

UPDATE MESSAGE TO STUDENTS – FRIDAY 26TH FEBRUARY 2021

Dear Students,

This morning you will have received an update from the University in regards to arrangements for the rest of Hilary term and Trinity term 2021. This follows an announcement by the UK Government on Monday 22 February, where it outlined the next steps in the pandemic roadmap.

While the national lockdown is being progressively eased, there will continue to be significant restrictions on what we can and cannot do for some time. This means that student life in Trinity term will not be the same as it has been in other years, and we understand that this will be disappointing for many of you. We remain hopeful that a wider student return will be possible in Trinity term, and will continue to support students both in Oxford and those unable to return at this time. Welfare support in College and at the University will continue to be available to all, and further information will be sent out shortly on support available during the Easter vacation.

This morning's update has raised a number of issues which the College is currently considering. We will be in contact with you again at the beginning of next week with further clarification. In the meantime, below is a summary of the arrangements for the remainder of Hilary term and Trinity as provided by the University this morning, and how these arrangements will impact in College. The full University update can be found on the Coronavirus website [here](#).

Please do contact a member of the COVID Planning Group if you have any questions.

- **Teaching and learning**

Some students who are taking part in practical teaching or accessing specialist facilities, will be allowed to return from 8th March, and will be contacted directly.

The Government will review the options for timing of the return of all other students by the end of the Easter holidays.

Undergraduates

Teaching for most taught students will remain online for the rest of the term, other than those who have been given specific permission to resume in-person teaching.

In Trinity term, teaching will generally take place within normal term dates, whether it be online or in-person and we await further updates on this.

In-person 'Catch-up teaching' will resume for a small number of students from Monday 12 April (Week -1 Trinity term) and these students will be contacted directly.

For some other courses, particularly those with a practical element, in-person teaching will start from Monday 26 April (Week 1 Trinity term).

If you are on a non-practical course, we will not be able to confirm when your in-person teaching can resume until the Government announcement around Easter, but we will inform you as soon as we can.

Taught postgraduates

Some taught postgraduate courses with a practical element will resume in-person teaching from Monday 8 March. Your department will confirm the specific arrangements for your course in the near future.

Postgraduate research students

Postgraduate research students (including final year students on integrated Masters courses) are not affected by the Government announcement. You can continue to conduct your research on-site where it is necessary, and you have been permitted to do so.

- **Assessments**

There will be no in-person exams in Hilary term (with the exception of one medical exam needed to meet professional body requirements). Your department will inform you of any changes to exam arrangements as appropriate.

Most exams will take place online in Trinity term, and as announced previously, most will use Inspira. Go to the new Trinity term exams page [here](#) for more information.

A single webpage outlining the format of all exams will be published in the near future. An 'academic support package' has been developed to support students impacted by COVID-19. Go to the teaching and learning page [here](#) for more information.

Libraries

While, for most students, access to the Bodleian libraries is primarily online, the libraries are working to maximise the range of resources and support available to everyone through these means.

In College, the libraries and Graduate Study Room currently remain closed. The College will review this provision over the Easter Vacation.

- **Staying in Oxford**

If you are in Oxford, please continue to follow all the current Government and University health guidance in order to protect our community and the wider Oxford community.

You will be expected to continue following all aspects of the Student Responsibility Agreement.

'Household' arrangements are still in place in College until further notice.

- **Returning to Oxford**

If you are on a non-practical or non-practice-based course, the Government will not issue guidance on your return for in-person teaching until 5 April at the earliest. We understand that this will be disappointing for you but we will be in touch again as soon as we get more guidance.

Exceptions

You may be able to return if:

You need to collect any medical equipment or items required for online learning,

You need to return for health and safety (including serious mental health and wellbeing) reasons,

Your current accommodation is completely unsuitable for studying.

For all of the above exceptions, please contact the Academic Director in the first instance to discuss your concerns or requirements. Please do not make plans to travel to Oxford until you have written confirmation from College that you are allowed to return.

Lateral Flow Device Tests (LFTs)

You should return to Oxford in time to take two Lateral Flow Device tests before your in-person teaching begins. Information on how this process will work in College will follow shortly. See [here](#) for more information on the University testing guidance.

International students

International students will be supported to return in time to take part in in-person teaching where necessary. However, if you do not have a large amount of in-person teaching scheduled for Trinity term, you may wish to take advantage of the residency exemption, particularly if you are in a [‘red list’ country](#).

If you decide to return, you need to follow national and international travel guidance and must self-isolate for ten days on arrival in the UK.

If you plan to self-isolate in college accommodation, you must agree this with the College in advance, to ensure we are able to support you.

You will need to take a COVID-19 ‘PCR’ test before you travel and provide proof of a negative result upon entry to the UK. You will also need to book two PCR tests to take during your self-isolation period; and it may be possible to reduce your isolation time by making use of the ‘test to release’ scheme.

If you have in-person practical teaching scheduled for Trinity term but are not able to return, you should discuss with your department what alternative arrangements can be put in place for you, including whether an alternative catch up plan can be offered at a later date.

If you are in a country that is on the UK Government’s ‘red list’, we advise you to take advantage of the residency exemption, unless you have substantial in-person teaching commitments. If there is catch-up in-person teaching planned for your course, but you are unable to return to Oxford, your Department will support you with alternative arrangements.

Postgraduate research students

If you are not currently in Oxford, you will be supported to return if you feel it would benefit your work (for example, through access to library facilities). However, if you are in a ‘red list’ country, you should speak to your supervisor about delaying your return and conducting preparatory work from home for the time being (see ‘red list’ section above).

Part-time students

If you are on a part-time or distance learning course, arrangements for your return to Oxford will vary. Your department will provide further details as soon as possible.

- **Travelling from Oxford to other parts of the UK**

Government guidance states that you should not leave your term-time accommodation, unless you can demonstrate that you have an exemption from the national restrictions on leaving home. This currently includes during the Easter vacation.

This means that students currently in Oxford should not return home or travel elsewhere during the Easter Vacation, unless you can demonstrate that you have an exemption from the national restrictions on leaving home.

The requirement not to return home or travel elsewhere has particular implications for those students residing in accommodation on the central site and Ship Street houses who have term-only licences. Some of you have already applied to stay in Oxford for the vacation. If you have not, can you please confirm that it is now your intention to stay in Oxford over Easter, or let us know if there are any reasons you should be exempted from this requirement. Please contact the Accommodation Office as soon as possible.

- **Travelling from the UK to other countries**

Personal travel

You can only travel internationally where you have a legally permitted reason to do so.

Travelling for educational purposes

UK Government restrictions allow students to travel, by exception, for educational purposes (such as for field trips, or for research). If you plan to travel internationally for educational purposes, you will require the advance approval of your Head of Department or Faculty Board Chair.

Please talk to your tutor or supervisor at the earliest opportunity and they will be able to provide advice and support.