

Dear Students,

We are writing as promised to update you on the latest advice on the recent changes proposed by the Government. Firstly, we seek to reassure you that all teaching remains in the current format with both face-to-face and online delivery until the periods outlined below. We want you to know that all staff are working tirelessly to ensure the best possible learning experience in these most difficult of times.

Teaching arrangements from December 9th onward

You will have seen that we have been asked to move all teaching online from Wednesday 9th December onward. For clarity that means that Tuesday the 8th December will be the last possible date for face-to-face teaching on campus. Your department is currently making plans to implement these changes, and you will receive further communications on the changes to teaching patterns after that date from your department. This will also include information regarding arrangements for your assessments.

Once teaching has gone fully online, you will have the choice of either returning to your home address or continuing to study on the campus. If you wish to minimise the chances of having to self-isolate away from your parental home, the Government advice is to travel home as soon after the 8th as possible. You are not obligated to do so if you do not wish to, though. You are being offered the choice whether you would wish to remain at the University or go home as soon as possible after that date.

The University is **not closing** on the 9th December and our Learning Resource Centres (LRC) remain available for use. LRC opening hours are available through this link. <https://help.chi.ac.uk/opening>

Information for those wishing to remain studying or living on campus beyond the 8th December

Our accommodation and main catering outlets will also remain open. There are always some students, some of whom are from overseas, who regularly stay with us over Christmas. Therefore, as normal we shall also continue to offer this service to those who would like to remain in residences all the way through the festive season.

However, if you are considering continuing to stay and study on campus, please make yourself familiar with the latest Office for Students (OfS) guidance which does state:

“Anyone who remains at university after 9 December will run the risk of having to undertake a period of isolation of up to 14 days at university, if they contracted Coronavirus (COVID-19) or were identified as a contact of someone who had, and would therefore be at risk of not being able to travel home for the end of term break. We therefore ask higher education providers to help reiterate this message so that students can make an informed choice.”

The full advice is available through the OfS website - <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/higher-education-reopening-buildings-and-campuses/student-movement-and-plans-for-the-end-of-autumn-2020-term>

Covid-19 Testing

You may have read about the Government offering rapid asymptomatic testing to all universities. We are currently in negotiation with the Department of Health and Social Care over the possibility of offering this service. However, there are significant legal, health and safety concerns with the proposals that need to be worked through and we are unlikely to offer asymptomatic testing at this point.

In the meantime, should you have any concern that you are suffering from any Covid-19 symptoms there are bookable walk-in test centres adjacent to both campuses. These centres have very good availability at the time of writing. In addition, home-tests are available for those with symptoms. These tests can all be booked through the government website - <https://www.gov.uk/get-coronavirus-test>

Your health and safety remains our top priority.

Your plans for the Christmas period

A survey will be sent to those students staying in university managed accommodation, and this will ask you to confirm when you will be away from the University over the Christmas period. This helps us to plan the appropriate level of service during the coming weeks. Therefore, we would really appreciate you spending five minutes to complete this.

January 2021 onward – Information on teaching and assessment period

We are intending on resuming our teaching timetable as normal within the New Year. In some cases, your academic area may need to ask you to return to campus in the second half of January, and before the start of semester two, in order to complete specific performance and practice-based assessment tasks. They will be in touch with you shortly if this is the case.

We hope that you find this message clear and supportive. Our principal goal continues to be delivering a high-quality, personalised and accessible experience of university life for all of our students and we will carry on doing our utmost to support you throughout this challenging time.

We wish you a good and successful rest of the semester and - when it arrives - festive season.

With very best wishes

Professor Jane Longmore, Vice-Chancellor
Professor Simeon Keates, Deputy Vice-Chancellor
Dr Mark Mason, Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Student Experience)