

Covid-19 Communications Toolkit

For Universities and Higher Education Institutions in England

1 September 2021



Department
for Education



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Covid-19 Communications Toolkit

Introduction

The Government announced that, from 19th July 2021, all restrictions on the approach to teaching and learning, including in-person teaching as a result of [COVID-19](#), have been lifted, alongside Step 4 of the Government's Roadmap. In addition, COVID-19 vaccination is now being offered to everyone aged 16 and over* at local sites run by GPs or community pharmacies, at larger vaccination centres and in some hospitals.

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 for new and returning students in the Autumn term, and information about the Covid-19 vaccine and rapid asymptomatic Covid-19 testing.

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 supplement the work you are already doing to ensure that students are fully aware of the latest Covid-19 guidance and vaccine information.

Thank you.

*16-17-year-olds will be offered the first dose only currently, unless in an at-risk group



Student Covid-19 Vaccine

The COVID-19 vaccination is being offered to everyone aged 16 or over at local sites run by GPs or community pharmacies, at larger vaccination centres and in some hospitals. You may also be working with your local public health to set up “pop up” temporary clinics at locations convenient for students to access, for example, on campus or halls of residence.

Students registered with a GP can book their appointment at a larger vaccination centre, a community pharmacy run site or at some GP run sites through the National Booking Service website or by phoning 119. Those who are registered with a GP will also receive an invitation to be vaccinated from their GP practice.

We appreciate any work you can do to increase take up of the vaccine. Your work will complement the national campaign by DHSC. Find out more on the [NHS England website](#) and use the [national campaign assets](#) to speak to young people about the vaccine, using some of the key messages on the next slide. For more general information about Covid-19 please click [here](#).



Student Covid-19 Vaccine

Key messages:

- Over two thirds of 18-30 year old's have already had their first COVID jab. It's the best way to protect yourself and your loved ones from serious infection.
- Many of the COVID-19 patients now in hospital are young and unvaccinated. It's important that you get your first and second dose for maximum protection.
- Covid-19 vaccines have saved an estimated 84,600 lives, 23.4 million infections and 66,900 hospitalisations have been prevented up to 6 August
- Vaccinated people are far less likely to get COVID with symptoms. Vaccinated people are even more unlikely to get serious COVID-19, to be admitted to hospital, or to die from it and vaccinated people are less likely to pass the virus to others.
- If you haven't had your first dose yet, you can book now at a centre or find your nearest walk in clinic at www.nhs.uk/covidvaccine. It's easy to get vaccinated quickly at a time that suits you.
- You don't need to have both doses in the same place. You can arrange your second dose through the booking service at www.nhs.uk/covidvaccine, or by going to a local walk in clinic 8 weeks after your first dose.
- If you aren't registered with a GP anywhere, it's definitely a good idea to do this as soon as possible, but you can still access a vaccine by finding your nearest walk-in clinic. You do not need to bring any ID. You can also speak to your nearest GP practice about how it works in your area.
- This offer is also available to international students studying in England, regardless of their nationality or immigration status.
- If you're aged 18 or over, you can download the NHS app and get an NHS COVID Pass for travel abroad and domestic venues and events depending on your vaccination or COVID-19 test results.



Student Covid-19 Vaccine

Please see below some examples from other providers, to help aid your communications to your own students.

COVID-19

Keep it kind on campus

- Keep testing
- Keep sanitising
- Keep your distance
- Keep yourself at home if you're ill
- Keep safe with vaccines

#WeAreYSJ

Est. 1841 YORK ST JOHN UNIVERSITY

Newcastle University @UniofNewcastle · 4 Aug

The NHS vaccine bus will be outside the Students' Union TOMORROW 10am-2pm offering both 1st and 2nd doses of the Pfizer vaccine. No appointment necessary just pop along! 😊 @NewcastleSU

Anyone over 18 can get their vaccination. Second doses available 8 weeks after first.

VACCINE BUS ON CAMPUS

The NHS vaccine bus will be outside the Students' Union on Thursday 5th August, 10am-2pm.

Coventry University @covcampus

If you are still looking to get your COVID-19 vaccine, our medical centre at TheHub is offering a walk-in clinic for Coventry students from 2.30-6.00pm today 😊

We spoke to students after their COVID-19 vaccination at TheHub

220 views 0:03 / 0:40

2:22 pm · 28 Jul 2021 · Agorapulse app

4 Retweets 3 Likes



Student Covid-19 Vaccine

Please see below some examples from other providers, to help aid your communications to your own students.



Sunderland Students' Union
@sunderlandsu

You can book your vaccine NOW in time for the coming academic year! You don't even need to be registered to a GP to help you protect yourself from COVID-19.

Ensure yourself and those around you are safe and Grab A Jab today! 🥰🎉

0:40 99 views

3:02 pm · 29 Jul 2021 · ContentCal Studio

3 Retweets 3 Likes



HEALTH MANCHESTER

Walk-in COVID-19 vaccination clinics in Manchester

by STUDENT NEWS TEAM
1 July, 2021

Reading Time: 2 minutes
Updated: 3 August

To meet the increasing demand for the coronavirus vaccine, there are pop-up vaccination clinics opening up across the city for anyone over the age of 18 to access. No appointments are needed and you don't need to be registered with a GP. There will be no immigration checks and you don't need to bring ID.

It's important that you wait the full 8 weeks before receiving your second dose of the vaccine.

Make sure you arrive at least an hour before closing at each clinic to ensure there is time for you to be seen. Unless you are medically exempt, remember to wear a mask and social distance when inside.



Student Covid-19 Testing

- Students are encouraged to test before they travel back to university, either through their local community testing programme or by [ordering a test online](#).
- On arrival at university, students should take two LFD tests either using home test kits or at an on-site testing facility (3-4 days apart)
- They should then test twice a week through September, either using [home test kits](#) or at an on-site facility.
- This is to reduce the risk of transmission following the movement of students across the country.
- It is very important that, when testing at home, test results are reported online to [NHS Test and Trace](#) whether positive, negative or void. Reporting results helps the NHS monitor the spread of the virus, combat the virus and save lives.
- If a student has had a confirmed PCR test for COVID-19 in the last 90 days, they do not need to take a test within that time period if they are asymptomatic. They are still required to follow the national guidance for adults who have been identified as a close contact of a positive COVID-19 case, even if this is within the 90-day window.



Student Covid-19 Testing

- If a student is on a placement and not attending university facilities, they should follow and participate in any testing regime in place at their placement. It is not necessary to travel to university to be tested before travelling to a placement, unless this is advised by the placement provider.
- Where students have a medical or other reason that prevents them from engaging in LFD testing, they should talk to their HE provider about alternatives.
- Students who have arrived from overseas and have completed a period of quarantine – either in a hotel or in their own accommodation – should follow instructions on ongoing asymptomatic testing as set out by their higher education provider.

Test results

Upon notification of a positive assisted LFD test result or positive home (self-reported) LFD test result, students and staff should follow the [national guidance for people who have received a positive COVID-19 test result](#).

Students may not be required to self-isolate if they are notified that they have had close contact with someone who has tested positive for COVID-19, for example if they are fully vaccinated. Students should follow the [national guidance on self-isolation](#) where this applies.



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 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.



International Students

Student Travel Advice

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

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 cannot provide proof of a negative test.
- Complete a [passenger locator form](#).
- [Book and pay](#) for a day 2 and – in some circumstances – a day 8 test
- The following regulations apply, which vary depending on whether you are travelling from a [red, amber or green-list](#) country:
 - 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 package in advance, or you could face a fine of up to £4,000.**
 - Or; If you have travelled from or through an **amber list** country only 10 days before arrival, you must quarantine in your own accommodation for 10 days and take 2 PCR COVID-19 tests on day 2 and day 8 after you arrive in England, **unless you are exempt (see below). University asymptomatic testing does not mean you are exempt from the day 2 and day 8 tests**. You will receive calls from NHS Test and Trace to check that you are quarantining. [You may also receive a visit from NHS Test and Trace staff](#), who are conducting Covid compliance checks to ensure that you are quarantining at the address provided on your passenger locator form. **If NHS Test and Trace staff suspect that you are not quarantining, your case may be referred to police who can issue a fine of up to £10,000.**
 - Those who are [fully vaccinated through the UK vaccination programme, or who have been fully vaccinated in the USA and many European countries](#), do not need to quarantine when returning to England from an amber list country or take a test on or after day 8. Passengers will need to provide proof of their vaccination status to carriers in advance of travel. **Pre-departure testing and day 2 testing measures remain.**
 - [Green list](#) arrivals do not need to isolate or enter managed quarantine, but must still complete a [passenger locator form](#), provide evidence of a negative test and pre-book a day 2 test.



International Students

Vaccine information for international students

- International students who live in the UK will be able to access the Covid-19 vaccine, just as they are currently able to access healthcare. Individuals who are registered with a General Practitioner (GP) will be contacted by their GP to book their vaccine via an online or telephone system – there is no need for students to proactively contact their GP about the COVID-19 vaccine. COVID vaccinations are classed as primary care, and anyone who lives in the UK is entitled to receive NHS Primary Care medical services at a GP surgery for free. When students arrive in the UK, they should register with a local GP surgery as soon as possible.
- If an individual has only partially completed their vaccination (i.e. one dose), they will be able to access the second dose here in the UK.
- If they have already had both doses of a vaccine – be that MHRA verified or not, they will not be required to have any further doses (unless the individual is eligible for any booster programme).
- From 16 August, you will not be required to self-isolate if you are notified you have had close contact with someone with COVID-19 and any of the following apply:
 - you are fully vaccinated
 - you are not able to get vaccinated for medical reasons
 - you are aged under 18 years and 6 months
 - You have taken part in or are currently part of an approved COVID-19 vaccine trial

Please note: Fully vaccinated means that you have been vaccinated with an MHRA approved COVID-19 vaccine in the UK, and at least 14 days have passed since you received the recommended doses of that vaccine

Further detail on the vaccination status of international visitors to the UK and the implications for self-isolation or subsequent vaccinations can be found in [Public Health England guidance](#) (see pages 15, 16 and Appendix 1)

Also see [Student Vaccine FAQs](#) published by NHS England



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Online Advice and Guidance

Detailed information about students returning to university, Covid-19 testing, and the Covid-19 vaccine is 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.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/.

Coronavirus guidance for university students 2020-21

This page provides advice for students who are at university in the academic year 2020-21.

Latest guidance

Following the government's announcement on 5 July:

- From 19 July, alongside step four of the roadmap, all restrictions on the approach to teaching and learning, including in-person teaching as a result of COVID-19, have been lifted.

[See the government's guidance](#)

Note, the following FAQs are applicable to higher education providers but not to further education (FE) providers who offer higher education qualifications. FE providers should follow [FE guidance](#).

Should I be getting tested whilst I'm at university?	+
Do I have to do anything before I travel home for the summer?	+
Will I have to get tested when I travel to university for the autumn term?	+
When and how do I get my COVID-19 vaccine?	+
I'm a new or returning student travelling from overseas - what should I do?	+
I'm struggling financially as a result of the pandemic. What help may be available?	+
I'm graduating this year, is there any support available?	+

The screenshot shows the GOV.UK website interface. At the top, there is a search bar and the GOV.UK logo. Below this, a section for 'His Royal Highness The Duke of Edinburgh' is visible, with a link to read about the arrangements following his death. The main content area is titled 'Coronavirus (COVID-19)' and features icons for 'Hands', 'Face', 'Space', and 'Fresh air'. A prominent message states: 'Coronavirus restrictions remain in place across the country. In England:'. Below this, a list of key restrictions is provided: 'Only socialise indoors with people you live with or who are in your support bubble', 'Up to 6 people or 2 households can meet outside', 'Work from home if you can and minimise travel', and 'If you have symptoms get a test and stay at home'. A yellow arrow icon points to a link: 'Find out the rules on what you can and cannot do'. At the bottom, there is a section for 'Recent and upcoming changes' with the NHS logo and the text: 'If you have no symptoms: Restrictions are easing across the UK.'



Communications Assets

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

These include:

- Social media animations
- Digital assets

These will be updated before the autumn term and will be available to download for free [here](#).

You can access a useful video explainer to help with communications around home testing/LFD collect [here](#). There are also some wider youth vaccine assets available [here](#).

[NHS vaccine comms resources](#) (including *Don't Miss Out campaign*).

[Online postcode search](#) 'find a walk-in vaccine centre'

[International travel comms resources](#) from Department for Transport



Please use and share these through your own student-facing channels.
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University Advice Service

Coronavirus (COVID 19) Helpline

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



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University Advice Service

Coronavirus (COVID 19) Helpline

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.



Graduate Employment & Skills Guide

In May 2021 we launched the [Graduate Employment & Skills Guide](#), in partnership with the Office for Students. The guide, developed with support from the higher education sector and graduate employers, is for students who are about to graduate and are at the start of their career journey, it sets out five important steps to help them, as students about to graduate, think about their choices and what they'd like to do next:

- Step 1: Identify skills
- Step 2: Develop skills
- Step 3: Gain experience
- Step 4: Apply for jobs
- Step 5: Wellbeing

At each step it signposts resources and opportunities to help graduates develop skills, gain experience and build networks in preparation for a graduate career.



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For more information

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

universities.comms@education.gov.uk



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