

All remaining university students to return to in-person teaching from 17 May

University students received a boost today (Monday 10 May) with the launch of a new employment and skills guide alongside the confirmation that all remaining students can return to in-person teaching from the 17 May.

Prime Minister Boris Johnson announced that the country can progress to Step 3 of the Government's roadmap which will see a further easing of restrictions on indoor mixing and social contact.

Some students, including those doing practical courses such as science and engineering, and who need to access specialist facilities and equipment, are already back on campus.

Before the remaining students return, they are encouraged to take a test either through home or community testing at least one day before they travel back to their term time accommodation.

Upon arrival at their term time accommodation, all students and staff will be encouraged to take three supervised Lateral Flow Devices (LFD) tests 3 to 4 days apart at an on-campus asymptomatic testing site, and will be expected to be tested two times a week throughout the rest of the summer term.

Home testing kits will be available to help those who are unable to attend the on-campus testing facilities. Further advice and support for universities is included in our updated guidance.

In addition to confirming the return for all remaining students, the Department for Education has worked with the Office for Students (OfS) and universities to deliver support and advice for those students who have graduated during the pandemic and might not have had access to the opportunities needed to take the next steps in their lives.

The Graduate Employment and Skills Guide brings together a broad range of tools, advice and resources into a five-step plan which will help pandemic graduates consider their post-university choices, identify and develop their critical skills, gain professional experience, and further their career while maintaining good mental wellbeing.

Universities Minister Michelle Donelan said:

Our priority from the very start of this pandemic has been to help students complete their courses and graduate as planned which is why I am pleased that the Prime Minister has today confirmed all remaining students can return to in-person teaching from the 17 May as part of Step 3 of the Government's road map.

It is vital that we make every effort to keep us all as safe as possible, and every student will be offered three tests on return to campus. I would strongly encourage students to make use of the free tests available to them.

To further support those beginning the next chapter in their lives we have published our Graduate Employment and Skills Guide, created with universities and designed with prospective employers in mind, which will give students the help and advice they need to build their skills and kickstart their careers.

I know that entering the jobs market can be daunting, particularly during a global pandemic, but I know that employers will recognise the resilience and strength of this year's graduates and the essential role they will play in this country's recovery.

Upon return, all tests for students will be free, through both the Government's offer of free rapid LFD tests twice weekly to everyone in England, and 'University Collect' services, under which universities will distribute tests from communal locations on campus, such as libraries. This is in addition to the onsite testing already offered.

All students and staff who test positive from an LFD test will need to self-isolate for 10 days, unless they receive a negative PCR test result within two days of the LFD test being taken.

The Government has made available an additional £85m in hardship funding for those students most in need, such as those struggling to pay accommodation costs due to the pandemic. International and postgraduate students will be eligible for this funding along with domestic undergraduates. This is on top of an existing £256 million that universities can draw on.