



Michelle Donelan MP
Minister of State for Universities

Sanctuary Buildings 20 Great Smith Street Westminster London SW1P 3BT
tel: 0370 000 2288 www.education.gov.uk/help/contactus

2nd November 2020

Dear students,

I understand the questions that many of you may have following the Prime Minister's announcement on Saturday, outlining the new national restrictions due to come into place on 5 November 2020.

Things have moved quickly as we continue to respond to the pandemic, but I wanted to write to you at the earliest opportunity to explain how these restrictions will affect you and your studies.

We are in the process of finalising guidance setting out what these new restrictions will mean for Higher Education, universities, and students, and this will be available shortly.

This guidance will explain that:

- By keeping universities open, we are prioritising education so that there is no gap in your academic journeys and lives.
- As for everyone under the new national restrictions from 5 November, you should stay in your current home. This means you should not leave your term time address to return to your parents' or carer's home until at least 2 December - and should continue to learn at university for the remainder of this term.
 - The reason we are asking you to remain at your university area and not to travel home before the new restrictions come into place on Thursday is to prevent any further spread of COVID 19 – any movement around the country will risk the lives of our loved ones.
 - I know and appreciate that a number of you may want to be back with your family during this difficult time, but I urge you to stay where you are in order to save lives. I can assure you that I will work with universities to ensure well-being, communications and mental health support are prioritised.

- We as a government recognise the importance of face to face teaching, including for your mental health and wellbeing, and we expect this to continue. Universities have worked hard to make teaching and learning COVID-secure, and we have not seen evidence of increased transmission within these environments. If you have any concerns, please do speak to your university – it is crucial that you and staff members feel safe.
- Your university must ensure the quality of the tuition you receive. If more teaching is moved online, standards must be maintained. This means ensuring that courses provide a high-quality academic experience, students are supported and achieve good outcomes, and standards are protected. We have been very clear about this and have worked with the Office for Students to regularly review the online tuition being provided.
 - If you have any concerns please do speak to your university. If you need to, you can make a formal complaint, and if you are still not happy you can refer your case to the [Office of the Independent Adjudicator](#).
- I know that the current year has been hard, but I want to reassure you that your education, health and wellbeing remain my top priority. Universities are required to provide mental health and pastoral support and this will be available to you in the coming weeks. Please also take a look at the [Student Space](#) platform, which you may find helpful.

I want to thank you again for your hard work and perseverance. I remain committed to helping you to continue your university studies during these unprecedented and challenging times.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Michelle Donelan". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, sweeping flourish at the end.

Michelle Donelan MP
Minister of State for Universities

3 Nov 20

Dear All

Following the Prime Minister's announcement at the weekend I want to update you on how this affects you as a student at Liverpool Hope. You will be aware that Mr Johnson was clear that Universities should remain open over the lockdown period.

We have asked all Heads of School/Departments to review their teaching patterns. I can confirm that the new lockdown will result in only very minor modification to what is already in place. As you know, our default position is that teaching should be online; but there are some specific exceptions to this. I need to be clear that face-to-face teaching continues only where the Head of School or Department has indicated that it is necessary to preserve the integrity of the overall provision. Given the University's extensive COVID-secure related measures, I am confident that the health and safety of students and staff is not being compromised by these relatively few instances of face-to-face teaching. Your School / Department will be in touch to clarify arrangements if they have changed from what you are already expecting.

The University resources such as the library, computer labs, and catering outlets will remain open as they are currently.

We have this morning received a letter from the minister Michelle Donelan which is for your attention. You can read this letter [here](#). The Minister makes it clear that you should remain in your current location until 2 December at the earliest. This is to prevent further transmission of the virus across the country. I would ask that you follow this guidance.

You will have also seen in the [media](#) this morning that Liverpool is to be the first city in the country to pilot city-wide covid testing. This will involve everyone who lives and works in the city being tested and then these tests being repeated on a fortnightly basis. The details of how this will work are still to be published, but I can confirm that the mobile test unit for those with symptoms will remain on site at Hope Park indefinitely. Once we are clear where asymptomatic testing will be available and what the process for attending will be, I will let you know. As I wrote to you on Friday, the reduction in numbers of positive cases and those required to isolate on campus is encouraging but this widespread testing will hopefully help us to identify cases much quicker and to potentially reduce these numbers even further.

I remain grateful to all of you for your care of others and your responsible approach to this difficult situation. Please remember if you need help don't hesitate to ask.

Look after yourselves.

Best wishes
Penny

6 Nov 20

Dear

As always, I thought I would drop you a quick note for Friday. During March when I started writing to you it seemed impossible that there would be another lockdown in November. Anyway here we are once again, looking after each other under a time of restrictions to our lives. I know that this is really difficult but we all have to remember that this is for the greater good. We need to stop the spread of the virus and particularly protect those in our community who are vulnerable. We also all need to look after our friends, families and colleagues at this time. I know I have said this many times but please look out for those who are around you and keep those small acts of kindness going - I have heard some great stories.

It is also really important that you look after yourselves. If you feel unwell or you are feeling anxious please ask for help - you can always email the Gateway or the Covid team. Don't forget about the online resources that have been provided by a range of different organisations which you can find on the [sdw webpages](#). The government has announced the continuation of [student space](#) - have a look at the resources on this site - I know than many of you have found these useful.

You will be aware that Liverpool is the subject of the government initiative for testing the whole population of the city. We have a symptomatic test centre on Hope Park already and we will have an asymptomatic test centre in the next couple of days. I would ask all of you who are in Liverpool at the moment to take the time to go for a test. The information you need on how to do this is on the Liverpool City Council website [here](#).

As always if you have a positive test result or you have symptoms you should inform the covid team covid@hope.ac.uk

I am really grateful to those of you who are in the halls of residence for following the guidance over the last few weeks, it has made a significant difference. Please don't let your guard down now. We need you to keep up with the social distancing, mask wearing and socialising only within your bubbles. We can beat this together.

Have a good weekend.

Look after yourselves
Penny

13 Nov 20

Dear

As I sit at my desk it is a lovely Autumn afternoon. I hope that you are getting outside to enjoy the fresh air and the sunshine.

There has been a vast amount of information in the press over the last few days so I want to make sure that everyone is clear on the situation in terms of lockdown, testing, travel and teaching:

We are in a national lockdown which lasts until 2 December. This means that you should only socialise with your household bubbles and should avoid unnecessary travel until 2 December. Travel related to your education or work is still permitted. Please make sure that you continue to follow the social distancing guidelines, washing your hands frequently and wearing your mask etc.

Arrangements for teaching will continue as currently arranged, so if you have timetabled on campus sessions they will continue for the moment.

Liverpool is in the middle of a City wide pilot which has made asymptomatic testing available to everyone who lives and works in the City. We have a Liverpool City Council Asymptomatic site at Hope Park which we are hosting for the Council. I would encourage you all to attend to have a test. It is quick and easy and you don't need to make an appointment. Just turn up. It is open 7am - 7pm in the Sports centre. If you live away from Hope Park you can use the University Shuttle Bus to come here or you can access one of the other test centres around the city. You can find the details of all of the test centres [here](#). This site is useful because it also tells you how busy each of the testing centres are.

As you are aware, the Government has released details of a scheme to ensure that all students are able to travel home for Christmas as safely as possible. This is obviously very welcome news to all of us. I am so glad that we will be able to help you all get home to your loved ones. The intention is to help you all to travel home at staggered times and after as many as possible have undertaken a covid test to ensure that you are not inadvertently carrying the virus home to your families. This scheme also gives time for anyone who tests positive to have a period of quarantine before they travel.

Covid testing for students travelling home will go live on 30 November. We will let you know the details nearer the time. Subsequent dates for leaving campus for various groups will be agreed over the next few days. It is really important that as many of you as possible get tested before travelling. This is to ensure your safety, that of your family members and also of the general public who you encounter whilst travelling.

As we have previously announced, we will be considering the arrangements for teaching for next term over the next few weeks. We will publish our intentions for Term 2 in w/c 7 December, so that you can start your planning for January as soon as possible.

13 Nov 20

Please don't forget that it is Children in Need Day. Tonight you are all invited to a live Quiz for Children in Need. You will find it on instagram [@liverpoolhopeuk](https://www.instagram.com/liverpoolhopeuk) at 8pm.

I hope that you have a good weekend.
Look after yourselves
Penny

20 Nov 20

Dear All

Another week has passed. The term moves inexorably forward. Christmas is coming. The evenings are dark and the weather is very Novemberish but let's try to keep a spirit of Hope in our hearts. You have all done so well in managing your studies and in helping others throughout the term. There isn't long to go, so please keep studying and please keep those acts of kindness on your minds. One of the Gateway team brought me a mince pie with my tea this morning, it was the first whisper of Christmas and it cheered me up after a difficult phone call. Little acts of kindness can make a huge difference.

I know that some of you are finding the lockdown and the coming of Winter difficult. If you need help please tell someone. You can contact SDW sdw@hope.ac.uk where there are drop in slots everyday for you to talk to someone or you can make an appointment to talk to one of the counsellors or Mental Health professionals. You can access a wealth of [online support services](#) including [Student Space](#). You might also want to talk to your senior resident tutor or to your personal tutor, all of who can support you and direct you to other services.

If you are in Level H I'm sure you are aware that your term finishes today. The next few weeks have been identified as reflective weeks. These have been deliberately scheduled at this time to give you space to make significant progress on your dissertation or project. This has been done in response to students in previous years telling us how useful this opportunity would be at this time of year. I would encourage you to make best use of this time to move your work forward so that you can return in January having made a really good start towards completing your project.

As you know, the national lockdown comes to an end on 2 December. We are committed to getting you home for Christmas in good time and in the travel window set by the Government. We will be providing testing services in w/c 30 November and 7 December to make sure you have ample opportunity to take the two required tests before travelling home. This will be at the Creative Campus and at Hope Park. I would encourage you all to take these opportunities for testing wherever you live. We want to keep you and your families as safe as possible and for you to be able to enjoy Christmas. I will write to you early next week with further details about these arrangements.

As you know, we have committed to providing details of arrangements for the start of the Spring term in w/c 7 december. Hopefully the national picture will be clearer by then.

I am aware that those of you who are currently on education placements are waiting for information about end dates and travel. I am frustrated that we do not yet have the promised guidance from the Department of Education but we will get this to you as soon as it is published.

In response to your feedback The Sheppard-Worlock Library will be piloting weekend access on Saturdays on the 28th November and 5th December between 10am - 3pm. You will be able to use the study spaces and collect books that have been ordered through the Request and Collect service. We will monitor use and this

20 Nov 20

information will be used when we set the opening hours for next term. For more information on how to book a study space or request a book see the [library web pages](#).

Please try to stay safe and look after yourselves.

I am thinking of you all.

Best wishes
Penny

23 Nov 20

Dear All

I want to confirm with you the arrangements for the end of term and for travel.

This is to facilitate your travel during the window identified by the Government.

Term dates:

The Level F, C and I term will end as published on 11 December. All teaching will revert to online for w/c 7 December. (All Level H teaching has already finished.)

If you are on a Teacher Training placement Michelle Pearson will be in contact with you about placement end dates.

Testing and Travel:

The National Lockdown is in place until 2 December so you should not travel home before that date.

If you do not live at home and are intending to travel home for Christmas, you should take part in the testing programme during w/c 30 November. Testing will be available at Creative Campus and at Hope Park as well as at some of the other city wide venues.

All students should have two covid Lateral Flow Tests, 3 days apart, during this period. If these are both negative you may travel home. If one is positive you will need a PCR test to confirm the positive result and you will need to isolate for 10 days. The timing of the testing has been put in place to allow you to get home in time for Christmas, even if you have to self isolate.

The travel window is 3 December - 9 December. I would anticipate, following two negative tests, most Hope students will travel or be collected during the weekend 5-6 December. This will allow you to be home for online study during w/c 7 December if this applies to your cohort. Obviously if you have a positive test result (and so have to isolate) or have some other mitigating factor then you will need to travel at a later date.

You will receive further details about onsite testing opportunities later this week.

If you have any queries you should contact the Gateway team gateway@hope.ac.uk

Best wishes
Penny

27 Nov 20

Dear All

I hope that you are all OK. We are having a festive afternoon here at Hope Park. Christmas is coming and we have decorated the tree in the Gateway. I know that this is a really important part of Christmas for some of you so I have attached a picture for those of you who can't get to campus to see it. Liz on the desk has been desperate to switch on the Christmas Carols. Having resisted all week I have now given in, so 'When a Child is Born' is playing in the background.

Another important part of Hope at Christmas are the Christmas lights on campus - they will be switched on at 5pm on Tuesday 1st December. Although you may not be able to be there in person, you can watch this much-loved tradition take place live on the University's YouTube channel - the link will be sent out on the day.

The situation in relation to Covid in the City of Liverpool is greatly improved. The allocation of Liverpool to Tier 2 in the Government's new system is a reflection of this. Let's just hope that this means that we will be able to look forward to some sort of normality in the new year. In w/c 7 December, as promised, we will be able to give you our first indication of what teaching will look like in term 2 of this academic year. In making these decisions we will be looking at the infection rate in Liverpool, the rate in the NW, the availability of vaccines and the need to keep all our staff and students as safe as possible. In the meantime please keep up with following social distancing guidelines, handwashing and wearing your masks - it is making a huge difference.

Coronavirus testing:

As you know, we are offering covid testing onsite over the next couple of weeks. This is open to all of you and it is particularly important to get tested if you are intending to travel home away from the City.

If you do not have covid symptoms you can get tested at the following times/locations:

The Great Hall, Creative Campus: Monday 30 November – Friday 4 December 10am – 5pm

Sports Centre, Hope Park: Friday 27 November – Tuesday 1 December. 7am – 7pm, Wednesday 2 December – Friday 4 December 10am – 5pm and Monday 7 December – Friday 11 December 10am – 5pm.

If these times/locations are not convenient you can also use any of the asymptomatic centres set up elsewhere in the city. You can check the [city council website](#) for the latest information about available sites.

Wherever you go for a test, you will need to take your mobile phone so that you can register on arrival, and you should receive your results within 20 – 30 minutes.

Once you get your second negative test result, you should return home within 24 hours. If you get a positive result, you will need to self-isolate and book a PCR test to confirm you have the virus. Once confirmed, you will have to self-isolate for 10 days in your term-time accommodation. Once your isolation period is over, you will still have enough time to travel home for the holidays. If you receive a positive result

27 Nov 20

you should contact the University's [Covid Control Team](#) to inform them of your result, and they will provide advice and next steps.

If you have symptoms of covid you should [book a test through the NHS](#). You should not visit the asymptomatic test centres on campus.

Travel:

Once you have had two negative tests you should travel home as soon as possible. Mersey travel have asked us to direct you to [rethink travel](#) which may be useful. If you are travelling by train, this [Government announcement](#) may also be helpful.

Availability of Computer resources:

We have been made aware that the library computers are quite heavily booked at the moment. Additionally some students need access outside of library opening times.

We have increased access to PCs by opening EDEN001 and EDEN002 computer labs at the following times up to Friday 11th December. Mon - Fri 8.30am - 10pm Sat - Sun 9am - 9pm

You will need your ID card to swipe into the EDEN building and these rooms. Please ensure that you follow social distancing guidance and clean your workstation.

In addition, the Student Success Zones on all 3 campuses are available 24/7 and these spaces will continue to be available over the Christmas vacation

Movember:

The Students' Union are hosting a quiz this evening (Friday) to raise money for Movember. An ex-Hope Student will also be playing a live Gig at the virtual quiz, please check out the event details on the Students' Union Instagram and Facebook pages. The aim with this event is to raise as much money for Movember as possible.

Music Students Concert:

Music students at Hope are raising funds for the city's food banks by holding a virtual concert. The 'GiveHope' extravaganza is being performed by first year Music and Music Production students. You can expect an eclectic mix of music to suit all tastes, including pieces by classic composer Claude Debussy, as well as tunes from comedy duo Flight of the Conchords. Most importantly, the online gig aims to raise vital funds for both the North Liverpool Foodbank and the West Everton Community Council (WECC) Food Project.

You can watch via the GiveHopeLiverpool Facebook page on Friday at 8pm and you can tune-in via the GiveHope YouTube channel on Saturday at 8pm.

I am very conscious that many of you are still finding the current situation very difficult and I am really concerned about you. Hopefully being with your families at Christmas, where this is possible, will help some of you, but I also know that this may not be the solution for all. I am really pleased that the Students' Union have re-opened their confidential listening and advice service, Nightline. The purpose of the service is to offer anonymous, non-judgemental and support for Hope students. Please check out the [website](#) for more information. This service provides non-directive support for all callers, regardless of their situation.

27 Nov 20

In addition, please don't forget that you also all have access to the support offered by [Student Development and Wellbeing](#) and [Student Space](#). It is quite OK not to feel OK about the situation but if this is the case you must ask for help. There are lots of people at Hope who will be happy to support you.

As always, if you have any questions about anything in my email or other issues that you are concerned about, please approach the Gateway team gateway@hope.ac.uk, they will be happy to help.

Look after yourselves - and get those tests done!

Best wishes
Penny