

Important COVID-19 update: new government guidance

Dear students,

You will have seen the news that the government has announced [temporary COVID-19 restrictions](#) in response to the newly emerged Omicron variant. These measures are being put in place as a precaution until the possible impact of the new variant can be scientifically assessed.

Please take a moment to read the government announcement and familiarise yourself with the [new requirements](#). The key points are that from tomorrow, Tuesday, in England:

- face coverings will be compulsory in shops and on public transport
- all contacts of suspected Omicron cases will be required to self-isolate for 10 days, regardless of a person's age or vaccination status
- anyone entering the UK will require a PCR test within 48 hours of arrival and will need to self-isolate until they have a negative result
- further changes have been made to the government's [travel red list](#).

University face coverings guidance updated

In response to the government announcement and [updated guidance for higher education](#), we will **expect face coverings in all indoor spaces** (including teaching rooms, the Library and communal areas of halls) when moving around and where social distancing cannot be maintained. In line with the new government rules, you should also wear face coverings in all our on-site retail facilities.

All our other existing control measures on campus are being retained. This means that all restrictions regarding, for example, ventilation and one-way systems remain in place. In particular, remember that only one person should use lifts at a time, and that lifts should only be used by those who have mobility challenges.

Vaccinations and regular testing remain vital

Regular testing remains extremely important to minimising the spread of COVID-19. We encourage **all students and staff who are on campus to take a lateral flow test every day** until the end of term, especially before mixing with people in crowded places, such as classrooms. Tests remain available for free from the Library foyer.

To make vaccination easier, we have arranged for the vaccination van to return to Whiteknights campus for first and second vaccinations. As before, the van will be located in the layby near the ICMA centre and will be operating daily between 10am and 4pm. You can [book your vaccination appointment](#) quickly and easily online.

As ever, please do not come to campus if you are showing any symptoms of COVID-19, no matter how mild, and book a PCR test straight away. As noted above, testing remains vital to containing the spread of COVID-19, including the new variant and reducing the likelihood of further, more restrictive, measures.

In relation to the spring term our intention remains to start teaching on-campus again from 10 January as planned although we will review that situation in the coming weeks.

The news of updated government guidance is a timely reminder that the COVID-19 situation continues to be changeable. Over recent weeks, we have started to enjoy again the benefits of being on campus and interacting in person. Our shared commitment now to observing these new government measures will help ensure that further restrictions are not necessary and that we can all look forward to a holiday season shared with friends and family.

Best wishes,

Paddy

Dr Patricia 'Paddy' Woodman
Director of Student Services