

Dear Students,

The end of an extraordinarily turbulent year is finally here, but, as we prepare to depart for Christmas, I wanted to thank you personally for keeping our University safe across 2020. The circumstances we've faced together have been incredibly challenging, and it's thanks to your collective efforts to closely follow COVID guidance that we've kept cases low across our campuses.

Here I outline our plans for (1) our final weeks on campus, (2) the Christmas holiday period, and (3) our return in January 2021:

1. Final weeks of semester/opening hours

(a) LRC and SIZ

Teaching will end on Friday 18th December but will move online from 9th December. During the festive period, the LRCs on both Chichester and Bognor Regis campuses will be open on:

- Monday 14th Dec to Thursday 17th Dec: 08:00 to 22:00
- Friday 18th Dec: 08:00 to 20:00
- Saturday 19th and Sunday 20th Dec: 10:00 to 16:00
- Monday 21st Dec to Sunday 3rd Jan: Closed
- Monday 4th January: LRCs reopen at 08:00

The book-return drop boxes will remain open 24/7. While the LRCs will be closed over the holiday, online resources are available with access to online journals, databases, and e-books.

Our click and collect service will be suspended on Thursday 17th Dec until Monday 4th Jan, however, the library chat service (on the [Library Moodle page](#)) will be available throughout the holiday period. For help returning books email leo@chi.ac.uk, or find the SIZ and LRC opening hours at help.chi.ac.uk/opening.

(b) Catering and food/drink

Catering for students on catered-for packages will continue until Friday 18th Dec, and will restart on Monday 11th Jan. Meanwhile, Otters restaurants and Costa on both Chichester and Bognor Regis campuses will be available until Friday 18th Dec.

(c) Students' Union

The Zee Bar and Hub are closed and will not re-open until the New Year – we will review our position in January in line with government guidance.

Other essential information:

- **SU activities:** All face-to-face activities are suspended until New Year, when we will review according to government guidance – most clubs and societies are running online activities.
- **SU shop:** The SU shop will close at 4pm on Tuesday 8th Dec, but [the online shop](#) will remain open until midnight on Wednesday 16th Dec, before re-opening in January.
- **Contact:** SU president [Moyin Ekundayo](#), vice-president [Jamel McFarlane](#), and our [SU officers](#) will be available until Saturday 19th Dec, and will return on Monday 4th Jan.

(d) Student Support services

If you're remaining in University accommodation, or living nearby, and you have symptoms or have come into contact with an active case, contact covidreport@chi.ac.uk so that we can advise you across the Christmas break.

- Student Support staff will be checking this inbox daily and will respond appropriately.
- If you're affected by Covid-19 while at your non-University address, please engage with your local and national support services.

If you're remaining in University accommodation, or living nearby, we recommend you maintain a reasonable reserve of provisions (i.e. a five-day supply) should anyone in your household be impacted by Covid across the break.

- Our online webpage on how to report possible cases and where to find support [is available here](#).
- We've also created a new webpage with answers to frequently asked questions (including available support and getting a test before going home) [which is available here](#).
 - It also contains guidance for students travelling overseas for the break.

Other support services: The autoreply for the wellbeing@chi.ac.uk email address contains links on how to get support in an emergency and out-of-semester time.

- Emails will be reviewed daily to support students remaining on campus and in our nearby community.
- The expectation is that, where possible, students will draw upon external support from family, friends, and the NHS/GPs between Monday 18th Dec and Monday 4th Jan.

2. End of term/getting home safely

(a) Collection and loading your belongings into vehicles

For those living in halls of residence, we want to make it easy for you to load your belongings into vehicles – whether these are your own, or belong to your family or friends. While your guests are allowed onto campus, **please can only you (and your flatmates) enter your accommodation blocks** to limit any risk of infection.

Please observe good hand hygiene and social distancing when travelling to and from the car. You'll probably find that you won't actually take too much home, as the Christmas break is relatively short, but feel assured that security will be on-site over the break.

(b) Train disruption (railway engineering works)

Railway engineering works are planned on major routes across the South of England – including up to London – from Wednesday 23 Dec until Monday 4 Jan. There's more info on [the National Rail website here](#).

(c) Security

Our security staff will be available throughout the holiday period at all four of our halls-of-residences: Bishop Otter campus, Bognor Regis campus, Stockbridge, and Fishbourne.

(d) Testing

We are not offering the asymptomatic lateral flow testing at the University just yet, but we are aiming to do so in January. To reassure you, the current number of active cases across the University suggests we are a low risk environment, as we have just three active cases currently self-isolating in a community of 6,500 staff and students. If you are concerned about symptoms at any time, though, please remember that we do have PCR testing stations available at both campuses.

This email follows our prior communication, sent in mid-November, which further explained our decision not to offer lateral flow testing at the present time. This is a voluntary exercise for universities and we therefore considered the level of risk in deciding whether to go ahead with asymptomatic testing at that stage. The government has modified its advice and support for smaller universities allowing us to proceed to offer testing in the new year.

3. Start of the spring semester (2021)

Please **check your University e-mails** regularly across the Christmas holiday to keep in touch with your tutors and for the latest guidance from them on when you should return to the university.

Yesterday, we received a letter from Michelle Donelan MP (Minister of State for Universities) which outlined the government's plans for students to return to university in the new year. It suggests:

- UK universities should stagger their start date
 - This is unlikely to greatly affect the University of Chichester academic calendar as it is currently structured.
- Students should be tested upon their return to campus
 - The letter suggests that this can be achieved through either lateral flow or different testing types (e.g. PCR).
 - As we have two PCR test sites on or adjacent to our Chichester and Bognor campuses, we are exploring both options at present.

And finally...

With a vaccine on the horizon, it won't be long until our entire community will be able to return to normality and enjoy a Covid-free existence. In the meantime, I and the University's senior team wish you a very Happy Christmas.

Professor Jane Longmore Vice-Chancellor