University own guidance or national and local requirements. If you see anything that doesn't look Covid-secure, or feel unsafe at any time, please let the University know by emailing studenthealth@qmul.ac.uk. If you have a concern about activity on campus that you feel needs to be urgently addressed, you can also call for help at any time on 0207 882 3333. All reports will be handled sensitively and with anonymity for the people making them.

Keep up to date

Please visit qmul.ac.uk/coronavirus regularly to keep up to date with the latest information and guidance. And if you have any questions or concerns, you can contact our dedicated coronavirus helpline on 0800 0966 263 or coronavirus@qmul.ac.uk.

Best wishes,

Stephanie and Shamima

Professor Stephanie Marshall   **Shamima Akter**

Vice-Principal (Education)   President
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