DfE
Department for Education

Guidance

Higher education: reopening buildings and campuses

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Introduction

This guidance supports the sector by outlining actions for reopening higher education (HE) campuses, and may be updated further in line with developing scientific evidence.

This guidance applies nationally to England. but you should follow local arrangements if restrictions are in place in your area.

The latest update includes:

- further advice on reopening university buildings
- updated advice on ventilation and cleaning
- guidance on when and where face coverings may be required
- updates on social gatherings relevant to higher education
- updated advice on student accommodation
- additional advice on student accounting
- updated advice on catering and food
- advice on NHS Test and Trace

The higher education (HE) system in the United Kingdom has a well-deserved reputation for providing high quality teaching and research and for being a vibrant and stimulating environment for students and staff. Universities have continued with some activities on campus, especially in their contribution to research and innovation, and to the support for students and their well-being.

The reopening of campuses for academic year 2020 to 2021 will bring about a significant change to the way in which HE providers operate. It will be a challenging time for providers, and we recognise that there will be some way in which their HE provider is located. The creation of many new households in HE will also bring a high number of contacts, which will need to be considered actions to minimising risk.

This guidance is designed to help HE providers in England to understand how to reopen their buildings and campuses safely. It provides guidance and lists the provisions providers should take to ensure they can be enjoyable experiences, while minimising the risk of COVID-19 transmission. It also provides a framework for providers to plan for a return to in-person teaching and learning, including how to manage any local lockdowns or other restrictions.

We hope this guidance gives you freedom within a practical framework to think about how to provide a high quality student experience and manage the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. We understand how important it is that you can offer students a high quality experience, and that this is vital for the sector, students, and the economy as we recover from the pandemic. We also recognise that providers can demonstrate that campuses are once again 'open for business', and that students can be confident that they will receive the high quality student experience.

In the same way that you are making plans for academic year 2021 to 2022, prospective and current students will be considering their options and making decisions about their future education. It is important that you provide students with the right information at the right time, so they can make informed decisions about their education and be prepared for changes to their course. It is also important that providers take steps to ensure that continuing and prospective students receive the clear, accurate information they need about their course, including any changes to it, and their obligations under consumer protection law, including, if relevant, in relation to information provision, terms and conditions, and complaints handling.

We expect HE providers to be open for academic year 2020 to 2021, although this will look different in many providers than it has in the past. We expect that you are putting in place arrangements that will allow your provision to be delivered to students and staff, in accordance with public health guidance.

The Office for Students (OfS) has set out its expectations for providers to ensure students receive a high quality education and student experience throughout the present crisis, while ensuring quality and standards are upheld. The OfS has also set out its expectations for providers to be transparent about their delivery of HE provision, and to ensure students know what standards must be maintained. The Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA) has also set out its expectations for providers to maintain standards. The Office for Students and QAA have also published a joint statement on how they will work together to support the higher education sector. We will continue to work closely with the OfS and QAA to ensure that providers are able to meet their obligations under consumer protection law, and that students are not disadvantaged by progress.

We thank the sector for its contribution to the public in 'clear we all must stay alert' in order to contain the virus and save lives. Guidance on how to protect yourself and others from coronavirus (COVID-19) is available.

The UK government has published a roadmap to ease lockdown restrictions, set out a roadmap to easing existing restrictions in a cautious way that minimises the risk of a resurgence of COVID-19, and ensures that the virus and being able to monitor and react to its spread.

How to use this guidance

As HE providers, you will make your own judgements about your provision, based on your assessment of risk, and in line with your duties as providers, who work and study in authorised premises and offer education and training to students. We do not expect providers to follow every piece of guidance. This guidance is intended to help you make decisions about how you can make your provision safe, and how you can minimise the transmission of COVID-19 on your premises, in line with government guidance and guidance.

We set out below the key principles and guidance we expect you to be taking into consideration when making decisions on when and how to reopen your premises, and how to do so safely. We also set out a number of other specific actions which are applicable at this time.

Each HE provider will need to translate this into the specific actions you need to take, depending on the nature of your provision, the number of students and buildings, the nature of your institution, including the size and type of institution, and the local context and local coronavirus (COVID-19) risk.

We have set out guidance for each of these areas, and have set out the measures that staff and students can return, with confidence that these have been taken into account. We have also set out the wider public health measures required by government guidance.

To help you decide which actions to take, you should carry out an appropriate assessment (COSHR) of the environment, such as your premises, and other health and safety related hazards. The Health and Safety Executive provides a helpful 12 point plan to assist with this process. The Health and Safety Executive also has made all sites and sectors of your institution COVID-secure.

Response to local outbreaks

The government's aim is for HE provision to be as open as possible, for as many people as possible, as fast and safely as possible, and in a way that avoids local lockdowns and other restrictions on people's lives wherever and whenever possible.

We are now better able to identify outbreaks at an early stage and take steps to ensure appropriate local action is taken to control the spread of the coronavirus (COVID-19) and to minimise the impact on people's lives. Each individual case will trigger a local response, including testing, and we will ensure that local public health officials are informed of all cases.

Local outbreaks are identified and managed through investigation and follow-up of cases by local teams led by the local Director of Public Health, in collaboration and different approaches may be needed in different circumstances. See more detailed guidance on COVID-19 outbreaks in different parts of the country.

Public health officials will be in contact with the Director of Public Health (England) (PHE) health protection teams, and local authorities, with an assessment of the situation and recommendations on the most appropriate transmission reduction measures. Local Outbreak Management Plans provide guidance. You should encourage staff and students to engage with NHS Test and Trace and follow its advice.

Public health officials will take into account the number of cases, and the number of cases, but this relies on people being able to identify one another by name, and to provide adequate contact details for their close contacts.

You should assist PHE health protection teams and local authorities in making risk assessments, based on your knowledge of:

- testing
- local cases
- outbreaks
- groups
- COVID-secure measures in place
- ventilation, including ventilation definitions of contacts, but where that information is available

You are responsible for ensuring that your students are safe and well-looked after during their self-isolation period. Existing guidance is available at support for residential educational settings.

Local COVID alert levels

The government is committed to ensuring the right levels of intervention in the right places at the right time to control the spread of the coronavirus (COVID-19) nationally and locally, and to prevent the need for a return to a tier or local COVID alert levels.

Local authorities will work with colleagues in local authorities, residents and sectors about which measures are most appropriate in their area.

Read further information on local COVID alert levels, including what they mean, the factors which are considered, and what it means for you.

HE providers will remain open at every level (tower, with their facilities and activities reflecting local restrictions and guidance in place at the time of local restrictions. National restrictions for Health Protection (England) will issue and guidance will be issued by the Director of Public Health (England) and local authority to students international university students.

Unless told otherwise, in the event of additional restrictions being imposed including during tiers, students should continue to attend their educational institution and not return to the family home, which would increase the risk of transmitting the virus.

Explanation of the education tiers in relation to HE

Tier 1 (default position)

HE providers are expected to provide blended learning with face-to-face tuition while following the provisions of this, and public health guidance (for example, the appropriate use of face coverings).

Tier 2 (indicators of concern)

HE providers are expected to an increased level of online learning where appropriate, and to ensure that students are not required to return to their family home, based on their own risk assessment. We expect that, in the majority of cases, face-to-face teaching will still be in place, to most beneficially the overseas, course and local learning and research.

Tier 3 (where stricter measures are needed)

HE providers should increase the level of online learning to return face-to-face teaching only where it is essential, and to ensure that students are not required to return to their family home.

Students should follow government guidance published as part of any local lockdown or other restrictions in place in their area. HE providers should also encourage students to return to their family home and to reduce their family home to other residential accommodation to reduce the risk of transmitting the virus. Students should follow the guidance on travel and accommodation, and should do so by keeping service for students, such as university libraries and catering facilities, open.

Tier 4 (last resort)

We expect the majority of provision to be online, with buildings open only for essential services and students are required to return to their permanent address (teaching is essential). This should include the continuation of essential research.

In the event of a national lockdown, we would expect HE providers to follow the Education Secretary's last notes to managing possible outbreaks in education settings.

Principles for higher education provision

Although some buildings and parts of campuses have physically closed in response to the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, HE has been able to continue to function. In contemplating action to reopen buildings and campuses, we recognise that a great deal of work has been, and continues to be, undertaken by providers in ensuring that students can study and receive a high quality education.

We encourage all providers to stand back and take a wider view that is a proportionate, risk-based approach, that takes into account the wider impact on students and staff of not reopening buildings and campuses, and the impact on the wider economy.

It is for an HE provider, as an autonomous institution, to identify and put in place appropriate steps, in order to meet its obligations under consumer and government guidance, based on the individual circumstances of that provider.

We expect providers to be able to demonstrate that they have taken account of the legal responsibilities of providers in taking steps to reopen, provisions and facilities, including the duty to ensure, so far as reasonable, the health and safety of them etc. Act 1974 and the Equality Act 2010. Providers will need to continue to comply with those obligations.

Minimising the risk to students

As with other population groups, students are at greater risk of contracting the coronavirus (COVID-19) than the general population, because of their demographic and social circles. While HE providers will be expected to undertake to reduce the importance of adopting safe behavioural genetic, HE providers should also ensure that students understand the risks, and that they are in educational environments, the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, and should encourage safe social activities for students. You might do this in collaboration with your students' union, and student representative bodies, and should ensure that students that provide COVID-secure environments and facilities, and that students are with public health guidance.

Shielding

We expect that most students will be able to return full time to your time but students on part time could be in the shielded cohort.

A small number of students may be shielding at home, and cannot because they are:

- self-isolating or living with someone who is and/or has had symptoms or a positive test result for coronavirus
- a close contact of someone who has coronavirus (COVID-19)

Shielding advice is not to attend any place outside of your home or support. This means that even the small number of students who will remain on the shielded list should not attend HE provider premises. Shielding advice is kept under review and when it changes, HE providers should take account of the latest advice on shielding.

Risk assessments

As part of the process of opening up buildings and campuses to staff and students, providers should carry out a risk assessment, and take steps to minimise coronavirus transmission, which will be a significant change from what was the circumstances of individual providers and the demographic profile of your staff and student population, and the way in which your premises and facilities are used. Providers should also take account of the wider environment.

Some people with particular characteristics may be at comparatively increased risk from coronavirus (COVID-19). The Office for Students has set out its expectations in relation to equality and diversity in the context of the pandemic. Sectors has concerns, we recommend that you discuss these with the individual, and that you take steps to ensure that the risk is as low as possible. The Equality Act 2010 has the duty to be practically possible to accommodate relevant additional needs.

Reopening buildings and campuses

In considering plowing people back into campus, you should take account of the wider impact on students and staff of not reopening buildings and campuses. This guidance is intended to help providers to take a risk-based approach, distance, adapt speed and maintain hygiene measures, and will isolate and get tested (test and trace).

Providers will find relevant guidance at:

staying safe outside your home and meeting with social distancing

It is the responsibility of HE providers to assess the risk of opening other buildings, and to implement mitigations, including those set out in this guidance, and in other guidance, such as the Health and Safety Executive's COSHR. HE providers example relevant to the HE sector.

Cleaning

You should introduce enhanced cleaning measures, including more frequent cleaning of rooms and shared areas that are used by different groups, and cleaning frequently touched surfaces, using standard cleaning products such as detergent. See the COVID-19: cleaning of non-healthcare settings guidance.

Ventilation

You should ensure that outdoor and covered areas have good ventilation in addition to other methods of risk reduction. This can help reduce the risk of airborne transmission of coronavirus (COVID-19) in shared spaces, and is a good place to reopening campuses and premises. Playing musical instruments can particularly contribute to virus spread. Where possible, poorly ventilated spaces should be avoided, and if they are used, the duration of the activity should not be used as a teaching opportunity.

You should consider ways to maintain and increase the supply of fresh air, for example by opening windows and doors, if it is safe to do so. Fan coils can be a concern regarding contribution to virus spread, and you should refer to the opening windows. For ventilation. Mass concerts can improve the circulation of air, and reduce the concentration of any airborne contaminants. Fan coils can be a concern regarding contribution to virus spread, and the opening windows. For ventilation is maintained. Air conditioning systems should rely on fresh rather than recirculated air, and should be cleaned and maintained in accordance with the manufacturer's advice. Advice on ventilation is available in the Health and Safety Executive guidance on air conditioning and ventilation during the coronavirus outbreak.

Social distancing on campus

You should consider how to reduce social contact and maintain social distance between people on campus, taking into account the risks to students and staff, while where possible. Where it matters is not safe, reducing the distance down to a shorter distance, with other measures in place to manage the risk of transmission. You should consider and set out the mitigations you will introduce in response to your risk assessment.

In order to determine and lower of attendance is appropriate in HE settings and in conducting open days, outreach activity, and the assessment of transmission risk associated with your campus, and the wider environment, you should consider the following factors in your risk assessment:

- the number of students and staff likely to be included in a learning space and the nature of the activity taking place in that space
- the sustainability of staff, including contingency plans should individuals be required to isolate
- supporting students who are required to self-isolate or shielding at home (for example, catering and free food can be provided as safely as possible, and students who are in self-isolation should be supported to study, and, during the pandemic, and mitigation to ensure that students with additional numbers (including additional cleaning requirements) should be supported instead of being unwell.

However, SAGE recognises that there is no one model of segmentation that universities can adopt. Segmentation is a key part of the Scientific Advisory Group for Emergencies (SAGE) has advised that the benefits of segmentation include:

- reduction in the risk of transmission (smaller number of people to infect)
- easier to contact trace (fewer people to contact)
- less disruptive (small number of people to quarantine or test)

Effective segmentation should be considered in the context of other mitigations, such as ventilation, hygiene, and face coverings, and should be based on a risk assessment, group, accommodation, site and on and, or teaching and accommodation. Segmentation should be considered in the context of other mitigations, such as ventilation, hygiene, and face coverings, and should be based on a risk assessment that certain classes or student households could be quarantined instead of whole groups, minimise wider disruption.

However, SAGE recognises that there is no one model of segmentation that universities can adopt. Segmentation is a key part of the Scientific Advisory Group for Emergencies (SAGE) has advised that COVID-19 has further examples.

Additional protective measures

Providers should identify and implement the range of protective measures required to comply with government guidance for safe workplaces, based on an assessment of the risks to students, staff and other users.

This should include (but is not limited to):

- enhanced cleaning, including especially high frequently used areas, surfaces, touchpoints and washrooms
- ensuring good personal hygiene and hand sanitisation facilities where handwashing facilities are not readily available
- reducing congestion (such as at the start and end of day), including through staggered timetabling, and ensuring that there is sufficient space and time between lessons to ensure safe ingress and egress
- utilising outdoor space
- ensuring that staff, and first aid and treatment around buildings, as well as signage with non-contact options, and ensuring that students are aware and use of PPE where possible

Where HE courses, such as dentistry, medicine, healthcare related courses, and the performing arts, may place particular risks of aerosol, droplet and surface transmission, HE providers should take additional precautions, including wearing face covering, ventilation or cleaning in accordance with guidance to the relevant professional working arrangement.

Any additional costs would be funded from contingency funds.

Face coverings

Face coverings should be worn as additional risk mitigation measure by students, staff and visitors, where social distancing is difficult to maintain and in communal areas, such as in corridors and common areas.

Face coverings should not be used as a substitute for other measures, such as manual performance. In line with government guidance for workplaces of 50 or more people.

Within teaching environments, HE providers should comply with the guidance provided by their employer, and ensure that appropriate risk assessments are in place (for example, medical, health and social care, and other environments where protection is required in line with the relevant professional environment).

Face coverings are likely to be appropriate in many social settings, including many students travelling to and from campus, and students and staff in communal areas, such as corridors, and in other shared spaces and facilities.

Face coverings are likely to be appropriate in many social settings, including any events hosted by student clubs and societies. Plan your lifestyle in line with other relevant guidance and guidance for clubs and societies.

Safe wearing of face coverings requires washing hands before and after putting on and taking off a face covering, and not touching the face covering while in use. Disposable masks should be kept in a bag pending disposal, and washed or disposed of daily.

There may be further use of face coverings required within providers as part of agreed additional restrictions in response to an increase in local lockdowns.

Social activities

Student unions and societies are an additional risk mitigation measure by students, staff and visitors, where social distancing is difficult to maintain and in communal areas, such as in corridors and common areas.

Face coverings should not be used as a substitute for other measures, such as manual performance. In line with government guidance for workplaces of 50 or more people.

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There may be further use of face coverings required within providers as part of agreed additional restrictions in response to an increase in local lockdowns.

Exemptions

In settings where face coverings are required in England there are some circumstances where people may not be able to wear a face covering. Exemptions include children under 11 years of age, people who have a disability or medical condition that means they are unable to wear one, or not able to wear face coverings, and that the reasons for this may not be visible to others.

Individuals do not need to wear a face covering if they have a legitimate reason not to.

This includes:

- if someone has a physical or mental illness or impairment, or a disability, that makes it difficult to wear a face covering or touch it safely
- if putting on, wearing or taking off a face covering would cause them severe distress

Some students and staff may need to be able to speak, or see people's faces, in order to communicate (there are complaints now relating to wearing Perspex face coverings).

There is further advice on exemptions contained in the face coverings guidance.

Social contacts

To prevent the spread of the virus, there are legal limits on the number of people that someone can spend time with in a group at any one time. These limits differ depending on the level COVID alert level.

These limits do not apply to:

- gatherings for educational or work purposes when reasonably necessary
- meetings of a single household or pair
- a support bubble which is more than 8 people

Student movement

The government is doing all it can to minimise the risks to HE staff and students from coronavirus (COVID-19) when they travel to and from educational settings, and throughout the time they are in the provision of education.

We recognise that the mass movement of students, and the creation of new households, will pose a challenge to the government's ability to provide reasonable advice with their students to minimise the risk of transmission.

A good deal of work has been done with the sector and with other HE providers to prioritise the health and safety of students, staff and local communities. We have worked closely with the sector to develop a set of principles and a set of measures to underpin a phased return to HE provision and to create a consistent approach to reopening.

In planning the return to academic year, providers should plan carefully to manage the time arising from the numbers of students arriving on campus in a short period of time. This will be important for the health and safety of students, staff and local communities. Providers should also plan carefully to ensure that students who need to return to their place of study can do so safely, and provide clear guidance to students on safe travel.

We will continue to work closely with the sector, the devolved United Kingdom and across government, to help minimise the risk of the coronavirus (COVID-19) and ensure that it and advice measures that apply to their particular circumstances.

International students and self-isolation

Providers and students will need to have regard to guidance on travelling to the UK. To keep the risk of coronavirus (COVID-19) to UK international students (both international students as well as domestic students) who are returning from overseas, the government has put in place a set of rules for travelling from countries with an increased risk of coronavirus (COVID-19) and their accommodation for 14 days. During the time there will need to be self-isolation, providers will need to be able to provide support to the necessity of leaving their room or accommodation.

Students will need to have regard to Kickstart guidance to ensure that they are aware of the rules and guidance for self-isolation. Providers will need to be familiar and signpost students to the Kickstart guidance. The DfE intends to decide how they should support their international students, as below is in relation to those who are self-isolating in accordance with the rules. Providers responsibilities will vary based on a number of factors, as set out below.

HE providers are responsible for ensuring their students are safe and well, whether on-campus or off-campus. Providers should consider the provision of suitable for residential educational settings.

Universities UK have set out a collaborative approach to support HE providers on how they can work together to support their students who are self-isolating in the UK. We encourage providers to review the guidance when considering how best to support their international students who are self-isolating in the UK.

You should also consider the needs of students, including international students, who are self-isolating in the UK. Providers should also be aware of, as a result of the coronavirus (COVID-19), the Student Counselling Service needs and

Guidance for Tier 4 students and sponsors affected by changes to UK immigration and Guidance for Tier 4 students and sponsors affected by Tier 3 and 4 lockdowns, including and with Scotland.

Guidance for Tier 4 students and sponsors affected by changes to UK Coronavirus (COVID-19) immigration and Guidance for Tier 4 childhood flexibilities. If they have any further questions about their visa.

Travel and transport

Transport will be important for students, and for many staff, who need to travel to the campus or place of learning, particularly those who are in or around London. Transport will also be important for those who are travelling as passengers and operators. Students and staff can help control coronavirus (COVID-19) by following the guidance on travel and transport. It is vital, if at all possible, they could avoid the busiest times of travelling (typically the morning rush hour) and times where provided or drop.

Transport, for example, will need to make sure you follow the road safety guidance:

- coronavirus (COVID-19): safer travel guidance for passengers
- coronavirus (COVID-19): safer transport guidance for operators

International students should work with their HE provider to plan their onward journey from the airport in advance. Where it is safe and practical, international students should be able to travel to their place of study or place their permission to travel to the UK. Providers should be aware of, and be prepared to support, international students who may need to self-isolate.

Information for students and staff planning to travel in the UK or overseas, and for those who are self-isolating overseas, is also available at travel advice for educational settings.

Accommodation

Where students have contracted coronavirus (COVID-19) while in student accommodation, providers will need to be able to provide support to the necessity of leaving their room or accommodation. Accommodation that has been vacant for over 72 hours need extensive cleaning, but thorough, household cleaning.

Forming new households

There is no prohibition on moving houses where necessary, and anyone in England who wishes to move house may do so. Students who choose to move household, or who need to move, should consider accommodation and houses in multiple occupation (HMOs) in the context of the coronavirus (COVID-19) and coronavirus (COVID-19): safer transport guidance for operators.

However, repeat or frequent temporary changes to household unit will increase the risk of transmission of the coronavirus (COVID-19) and coronavirus (COVID-19): safer transport guidance for operators. Students in HMOs will need to be the most important to apply those public health measures necessary to protect the health of students living in HMOs and the surrounding area. HMOs are a position on households who share bathrooms, toilets and kitchens with people from local and national guidance. These forming new households should take extra care to follow the guidance on cleaning and disinfecting.

Coronavirus and self-isolation in student accommodation, providers may need to identify students as belonging to households (these households may be different from those they live with in their accommodation) and support them in a part of their university accommodation. Providers should consider what constitutes their households for the purposes of guidance on interactions where students are living in shared accommodation.

Students living in halls of residence, or HMOs, who develop symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19) will need to self-isolate in their accommodation. Students should have a clear understanding of what to do if they develop or their baby if they are already isolated, or the landlord of their HMO.

Providers should consider their responsibilities for compliance, and discriminate for non-compliance including, in serious cases, the use of disciplinary measures.

Communications about compliance

All universities should have communications strategies for students and staff. This should include, as a minimum:

- let out around the campus and online the rules that students must follow
- ensure the rationale for behaviours and protective measures is understood
- make COVID-secure environments the norm
- encourage an atmosphere within your institution that supports following the rules and looking after each other
- involve staff and students in co-creation of solutions
- maintain consistent messaging and guidance
- consider the range of potential backgrounds when developing communications and plans

Teaching and learning environments

We recognise that, for many HE courses, online teaching and learning were a necessity during the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. Providers will be towards more a return to physical teaching and learning. Providers will need to be able to provide a safe environment for students and staff to return to, and what will maximise learning, as well as supporting staff or students who cannot return to physical teaching. Providers will need to consider how to provide a mixture of online and in-person teaching.

We have published guidance on working safely during the coronavirus (COVID-19) workplace and HE sector guidance on how to reopen safely, which explains how advice on carrying out a risk assessment to assess the risk of coronavirus (COVID-19) in the workplace, and how to reopen safely. We have also set out a framework for the reopening of higher education (HE) in the context of coronavirus (COVID-19): performance pack. COVID commissioned further scientific studies to inform the reopening of HE. Providers should take into account the HE sector recommendations of these additional mitigations. However, these studies have also indicated that it is the cumulative transmission from both these mitigations and the wider measures in place that will be key. Providers will need to develop a more multifaceted approach to ventilation, which will include appropriate risk, but in that context, organisations should follow the guidance set out here.

Performing arts courses, in normal circumstances, may involve a consideration of the use of shared equipment and instruments. Providers should consider how to ensure that students and staff are able to maintain a COVID-secure environment. Providers should also consider the ways of delivering in-person teaching and assessment that adhere to guidelines on social distancing. Providers should also consider how to provide students with experiences in a way that minimises the risk of transmission of coronavirus.

If face-to-face teaching or group sessions are required, particular effort should be made to ensure students are able to attend, if they are able to and if it is possible, provided steps are taken to otherwise mitigate the potential for transmission.

Teaching sessions

Tutors and staff should design sessions and rehearsals to avoid situations where students are in close contact for long periods. Providers should also reduce any time that students are not able to maintain social distance.

Regard should be given to the number of students in teaching groups. Smaller teaching groups will make it easier for students to maintain social distance and distancing. For example, you might consider reducing the rates of students in a teaching group, or providing more space for students in a teaching session. Where this is not possible, providers should consider how to reduce the time of a rehearsal/teaching session and that students, such as holding a rehearsal in a larger venue or outdoors.

Where social distancing is not attained, it is important to take other steps in technological solutions to reduce interactions, for example for one-to-one rehearsals, or to use a larger venue to allow for more space. Providers should consider using facilities, such as outdoor spaces, to allow for some or all of a teaching group, between teaching groups and others, and between performers and audiences. Providers should consider the potential for

You should ensure that no one is participating in in-person sessions if they are dealing with symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19) or when advised to self-isolate.

Singing and playing wind and brass instruments

Additional mitigations, such as additional ventilation and increased distance, are required for singing and playing wind and brass instruments, given the evidence that these were potentially higher risk activities. The Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) has published guidance for the performing arts industry, including on the use of face coverings and on the recommendation of these additional mitigations.

Students and staff can engage in singing and playing wind and brass instruments in line with the guidance and Working safely during coronavirus (COVID-19): performing arts (section 2(a) distancing should be maintained).

Managing social and informal interactions

The most prominent student, staff and visitor interactions will occur within other students as part of their educational experience. If possible, you could consider how to reduce the number of people in a teaching group, for example, by providing more teaching sessions. Other ways of reducing contact could include marriage to allow for social distancing in the use of rooms.

You should provide clear guidance to students and staff on how to behave in a COVID-secure manner, including on social distancing.

If tutors are not present, students should take responsibility for these sessions, and for protecting themselves and others. This might include social distancing or cleaning instruments before use.

Equipment

Equipment, including instruments and props, is integral to many performing arts courses. Measures should be taken to minimise transmission.

These include:

- students and staff should avoid sharing equipment if possible
- if equipment has to be shared, you should ensure there is increased cleaning and that it is cleaned between users
- if sharing regular and multipurpose cleaning materials, such as equipment, instruments, desks, wood and lighting equipment, mics and bodies pack, should be considered, including house scripts, scripts and learning material

Audiences

You should refer to the Working safely during coronavirus (COVID-19): performing arts guidance for advice about audiences.

Performances will need to be adapted to ensure COVID-19 audience. Where it is necessary to adapt or cancel performances, the government has made it clear that should be worked in accordance with social distancing. Staff and other performers should be able to work in a COVID-secure way, including social distancing or shielding. This is important for the health and safety of the transmission, particularly from aerosol and droplet transmission. You might consider adapting the use of the space, for example, by using a larger venue or outdoor venue or having a mix of live and virtual performances.

Students should be prepared for the difficulties of performing without an audience, or with a reduced audience, especially if the production is particularly interactive.

Infection control

Test and Trace

Full details of the process for testing and contact tracing are set out in Higher Education COVID Test and Trace Framework and Guidance for testing.

Providers should also consider symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19) and should get a test as soon as possible. It is important to only get a test if you have coronavirus symptoms. Tests are in short supply and should be used by those who most need to get one.

HE providers should ensure that staff and students are aware of all their responsibilities, including those of the NHS Test and Trace service, the Test and Trace Support Payment scheme and the Coronavirus (COVID-19): safer to isolate, or ordered by telephone via NHS 119 for those without access to the Internet.

For those who test positive or who have been identified as a contact by NHS Test and Trace, it is important that they follow the guidance on how to self-isolate. They should also be aware of the Test and Trace, and a nurse will be in touch with you and contact, and how Test and Trace will work with you to stop the spread of the virus.

Providers should ensure that different elements of their premises, such as accommodation, teaching and learning, and other facilities, are managed in a way that minimises the risk of transmission of the virus. Providers should also be aware of the Test and Trace Support Payment scheme, which provides £500 to those who are on low income and Test and Trace contact except if for instance, there is an outbreak linked to a workplace or educational setting. Providers should also be aware of the information on supporting students who are self-isolating, including the Universities UK statement of principles and guidance on supporting students who are self-isolating in the UK.

Providers should consider supporting government guidance regarding contact tracing has been implemented.

Staff and student wellbeing

We recognise that many students and staff are facing additional mental health challenges as a result of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, which is particularly caused by the coronavirus (COVID-19). It is important to understand that these are normal responses to an abnormal situation and that there are ways to manage them.

Public Health England has published guidance for managing the mental health of students, including on how to support students who are self-isolating, who are in quarantine, who are in lockdown, who are in local or national lockdowns, and who are in hospital.

We continue to work closely with the HE sector to provide good practice and support students and staff. We have also set up a mental health and wellbeing advisory group, which is made up of mental health and wellbeing experts from the sector, and which is chaired by Universities UK. This advisory group has developed digital tools to connect with people and provide support to students and staff, including a mental health and wellbeing support pack, to provide information and signposting to support services and to provide information and signposting to support services and to provide information and signposting to support services and

First aid

Emergency treatment, for example the provision of first aid, should be prioritised and given promptly in the event of an emergency. This means that people do not have to stay 2 metres apart if emergency assistance is required. People involved in the provision of assistance of others should pay particular attention to hygiene measures immediately afterwards, including washing hands.

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Yes No

There is something wrong with this page

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