

Covid-19 Communications Toolkit

For Universities and Higher Education Institutions in England

14 April 2021



Department
for Education



Test and Trace

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Covid-19 Communications Toolkit

Introduction

The Government have announced that all remaining students will be able to return to face-to-face teaching from the 17 May 2021 at the earliest, alongside Step 3 of the Government's Roadmap.

This toolkit has been produced to support communications professionals in universities and higher education institutions across England share this message, along with essential Covid-19 advice to help prevent the spread of coronavirus. It contains key messages to help students travel back to university safely, information about rapid asymptomatic Covid-19 testing when back on campus, and advice for those students who will continue to access their course online.

It also contains links to the latest Covid-19 information online and a suite of communications assets to download and use in your own student-facing channels. Please use this information to ensure that students are fully aware of the latest Covid-19 guidance and to help amplify these messages to a wide student audience.

Thank you.



Returning to University

Key messages for students due to return to face-to-face learning from 17 May 2021.



HM Government

Covid-19 testing for all students

Around 1 in 3 people with Covid-19 have no symptoms, so anyone using university facilities or back at their student home should get tested twice a week.

NHS
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FREE, RAPID
COVID-19 TESTS



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Returning to University

Guidance for students returning to campus

- To reduce the risk of Covid-19 transmission there has been a staggered return to university this spring. **From Monday 17 May at the earliest**, all students will be able to return to in-person teaching.
- Until then, these students should **stay where they are** and continue to study online. This is to help to reduce transmission of Covid-19. Your university will let you know exactly when your face-to-face teaching will resume.
- Students returning to face-to-face education after negative tests must still exercise caution and follow national guidance on social distancing, wearing face coverings and hand hygiene. It's important to take this next step safely.
- If you need to return earlier or need any other support, let your university know so they can help.



Student Covid-19 Testing

Covid-19 testing messages for students who are back on campus, and why it is important that all students get regular Covid-19 tests.

HM Government

NHS
Test and Trace

Covid-19 testing for all students

Around 1 in 3 people with Covid-19 have no symptoms, so anyone using university facilities or back at their student home should get tested twice a week.

**FREE, RAPID
COVID-19 TESTS**



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Student Covid-19 Testing

For students planning to return to campus

- Students are encouraged to test before they travel back to university, either through their local community testing programme or by [ordering a test online](#).
- In May 2021 home test kits will become available to universities to supply to their staff and students as appropriate. Home test kits are also available for students to order online or through the 119 testing hotline number.
- On returning to university, students should take three tests at an on-site testing facility (3-4 days apart). They should then test twice a week, either using home test kits or at an on-site facility. As well as offering home test kits to staff and students, universities are encouraged to retain asymptomatic test sites near university facilities (libraries, lecture halls, large halls of residence etc) to make it as easy as possible for students to access regular tests, although some students at smaller HE providers may only be offered home test kits.
- Following a positive LFD test result, students and staff should self-isolate immediately and take a follow-up polymerase chain reaction (PCR) [test](#) as soon as possible. If a student or staff member takes a PCR test within 2 days of the LFD test and receives a negative result, they and their household can stop self-isolating. Students who receive a positive PCR test are required to self-isolate immediately on the day of the test and for at least the following ten full days along with their household contacts. Students that receive a positive LFD test and do not access a PCR test should also isolate for 10 days.



Student Covid-19 Testing

For students back on campus

- Higher Education providers will continue to offer twice weekly rapid asymptomatic testing to all students residing in their term-time accommodation, or accessing university facilities.
- Students should test twice a week, either using home test kits or at an on-site facility.
- Following a positive LFD test result, students and staff should self-isolate immediately and take a follow-up [polymerase chain reaction \(PCR\) test](#) as soon as possible. If a student or staff member takes a PCR test within 2 days of the LFD test and receives a negative result, they and their household can stop self-isolating. Students who receive a positive PCR test are required to self-isolate immediately on the day of the test and for at least the following ten full days along with their household contacts. Students that receive a positive LFD test and do not access a PCR test should also isolate for 10 days.
- Universities should strongly encourage all students and staff to participate in the testing programme and, when testing at home, to report their results, whether positive, negative or void
- If you are a student who has arrived from overseas and have completed a period of quarantine – either in a hotel or in their own accommodation – it is important that you engage in regular asymptomatic testing upon return to your university or higher education provider.



Student Covid-19 Testing

Why testing is important

- About 1 in 3 people with Covid-19 do not have any symptoms. LFD tests can detect the virus in people without symptoms and prevent them unknowingly passing it on to others.
- By identifying more people with the virus we can better mitigate the transmission of Covid-19 which will help protect your friends and lecturers, and will allow your university experience to improve more quickly and your education to continue uninterrupted.
- Lots of people taking LFD tests allows us to detect positive cases, take quick action to prevent the spread of coronavirus and break chains of transmission.
- LFDs have been through a rigorous validation programme. [Evaluations from Public Health England and the University of Oxford](#) show these tests are accurate and sensitive enough to be used in universities.
- Antigen LFD tests are highly specific, meaning that only a small proportion of people who do not have coronavirus will receive a positive result.
- More information about [understanding lateral flow antigen testing for people without symptoms](#) is available on www.gov.uk/coronavirus.



Student Travel Advice

Key travel messages for students

HM Government

NHS

SAFER TRAVEL GUIDANCE

From 29 March, minimise travel where possible.
If you need to travel:

- 
Plan your journey
- 
Regularly wash or sanitise your hands
- 
Wear a face covering, unless exempt
- 
Keep your distance from others where possible



Student Travel Advice

Students should follow the government's guidance on how to travel safely:

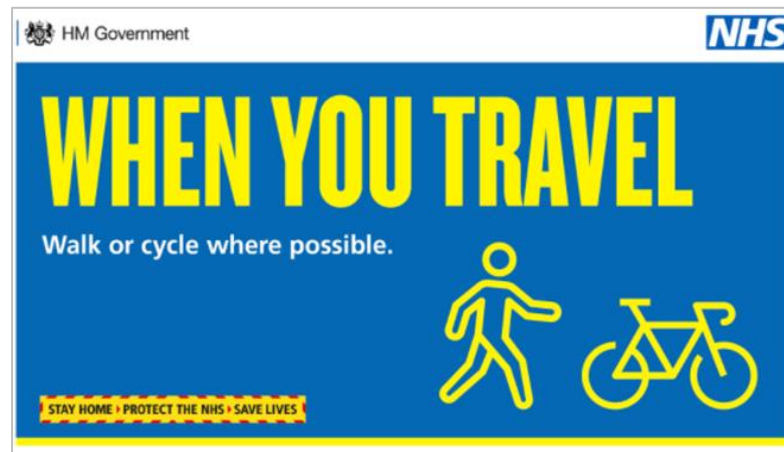
- No matter how you travel, you should plan ahead, and avoid busy times and routes where possible.
- Walk or cycle where possible.
- If using public transport, you should regularly sanitise your hands, wear a face covering unless you are exempt, and keep your distance where possible.
- It is a legal requirement that, unless exempt, you must wear a face covering on public transport and inside transport hubs, e.g. train stations. You could be fined £200 minimum if you do not comply.
- If travelling by car, you should avoid sharing a car with anyone outside of your household or support bubble. If this isn't possible, you should open the windows, wear a face covering unless exempt, and leave seats free to social distance.



Student Travel Advice

How to travel safely if you test positive for Covid-19

- Students are encouraged to test before they travel back to university, either through their local [community testing](#) programme or by [ordering a test online](#).
- If you know you are going to be tested, before you leave consider how you will travel back home in a way that protects others should you test positive.
- If possible, walk, cycle or drive in a private vehicle alone.
- If students have concerns about travel arrangements should they test positive, they should discuss this with their college or university.



Student Travel Advice

Checklist and messages for providers planning to welcome international students / students arriving in the UK from overseas (1/3)

It is **vital** that international students arriving in the UK have followed the correct arrival procedure. **Failure to do so may result in possible delays or fines. In some instances, students may be denied entry at the border.**

There are reports that some students arriving from overseas mistakenly think their university's asymptomatic testing process exempts them from having to book and pay for a travel test package. **This is not the case**, and it is important that universities help to get the right information to their international students before they make arrangements to travel to the UK.

The following checklist can be used to communicate key actions that students should take.



Student Travel Advice

Checklist and messages for providers planning to welcome international students / students arriving in the UK from overseas (2/3)

Students must follow the law on international travel. If you are a student coming to the UK, BEFORE you travel (regardless of where from) you must:

- **[Take a coronavirus \(COVID-19\) test](#)** and get a negative result within 3 days of your travel. **You could face a fine of £500 if you can not provide proof of a negative test.**
- Self-isolate for 10 days on arrival, and pre-book/pre-arrange your accommodation accordingly:
 - **If you have travelled** from or through a [red list](#) country 10 days before arrival, [you must quarantine in a managed quarantine hotel](#). This applies to students who are British or Irish nationals, or third country nationals with residence rights in the UK, e.g. international students. **You must pre-book your quarantine hotel in advance, or you could face a fine of up to £4,000.**
 - Or; **If you have not travelled** from or through a [red list](#) country, you must [quarantine in your own accommodation](#) for 10 days.



Student Travel Advice

Checklist and messages for providers planning to welcome international students / students arriving in the UK from overseas (3/3)

- Complete a passenger locator form **detailing where you will quarantine** upon arrival.
- [Pre-book and pay for a travel test package](#), which will include Covid-19 tests to be taken on or before day 2 and on or after day 8 of quarantine. **Testing provided by universities will not cover this.** Students **must** pre-book the travel test package. If they do not take the day 2 and day 8 tests, they could face a fine of £2,000.
- Be ready to present proof of study documents on arrival to the UK.
- Be aware that travel advice may change, so regularly check all relevant guidance pages for the [latest updates](#) prior to travelling.
- Speak to your travel insurer to understand the implications of changing your travel date.



Student Travel Advice

Arriving in England and travelling on to other countries in the UK

If students are travelling to any of the Devolved Administrations (DA) directly (Scotland, Wales or Northern Ireland), they should be aware that there may be different rules in place to those in England.

Students must check what they will need to do if they are travelling to:

- [Scotland](#)
- [Wales](#)
- [Northern Ireland](#)

If students have not transited through one of the red-list countries in the 10 days before arriving in England and are getting an onward **connecting flight to Scotland, Wales or Northern Ireland then they are not required to self-isolate on arrival in England.**



Student Travel Advice

Arriving in England and travelling on to other countries in the UK

Travellers should, however, self-isolate immediately on arrival at their destination in Scotland, Wales or Northern Ireland.

If students have transited through one of the red-list countries in the 10 days before arriving in England, they will be required to [quarantine in a managed quarantine hotel](#) on arrival in England for 10 days. Managed quarantine hotels can be booked [here](#).

Anyone who travels via England, whether they have been through a red-list country or not, should make sure they have [booked](#) their pre-departure test, [completed their passenger locator form](#) and [booked](#) their travel test package as per the steps highlighted above.

International travel social media animation

The Department for Transport have produced a short animated explainer for international arrivals. This can be downloaded from their [extranet site](#).



Online Advice and Guidance

Detailed information about students returning to university, Covid-19 testing, and how to travel safely is available on the [Student Guide to Coronavirus](#) page on the Office For Students website or by seeing the [latest government advice for students and higher education providers](#). Wider information about Covid-19 is available at www.gov.uk/coronavirus.

The screenshot shows the Office for Students website. The main heading is "Student guide to coronavirus". Under "Sections in this guide", "3. Returning to university in 2021" is highlighted. Below this, there is a section titled "Returning to university in 2021" with a sub-heading "Latest guidance" and a list of bullet points. A "Coronavirus" section with "Publications and letters" is also visible.

The screenshot shows the GOV.UK website. The main heading is "Coronavirus (COVID-19)". Below this, there are icons for "Hands", "Face", "Space", and "Fresh air". A section titled "Coronavirus restrictions remain in place across the country. In England:" contains a list of bullet points. A "Find out the rules on what you can and cannot do" link is also present.



Communications Assets

A range of communications assets have been produced to help universities and HE institutions communicate these important Covid-19 messages to their students.

These include:

- Posters
- Social media animations
- Postcards
- Email signatures
- Web banners

These assets are available to download for free [here](#). Assets from the government's Safer Transport Campaign are also available to download [here](#). Please use and share these through your own student-facing channels.



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Covid-19 testing for all students

Around 1 in 3 people with Covid-19 have no symptoms, so anyone using university facilities or back at their student home should get tested twice a week.

Help to protect your friends and those closest to you.

Rapid tests are easy and free with results in around 30 minutes.

Let's fight Covid-19 together.

FREE, RAPID
COVID-19 TESTS

UNIVERSITY
LOGO

TESTING AVAILABLE NOW

URL/PHONE NUMBER



Test and Trace

University Advice Service

Coronavirus (COVID 19) Helpline (1/2)

Public Health England has launched a dedicated advice service, managed by a team of trained NHS Business Services Authority advisors, for universities and higher education providers. The advice service is an optional additional channel of support to provide advice to university coronavirus leads and management teams on the action to take in response to a positive case of coronavirus among staff and students who live in halls of residence, or the wider community in private rented or family accommodation. Advisors can work through a risk assessment to identify close contacts and then inform you what action is needed based on the latest public health advice.

University coronavirus leads and management teams can access the advice service by calling:

0800 046 8687 (option 2)

Monday to Friday – 08:00 to 18:00 and weekends – 10:00 to 16:00



University Advice Service

Coronavirus (COVID 19) Helpline (2/2)

When calling the advice service, the coronavirus lead should try to have the following information to hand:

- The details of the organisation, including postcode where relevant.
- The date of onset of the symptoms and the test for the confirmed case so that the infectious period can be identified.
- If the confirmed case is a student, information about their accommodation and details of their university course so that contacts can be identified.
- If the confirmed case is a member of staff, information about their role and the times they may have come into contact with others in the university setting so that contacts can be identified.



For more information

**If you have any questions regarding this toolkit,
or require any more information,
please email:**

universities.comms@education.gov.uk

