SELF-ISOLATION FOR STUDENTS ARRIVING IN THE UK

GUIDANCE AND CHECKLIST

FOR HIGHER EDUCATION

INSTITUTIONS

Universities UK International

UK Council for International Student Affairs

UKCISA

BUILA
BRITISH UNIVERSITIES' INTERNATIONAL LIAISON ASSOCIATION

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Introduction

Self-isolation for new arrivals to the UK

On 8 June 2020, the UK government implemented a policy of self-isolation for anyone arriving in the UK. The aim is to help manage the risks to public health from coronavirus (Covid-19), and at the time of writing the policy may require new arrivals to the UK to self-isolate for a period of 14 days from the date of arrival.

This policy is backed by legislation, and while enforcement actions are devolved responsibilities, the general principles are that:

- it applies to all arrivals to the UK from countries that are not on the exempt lists – regardless of nationality (including British citizens) [1]
- all arrivals, regardless of nationality or the country of origin, must complete a passenger locator form (PLF) before travelling to the UK, listing the address of the nominated place of self-isolation
- individuals must bring a copy of the PLF with them (either printed or electronic), and they should travel directly to their isolation accommodation
- if it is necessary to use public transport to transfer to the nominated accommodation, precautions such as face coverings and social distancing must be followed
- anyone required to self-isolate should not leave their identified accommodation for any reason until the self-isolation period (currently 14 days) is complete
- compliance with the self-isolation is a personal responsibility – and failure to comply with the requirements is an offence that can be punished with a fine, payable by the individual

Given the changing nature of requirements and the different approaches taken across the UK, institutions are advised to refer to the relevant government advice for the most up-to-date account of the requirements:

- England
- Scotland
- Wales
- Northern Ireland

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[1] Note that there are separate lists for the four nations of the UK, each of which is updated regularly.

The requirement for self-isolation will clearly have implications for universities and some staff and students arriving in the UK.

The role of institutions in supporting self-isolation

While the responsibility for complying with the self-isolation regulations lies with individuals, it is of course important that institutions ensure that any students travelling to the UK – many of whom will be arriving here for the first time – are fully and properly supported throughout this period.

It will no doubt be unsettling for many students to arrive in a new country and immediately self-isolate. As such, it is vital that institutions and the wider sector do whatever is possible to ensure that our students feel safe, secure and welcomed throughout the period of self-isolation.

This means considering how students can be supported throughout the process: from before they set off, ensuring that they understand the requirements of self-isolation, through their transfer from the point of arrival to their accommodation, and throughout the self-isolation period itself.

What the government says about self-isolation for students arriving in the UK

Providers and students will need to have regard to guidance on travelling to the UK. To keep the rate of transmission in the UK as low as possible, all international arrivals will be required to complete a passenger locator form on arrival in the UK and passengers travelling from countries not on our exemption list will need to self-isolate in their accommodation for 14 days.

Students will also need to have regard to transport guidance to ensure that they are safely travelling from their entry port to their accommodation (see 'Transport' for further advice on using transport safely). While it is for providers to decide how they support international students, we believe it is important that you make every effort to welcome them to the UK and your responsibilities should start as soon as a student lands, if not before.

Noting the advice provided for students (both domestic and international) who self-isolated during lockdown, you are responsible for ensuring students are safe and well looked after during the 14-day self-isolation period. Existing guidance is available at isolation for residential educational settings.

You should also consider the needs of students, including international students, who may be suffering hardship or be without the ability to travel as a result of the coronavirus (Covid-19) outbreak.

Guidance for Tier 4 students and sponsors affected by changes to UK immigration and borders due to coronavirus can be found at Tier 4 sponsors, migrants and short-term students.

International students and their sponsors can email the Government's Coronavirus (Covid-19) Immigration Help Centre at: CIH@homeoffice.gov.uk if they have any further questions about their visas.

Guidance and checklist for institutions

It is in this context that this guidance and checklist has been produced. We recognise that institutions will want to do everything that they can to support their students throughout any period of self-isolation, but that there can be no 'one size fits all' approach. Solutions will need to be tailored to local circumstances, taking into account the institutional context, resources and the communities they serve.

We also recognise that many institutions will already have taken significant steps to develop and implement their approach to self-isolation. As such, this document does attempt to prescribe an approach; the aim is to support institutional planning by:

- helping institutions to understand the requirements as they stand at the time of writing
- identifying key questions and considerations for university leaders and higher education professionals
- signposting useful resources that can help institutions manage the process effectively

Useful resources and links to relevant government advice and guidance is included in **Annexe A.**

Note that this document refers to students arriving in the UK – it is important to recognise that this includes UK students who have been overseas, who may also be subject to the requirement to self-isolate and should be considered as part of your institutional planning. Similar issues may also be encountered by staff arriving in the UK from countries subject to the self-isolation regulations, and many of the considerations raised in this document will also be applicable when thinking about how to support such staff.

Developing the guidance and checklist

This checklist was developed by Universities UK International in close collaboration with the UK Council for International Student Affairs (UKCISA) and the British Universities' International Liaison Association (BUILA). It was supported by a cross-sector working group which included representatives from the National Union of Students and the Department for Education. The group was chaired by Professor Sir Steve Smith, Vice-Chancellor at the University of Exeter, in his capacity as chair of the UUK International Policy Network and the UK government's appointed International Education Champion.

Keeping the document up to date

Please note that this document is correct at the time of writing. It will be reviewed every two weeks. In places, the advice contained in the guidance may be tentative and subject to clarification from the UK government or another body; these sections are identified in the text as follows:

!	[**Issues**]: At the time of writing ….

Please refer to date this document was last dated on page 2 to ensure that you are using the most recent and up to date version.

Checklist summary

Ensuring that all students understand the importance of self-isolation

Has your institution:

- ✓ ensured that all students are aware of their responsibilities and the consequences of failing to comply with the self-isolation requirements?
- ✓ considered how to embed a shared understanding of individual responsibilities to ensure that students, their peers and the institution are safe and secure environments

Before the student sets off

Has your institution:

- ✓ checked the latest requirements of the government policy?
- ✓ communicated the latest relevant requirements clearly to all affected students, including any details of local developments?
- ✓ ensured that affected students understand the purpose and purview of the self-isolation policy?
- ✓ clarified whether your usual advice to incoming students needs to be amended – for example, around securing their accommodation before travelling to the UK?

Arriving in the UK and getting to the isolation accommodation

Has your institution:

- ✓ wherever safe and practical, made arrangements to welcome new students at their point of arrival, and to facilitate their transition to their nominated isolation accommodation?
- ✓ identified how you will you advise and support students to reach their isolation accommodation where welcome and transit services cannot reasonably be provided?
- ✓ completed a full risk assessment for the transportation of students to their study destination or isolation accommodation?

Self-isolating in student accommodation

Has your institution:

- ✓ considered how you can advise students on the level and type of support that can be made available depending on their living arrangements?
- ✓ ensured that all affected students can access basic services from their isolation accommodation?
- ✓ considered the support that will be in place when students arrive, including basic care and welcome packages for students?
- ✓ considered how to establish shared households that comply with relevant good practice and government advice?
- ✓ liaised with private accommodation providers to help them understand the additional support that may be required?

Supporting students through the self-isolation period:

Has your institution:

- ✓ considered ways to mitigate the practical, logistical and resource implications of self-isolation, such as staggered or early arrival dates and online registration and teaching?
- ✓ established and communicated a clear protocol for any students exhibiting Covid-19 symptoms while in isolation to access medical advice, testing and support?
- ✓ put mechanisms of personal contact and support in place to ensure that students feel supported through the self-isolation period?
- ✓ considered the support that can be made available to students in different living situations, recognising that while an identical service cannot be provided to students in all living situations, appropriate steps should be taken to ensure effective access to support for all that require it?
- ✓ ensured that students can access key services throughout the self-isolation period?
- ✓ considered how to help students integrate into the university community through the self-isolation period – and after it has ended?
- ✓ put in place mitigating actions and processes to help students fulfil their immediate obligations throughout the self-isolation period, such as police registration and Biometric residence permits (BRPs) collection?

Advice for institutional leaders

- **Regularly review the government requirements**. Government advice is subject to change, and the regulations are different across the nations of the UK (for example, the exempt list of countries is subject to rapid change). Ensure that your teams review the relevant government advice regularly (see **Annexe A**), including consideration of any local lockdown measures in place and consider how any changes may need to be communicated internally, to your stakeholders in the UK and overseas, and to students – and whether any changes have a material impact on your planning and preparations.

- **Identify a senior lead to own your institutions' plans for supporting self-isolation**. There are many different facets to the planning for self-isolation, as set out in this guidance note and checklist. A senior leader within the institution should be nominated to coordinate activity and to ensure that all relevant stakeholders are included in the planning, implementation and communications processes.

- **Engage the key professional communities at the start of the planning process**. Self-isolation will be a complex project to fully implement and will need to draw on the expertise of a diverse range of professional communities. A project team should consider including estates, and accommodation and business services teams; international offices; student services; student unions; ICT; and teaching and learning expertise. Also consider how you will ensure staff know which students may be self-isolating, so that they can make necessary adjustments.

- **Liaise with external stakeholders such as private accommodations providers and community groups**. It will be important to consider how students in private rented accommodation will be supported throughout the self-isolation period and working with private accommodation providers to ensure that they are aware of the unique challenges and solutions will be essential. Similarly, it will be important to reassure the local communities that your institution is taking all necessary steps to ensure that everyone on campus understands and fulfils their responsibilities.

- **Consider the advice you provide to students before they travel to the UK**. It may be necessary to ask all students arriving from abroad to confirm their travel arrangements with your institution in advance, or to change advice on securing their accommodation before arriving in the UK. You may need to provide students with additional, detailed information on how to get to the institution's location, and on temporary accommodation options should they be unable to secure a residence before arriving in the UK. If the university cannot offer temporary accommodation, ensure that students fully understand their responsibility for self-isolation on arrival.

- **Communicate with students early and often**. It is important to reassure students that self-isolation is not being targeted at specific nationalities, or at students in general. Provide regular communications to your offer holders to socialise the policy and its requirements, emphasising that self-isolation is one of the ways in which the government is endeavouring to ensure that the UK is safe for all – including international students. It is important that students have confidence that the UK will be welcoming and supportive in terms of practical arrangements relating to quarantine.

- **Be prepared to respond to queries from overseas stakeholders, media and families of students.** As the requirements change, notably around exempt countries, your communications teams should be prepared to provide clear lines on the purpose and rationale of self-isolation. You may wish to refer to UUKi's [international updates and FAQs](#) page.

- **Treat self-isolation as a wellbeing issue, rather than a matter of compliance**. The policy is in place to help protect everyone within the communities in which our students live and learn. It would be seriously detrimental to the welfare and experience of students if they are subject to enforcement action for breaching self-isolation requirements. Rather than seeing this in terms of compliance, frame the issue around the health, welfare and wellbeing of students and the wider community.

- **Support for the mental health and wellbeing of students in self-isolation must be a priority.** Institutions should ensure that they are able to provide regular contact with all students undergoing self-isolation throughout the relevant period. Peer support networks and opportunities for virtual engagement should be provided to help ensure that no student feels alone during the self-isolation period, and who to contact in case of emergencies must be made clear.

- **Consider and prioritise resourcing at the outset**. It is highly likely that supporting students through self-isolation will require additional resourcing – both financial and human resources. Institutions will need to decide at an early stage what costs can be borne by the institution, and where contributions from students may be needed and would be appropriate.

- **It is important to consider the support that can be made available to students in different living situations**. Many students will choose to live in places other than university owned or managed accommodation. It is important to agree what support should be provided to all students and how this can be delivered, and to understand where they may be limitations to the support or services you are able to provide. Universities should work with private accommodation providers to consider how they can support students in their accommodation and to help ensure that such providers understand how self-isolation may change the needs of their students. While an identical service cannot be provided to students in all living situations, appropriate steps should be taken to ensure effective access to support for all that require it.

Ensuring that all students understand the importance of self-isolation

> **Checklist**
>
> **Has your institution:**
>
> ✓ ensured that all students are aware of their responsibilities and the consequences of failing to comply with the self-isolation requirements?
> ✓ considered how to embed a shared understanding of individual responsibilities to ensure that students, their peers and the institution are safe and secure environments

Overview

- The self-isolation policies implemented across the UK are clear that responsibility for compliance lies with the individual arriving in the UK. The government has confirmed that there are no statutory or regulatory responsibilities on institutions to ensure that any students arriving in the UK abide by the requirements of the isolation policy.

- However, institutions should treat self-isolation as a wellbeing issue for all students: the policy is in place to help protect everyone within the communities in which our students live and learn, and it would be seriously detrimental for the welfare and experience of students if they are subject to enforcement action for breaching self-isolation requirements.

Issues to consider

While institutions are not expected to monitor compliance or undertake any enforcement actions, it is in the interests of student wellbeing and the reputation of institutions that affected students fully understand their responsibilities under the legislation, and that institutions do everything they can to ensure that students can successfully self-isolate for the required period – and that those students subject to the policy feel safe and supported throughout. Given this, institutions should ensure that all students who are required to self-isolate under the provisions of the policy are:

- fully aware of their responsibilities under the legislation
- supported through regular contact and engagement with university staff and peer support networks
- provided with an emergency contact where they can raise any questions or concerns, including information on what to do should they display Covid-19 symptoms

Institutions should consider how to embed a shared understanding of individual responsibilities to ensure that students, their peers and the institution are safe and secure environments for all.

Drawing on government advice, an overly legalistic, compliance-based approach is not recommended. Rather, institutions are urged to consider how they can frame the responsibilities of everyone – the institution, staff and all students (not just those in required to self-isolate) – to help keep their community safe, and that compliance with all public health advice is of critical importance if students are to enjoy a fulfilling educational experience. This should include the requirement to self-isolate for incoming students but should also reflect the need for all students to abide by social distancing, to respect evolving advice and local requirements, and to isolate if they develop any symptoms. As such, this should be framed as an issue and a priority for the whole community, and not solely a responsibility for students newly arriving in the UK.

Before the student sets off

Checklist

Has your institution:

- ✓ checked the latest requirements of the government policy?
- ✓ communicated the latest relevant requirements clearly to all affected students, including any details of local developments?
- ✓ ensured that affected students understand the purpose and purview of the self-isolation policy?
- ✓ clarified whether your usual advice to incoming students needs to be amended – for example, around securing their accommodation before travelling to the UK?

Overview

- It is vital that institutions understand the very latest government advice and requirements and communicate what their students will need to do before setting off to the UK.

- Countries exempt from the self-isolation requirement are subject to change at short notice, and there are differential requirements across the nations of the UK. The advice you provide to students may also need to be different to that you usually provide – for example, advising that students have their accommodation secured before arriving in the UK.

- It is important to communicate the requirements to students at the earliest possible stage – while emphasising that the self-isolation policy applies to everyone travelling from countries that are subject to the requirements (including British nationals) and is not targeted at specific nationalities or at students alone.

Issues to consider

Understanding the latest requirements

It is vital that institutions communicate the latest requirements to all students before they set off. In particular, government advice on travel corridors, countries from which any arrivals are exempt that are exempt from self-isolation, are updated regularly. Ensure that your students understand where to go for the latest advice.

Institutions should ensure that they are fully up to date with the latest requirements – check the relevant government websites:

- [England](#)
- [Scotland](#)
- [Wales](#)
- [Northern Ireland](#)

Reassuring students

When communicating to students, it is important to reassure students that self-isolation is not being targeted at specific nationalities, or at students in general. Provide regular communications to your offer holders to socialise the policy and its requirements, emphasising that self-isolation is one of the ways in which the government is endeavouring to ensure that the UK is safe for all – including international students. It is important that students have confidence that the UK will be welcoming and supportive in terms of practical arrangements relating to self-isolation.

- Avoid using the term 'quarantine' in any communications – this will have negative connotations in many countries.
- Ensure that your students understand that self-isolation is in place to help ensure that the communities in which they will live and study are safe for all.
- Emphasise that the policy applies to everyone travelling from countries that are subject to the requirements (including British nationals) and is not targeted at specific nationalities or at students alone.
- Reassure students that they will be supported throughout the period of self-isolation.

What students need to do before travelling to the UK

At the time of writing, students planning to come to the UK must complete the [passenger locator form](#) – ensure that students understand what they must do, and that they need to bring a copy of the form (digital or hard copy) with them. When communicating to students, institutions should ensure that their students know that they must:

- review the latest government advice relating to any countries that they travel through on their way to the UK
- complete the passenger locator form 48 hours of their departure time
- ensure that they bring a copy of the completed Passenger Locator Form with them – either by printing a copy, or showing it on your phone
- bring a face mask and hand sanitiser in their hand luggage
- endeavour to bring an international credit or debit card – recognising that it may be difficult to open a bank account in the first two weeks, and that using cash should be avoided

- check their travel and health insurance is appropriate – many providers are adding Covid-19 exclusions

Institutions should also consider advising students to ensure that they have a clear onward travel plans when they arrive in the UK. This should include:

- securing their self-isolation accommodation before travelling to the UK
- ensuring that they know how they will travel to their self-isolation accommodation once in the UK

Arriving in the UK and getting to the isolation accommodation

> **Checklist**
>
> **Has your institution:**
>
> - ✓ wherever safe and practical, made arrangements to welcome new students at their point of arrival, and to facilitate their transition to their nominated isolation accommodation?
> - ✓ identified how you will you advise and support students to reach their isolation accommodation where welcome and transit services cannot reasonably be provided?
> - ✓ completed a full risk assessment for the transportation of students to their study destination or isolation accommodation?

Overview

You should ensure that students understand what they need to have with them when they arrive in the UK, and that they should plan their onward journey in advance.

Where possible, it should be good practice to offer welcome and greeting services students at their point of arrival. However, it is important that institutions understand any restrictions that may be in at airports, and that full risk assessments are carried out so that you are fully assured that any risk to staff and student ambassadors is mitigated.

Government advice is that new arrivals can use public transport but must abide by requirements such as wearing face coverings and social distancing, and that such journeys should be kept to a minimum. Communicating these requirements, and viable options in lieu of transport provided by the institution, should be a first-order priority.

Issues to consider

Welcoming students at the point of arrival

Many institutions offer meet and greet services to newly arrived international students. Given the added complexity of self-isolation requirements for students travelling from or via any countries subject to the current legislation, institutions are strongly urged to consider providing such services, and facilitating the transit of students from their primary or secondary point of arrival to their isolation accommodation.

However, such a service will not be without significant resource requirements (in terms of people, transport costs, etc) and would require an appropriate risk assessment to be undertaken to minimise

any risk of staff, student ambassadors or third party contractors being exposed to Covid-19. The need to accommodate social distancing on any transport also needs to be taken in to account when considering the cost and practicality of solutions.

Finally, we understand that there may be additional restrictions in place at some airports that make such services difficult to offer. Restrictions are subject to interpretation by airports; liaise with officials at the main points of arrival to understand what is possible under the current regulations, and whether exemptions can be made for safe meet and greet services such as a designated point outside and away from the main passenger flow.

!	**Access to airports**: At the time of writing, we understand that some major airports have restricted access to arrivals halls and are limiting the time coaches can wait at airports. UUKi is engaging with the relevant authorities to urge airports to work with institutions and to allow meet and greet services to be put in place, recognizing that this would reduce the need for students to use public transport and thereby support government objectives regarding public health.

Institutions should:

- wherever it is safe and practical to do so, offer a meet and greet service, alongside transportation to the students' study destination or isolation accommodation
- consider working with other institutions in their local area to help share the logistical burden and to minimise the number of people involved in supporting the arrival and transfer of students

It will be important for institutions to consider:

- the cost and availability of commercial transport – intelligence suggests that there may be limited availability in the autumn, so commissioning services as soon as is practical would be advised
- any restrictions in place at the point of arrival – early engagement with representatives of relevant airports and other points of arrival would be highly recommended, in parallel with UUKi's work to address issues that we have been made aware of

Institutions must:

- undertake a full risk assessment for the transportation of students to their accommodation

Getting to the nominated accommodation

As noted above, institutions are strongly urged to facilitate the transit of their students from their primary or secondary point of arrival wherever it is safe and practical to do so. Where this is not

possible, institutions should look to provide accurate and up to date advice to students on how to they can complete their onward journey.

Drawing on the resources in **Annexe A**, information to provide should include:

- an overview of the latest government advice for new arrivals on using public transport, including advice on social distancing, face coverings and other mitigating actions
- advice on making any intermediate stops, for example, an overnight stay before making a substantial onward journey, based on the latest government advice
- suggested routes and travel providers for the required journey and advising students to pre-book onward travel where possible

Self-isolating in student accommodation

Checklist

Has your institution:

- ✓ considered how you can advise students on the level and type of support that can be made available depending on their living arrangements?
- ✓ ensured that all affected students can access basic services from their isolation accommodation?
- ✓ considered the support that will be in place when students arrive, including basic care and welcome packages for students?
- ✓ considered how to establish shared households that comply with relevant good practice and government advice?
- ✓ liaised with private accommodation providers to help them understand the additional support that may be required?

Overview

- Students affected by the self-isolation requirements may be in a variety of different accommodation settings. They could be in university accommodation, private halls of residence, staying with friends and family or in private shared accommodation. They may be living alone, with their family, or – more usually – in shared accommodation.

- Catering for the diverse needs of students in such different settings will be challenging. It will be possible for universities to provide a greater level of support to those students in university accommodation than those in other settings.

- When establishing the accommodation, all providers should consider the specific needs of students undertaking a period of self-isolation and the additional support that could be provided. Regardless of where students choose to self-isolate, universities should consider how they can provide access to support services, and advice that should be provided regardless of setting.

Issues to consider

Government advice on establishing new households

The reality is that most students will be in shared accommodation for the period of self-isolation. The UK government advice is that new households of multiple occupation can be established, but

that landlords should have regard for the health, safety, and wellbeing of those in their accommodation. There will be logistical challenges that need to be addressed.

You will need to consider:

- how to ensure that all students have access to basic services
- how to best create households, and whether entirely comprised of students needing to self-isolate or are mixed households
- how to communicate the latest public health advice to those in the self-isolation accommodation
- how to engage with private accommodation providers to ensure that they understand the unique challenges that many students will face

The preferred approach should be for students to be placed in university arranged or nominated suitable accommodation. However, we recognise that accommodation is a matter of individual choice for students and that suitable accommodation may not be available in all contexts. This guidance therefore covers a variety of other circumstances. In non-university accommodation, institutions may not have any ability to inform this process but should consider liaising with private accommodation providers so that they understand the challenges.

Creating mixed households is permissible under the regulations, however care must be taken to ensure that all members of the household understand the requirements of self-isolation. Others in the house may not have to self-isolate **unless one of their housemates show any coronavirus symptoms**. In this case, all members of the household would need to isolate as per public health advice.

Isolating in shared accommodation

Universities should take steps to help ensure students can effectively self-isolate in shared accommodation. It is critical that all students understand the steps they must take when self-isolating in these circumstances. The steps taken to minimise the risk to themselves and others should be the same as those advised for any shared household where one member has displayed Covid-19 symptoms. In non-university accommodation, institutions should seek to provide information and advice to students and accommodation providers and access to support services.

The latest advice to those isolating in shared accommodation is:

- you should **avoid shared spaces as much as possible** – including such as kitchens, bathrooms and sitting areas
- everyone **should wash their hands lots of times during the day** – do this for 20 seconds, using soap and water or hand sanitiser
- **always cough and sneeze into a tissue** – then throw the tissue away and wash your hands

- **in communal areas, try to stay at least two metres away from other people** as much as possible
- think about **wearing a face covering when you are in the same room as another member** of the household
- use a different bathroom if possible. If you use the same bathroom **clean it each time after you use it**. Wipe all surfaces you have touched using strong household cleaner (disinfectant)
- use different towels
- do not share a bed
- do not use the kitchen at the same time
- **clean surfaces that you often touch several times a day** with a household cleaner / detergent
- use a dishwasher – if this is not possible, **wash and dry each person's things separately**
- **use a different sponge and tea towel** for each person
- do not shake dirty washing before putting it in the washing machine – **if you do not have a washing machine, wait three days after your staying at home period ends before taking it to be washed**
- **put rubbish such as tissues and disposable wiping cloths into rubbish bags that are tied shut**, then put these bags inside a second bag – you should wait three days before you put them outside for the rubbish collection
- while you are self-isolating **arrange for food and medication to be delivered**
- tell **people delivering things to your home to leave them outside** and let you know they are there – they must not come into your home
- **do not use taxis or public transport and do not allow social visits** from friends and family – use your phone and social media to keep in touch

Further, if any student undergoing self-isolation displays Covid-19 symptoms, regardless of their type of accommodation, then they should tell the university immediately.

- In university accommodation, the institution must inform any housemates in the shared accommodation that have not been isolating that they need to do so. Universities should have protocols in place to deal with a scenario where a student displays symptom – this is not unique to students newly arrived in the UK.
- Where the student is in private accommodation, it is their responsibility to ensure that others in the household are made aware of the need to self-isolate – however, universities should consider how they can support and facilitate students in this situation, and how they can liaise with accommodation providers or other students in the household on behalf of the student.

Basic requirements of accommodation for self-isolating students.

Given the public health advice for those self-isolating in shared accommodation, universities should consider how they can help ensure affected students can safely self-isolate. This includes how they can get food and the basic provisions they will need on arrival. Universities may not be able to provide this for students (particularly where they are in non-university accommodation) but you should consider what support, information and advice students and other accommodation providers may need to navigate self-isolation safely and effectively.

Given the public health advice, you need to consider how you can help ensure students have access to the following:

- individual cleaning materials and hand sanitizers
- bedding
- bin bags
- face masks
- food or food delivery services
- cutlery and dishes
- toothbrush and personal hygiene items
- tissues and toilet rolls
- internet services
- safe rubbish collections

One option is to provide basic care packages for all affected students on arrival; however, it is recognised that it may not be possible to provide same levels of support to students in non-university accommodation. To help ensure that all students have the support and access to basic services they require, and that they can self-isolate safely:

- ensure that all students are properly informed of the latest public health advice regarding self-isolation
- liaise with private accommodation providers to ensure they understand the situation of students in self-isolation
- advise private accommodation providers of the steps you are taking to support students in your care, and urge them to implement additional support where necessary

Supporting students through the self-isolation period

Checklist

Has your institution:

- ✓ considered ways to mitigate the practical, logistical and resource implications of self-isolation, such as staggered or early arrival dates and online registration and teaching?
- ✓ established and communicated a clear protocol for any students exhibiting Covid-19 symptoms while in isolation to access medical advice, testing and support?
- ✓ put mechanisms of personal contact and support in place to ensure that students feel supported through the self-isolation period?
- ✓ considered the support that can be made available to students in different living situations, recognising that while an identical service cannot be provided to students in all living situations, appropriate steps should be taken to ensure effective access to support for all that require it?
- ✓ ensured that students can access key services throughout the self-isolation period?
- ✓ considered how to help students integrate into the university community through the self-isolation period – and after it has ended?
- ✓ put in place mitigating actions and processes to help students fulfil their immediate obligations throughout the self-isolation period, such as police registration and BRPs collection?

Overview

- Arriving in the UK and being required to spend an extended period, currently 14 days, in self-isolation will be challenging for many students. It is imperative that institutions do all that they can to support students through any self-isolation period. The health, welfare and wellbeing of students undergoing self-isolation must be the institution's primary concern.
- All efforts must be taken to ensure that they have access to support and services, and that steps are taken to mitigate the impact of self-isolation on their studies, on any legal or regulatory commitments they may have.
- This section suggests ways in which institutions can provide this pastoral support, and key issues that must be considered as part of any institutional planning.
- It will be important to consider how students can be supported wherever they are housed. Institutions should consider how they can help ensure equitable access to support services to students in different living situations.

Issues to consider

Isolation and the beginning of the semester

Institutions are free to consider different options to help mitigate the practical, logistical and resource implications of self-isolation – on both the institution, and on affected students. One key consideration will be how the start of the new semester interacts with self-isolation. There is no single, 'correct' approach, and the final decision must remain with institutions based on their understanding of the wider context. However, all institutions should:

- consider ways to mitigate the practical, logistical and resource implications of self-isolation, such as staggered or early arrival dates and online registration?
- consider how they can help ensure equitable access to support services to students in different living situations

Engagement and wellbeing

Throughout the self-isolation period, it is critical that students have regular contact and understand how they can raise any issues or concerns with the institution. It is vital that they are provided with basic information on how to access goods and services; have the ability to access services online; and have regular personal contacts. The importance of providing this support through the period of self-isolation cannot be overstated. Institutions should:

- provide for regular, personal contact with students throughout the self-isolation period, including working with students' unions to provide peer support
- provide an information pack for all affected students, including important information on how to access services, order food deliveries (if appropriate), and where to go for support
- provide an emergency 24-hour contact where affected students can raise any issue or seek support
- consider providing a basic care and welcome package with necessities to cover at least the first 24–48 hours of self-isolation (see previous section)
- consider how they will ensure that students living off campus have an equitable experience, including the level of personal contact and access to support services
- engage with private accommodation providers where possible to help them understand the specific needs of students in self-isolation

Important activities and obligations for new students to complete

There are a number of important things that newly arrived international students may need to do in their first two weeks in the UK, and institutions will need to consider how they can best support students given the need to enter self-isolation.

It is important to:

- consider the range of critical activities for students and identify mitigating actions appropriate to your institution and your student community
- consult the [UKCISA website](#) for the latest information

As part of your institutional plan, issues to consider should include:

- **matriculation** – can this be moved online so that students can complete registration as part of their self-isolation period?
- **police registration** – students won't be penalised if they don't register at a police station within 7 days upon arrival to the UK if they are required to self-isolate. However, they should call their local police station to notify them of their circumstances and make arrangements to register as soon as possible. Have you checked with relevant local police forces to see if registration is possible at this time and if so, how self-isolating students can be accommodated?
- **biometric residence permits (BRPs) collection –** is there any reason why the university cannot be nominated as the collection point as has been strongly encouraged by Home Office and Department for Education ministers in a letter to all Tier 4 sponsors? If so, can other destinations such as the Post Office hold the relevant documentation until after the self-isolation period has ended?
- **registering at a GP** – can you liaise with relevant health authorities to ensure that online registration is available for all students needing to enter self-isolation?
- **attendance monitoring** – will students be studying by distance learning during their self-isolation period? If so, can you provide online check-in?
- **opening bank accounts and getting a mobile phone** – can you provide information on available online services as part of the welcome / information pack – and ensure that any students encountering difficulty has access to funds and communications during the period of self-isolation?

It is also important to note that there are no faith-based exemptions to self-isolation. As such, institutions will need to:

- ensure that affected students understand that there is no faith-based exemption
- consider ways of supporting affected students to undertake faith-based activities through their period of self-isolation

Integration into the university community

Self-isolation after arriving in a new country may be challenging for affected students. It is vital that institutions:

- consider how they will support the integration of students into the wider community once the self-isolation period comes to an end – and that this process of integration begins during the period of self-isolation

Annexe A: useful resources

Self-isolation requirements in the four nations, available at:

- England
- Scotland
- Wales
- Northern Ireland

Department for Education **Higher education: reopening buildings and campuses,** available at https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/higher-education-reopening-buildings-and-campuses/higher-education-reopening-buildings-and-campuses

Department for Transport, **Safer Transport campaign materials**, available at https://extranet.dft.gov.uk/safer-transport-campaign/guidance-for-travelling-abroad/

UKCISA, **Coronavirus (Covid-19): info for international students**, available at: https://www.ukcisa.org.uk/Information--Advice/Studying--living-in-the-UK/Coronavirus-Covid-19-info-for-international-students

UUK, **Principles and considerations: emerging from lockdown**, available at: https://www.universitiesuk.ac.uk/policy-and-analysis/reports/Pages/principles-considerations-emerging-lockdown-uk-universities-june-2020.aspx

UUK, **Covid-19 and UK universities: international updates and FAQs,** available at https://www.universitiesuk.ac.uk/International/Pages/Covid-19-intl.aspx

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