



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

GUIDANCE

Start and end of term guidance for university students

This guidance is aimed at providing information to students on keeping themselves, their families, friends and university communities safe at the start and end of term.

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Introduction

Universities have worked really hard to provide COVID-secure campuses for students and staff.

The Welsh Government has treated students in the same way as any other adult member of the population.

Universities in Wales are open for essential on campus activity as many students and staff need access to a laboratory, specialist academic library, appropriate study space or a studio.

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In considering whether learning should be attended in person we have asked our universities to consider this on an essential only basis, with the majority of students being asked to study online only and not to travel to their term time household this term.

However, some students will have been asked to return to university to attend in person learning and this may mean you have moved to live in your term time household.

We also know that many students are living in their term time household as a matter of personal choice or because they only have one household and do not need to travel.

Students should remember that different rules may apply in different parts of the UK.

Please familiarise yourself with the rules in Wales.

Summer Term

We are hopeful that, subject to the public health position continuing on its current trajectory, we will be able to welcome all students back to campus for the summer term. From the 12th April, it is our expectation that all students can return for blended learning for the duration of the summer term.

The Welsh Government will review the position at the end of March and will make an announcement on 1 April.

If you have not yet returned to your term time address, you should not travel until your university tells you that in-person learning will resume.

If you have returned to your term time address, we are asking you to stay in your term time household for the Easter Break.

This is because we know that the virus spreads when people make new contacts. When you move between your term time and out of term address you form new households and this a really easy way for the virus to spread.

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We also know some people are at increased risk of harms, those who are extremely vulnerable to poorer outcomes from COVID-19 and we all need to help keep everyone safe.

We also need to be careful to control the possible spread of new variants of the virus and travel around the country is one way this could happen.

We know the vaccination programme has been making great ground, but we must give the vaccination programme time to be fully effective in protecting the most vulnerable and because we know not everyone who could be at risk will have received the vaccine just yet.

COVID-19 symptoms

If you have any **coronavirus symptoms** (a high temperature, a new continuous cough or a loss or change of taste or smell), you must self-isolate at home (where you are currently living) and **get a test**.

You must not go to a GP surgery, pharmacy or hospital.

The self-isolation period is 10 days.

If you've tested positive for COVID-19, or have been told to self-isolate by the NHS Test, Trace, Protect (TTP) service you must stay at home. You are breaking the law and could be fined if you do not stay at home and self-isolate.

What if I need to travel – can I travel?

If you do not have symptoms, have not tested positive or you have not been told to self-isolate, the regulations allow you to travel if it is necessary for you to do so and there is no practicable alternative, (the primary reason for students to be able to travel is generally in order to access educational services in case of travel back to your term address).

For the moment, our advice to students is only travel between your term time

and out of term address if you have a specific reason which makes the travel necessary, such as being told by your university your in-person education will resume, caring responsibilities and there is no practical alternative to your providing the care, a medical appointment which necessitates your presence in person, if you have employment or if you are struggling with your mental health.

Stay local restrictions in Wales were changed to 'Stay within Wales' from 27 March.

In relation to students who have two households, one during term time and one out-of-term, the expectation is that they should not travel between them during the term without good reason - while the travel itself would be allowed, purely social visits should take place outdoors and be done in accordance with the normal rules on gathering with others. Please see the 'Test before travel' guidance.

Students need to make judgements for themselves about what is reasonable and how the rules apply to a visit to the household they are not, at the specific time, living in. Keep in mind that the purpose of the restrictions is to prevent the spreading of the virus, including to those we care about.

Remember we all have a responsibility to recognise the risks the virus presents to ourselves, our families and friends and our wider communities.

- You cannot leave Wales without a reasonable excuse. Similarly, people living outside Wales also need a reasonable excuse to be able to travel in to Wales. Accessing educational services is a reasonable excuse, which enables students to cross the border at the start and end of the term. Please try and reduce the number of different people you see. It is better to see the same people regularly than to see lots of different people occasionally.
- Please maintain social distancing and hand hygiene.

If the circumstances are such that you are allowed to travel, you must take extra care and should get tested before you travel.

If you're worried about your mental health and wellbeing, you may wish to contact your student welfare services or organisations such as [Mind Cymru](#) and

Student Space.

If you are experiencing a significant exacerbation of your symptoms, contact your GP, NHS 111, your student support or someone you trust.

Travelling from your term time address to your out of term address

Asymptomatic test before travel

If you need to travel from your term time address to an out of term address, you should book two asymptomatic tests, 3 days apart, at your university testing facility before you travel.

These tests will help to identify if you have COVID-19 and help avoid inadvertently taking the virus from one place to another.

Most universities are using the Government supported lateral flow devices. However, Cardiff University is providing their own asymptomatic screening service.

To book your tests please contact your university.

A test will tell you if you are infectious with the virus at that single point in time, so you should plan to travel as close to the test result as possible and within 24 hours of your second test if you get the all clear.

Important – your test result is only accurate on the day of the test. Even if you test negative, you must still remember to follow the rules.

What if I test positive?

If you test positive, you will need to **self-isolate** immediately at your term time address for 10 days in strict accordance with the guidance. You will also need to get an **NHS COVID PCR test** to confirm the result of the asymptomatic test. The

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reason we're asking you to do this is to help us monitor how accurate the asymptomatic test is. We are confident that the asymptomatic test is accurate but we need the follow-up NHS COVID PCR test to support Test Trace Protect. The NHS COVID PCR test detects the presence of the virus in your body by detecting COVID-19 genetic material in your nose or throat. It is really important that you get a follow-up NHS COVID PCR test if your asymptomatic test is positive not just to support Test Trace Protect, but because the genetic material analysis is also really important to help us understand the virus.

A person who is a close contact of a person who tests positive, must also self-isolate for 10 days from the date of the test. This means a close contact would need to self-isolate at their term time address for 10 days.

This may feel like getting tested will not help you, as you may test positive which may mean you can't do what you planned. It could also stop your friends being able to do what they had planned. We know this is a really difficult choice, but we also know that if you travel to another part of Wales or the UK for the Easter break and take the virus with you, you will be putting other people at risk. It is essential therefore that you follow the rules and self-isolate if you have symptoms, test positive or are a close contact of someone who has.

Controlling the virus and being able to release restrictions is dependent to a large degree on the behaviour of individuals and communities.

If we all do our bit to help keep the virus under control then hopefully we will all be able to look forward to doing more of the things we would like to do. It is important that you continue to do the right thing, so getting tested before you travel and self isolating if you do test positive will really help everyone stay safe and keep the rates low so we can all get on with our lives in the longer term.

If you've tested positive for COVID-19, or have been told to self-isolate by the NHS Wales Test, Trace, Protect (TTP) service you must stay at home. You are breaking the law and could be fined if you do not stay at home and self-isolate.

Travelling back to your term time address

Testing before travel

All students studying in Wales who plan to return to their term time address from any part of Wales or the UK to access in-person teaching or on-campus facilities such as the library, study spaces or specialist facilities will be able to access free tests before travel. A test before travel will help to identify if you have the virus before you travel and help keep your term time household safe.

This is really important to help stop the spread of the virus from one location to another and will also mean we can reduce the numbers of students needing to self isolate.

If you've tested positive for COVID-19, or have been told to self-isolate by the NHS Wales Test, Trace, Protect (TTP) service you must stay at home. You are breaking the law and could be fined if you do not stay at home and self-isolate.

Remember, you should minimise social contacts before any potential change of household.

If you live in Wales or Scotland you will be able to book a free **NHS COVID PCR test**.

If you live in England you will need to **book a test** at your local community asymptomatic testing centre 48 hours before you travel. You will need to go online to your local authority website to book a test at a community testing centre.

How do I book an NHS COVID PCR test?

If you live in Wales or Scotland you can book your NHS COVID PCR test using the NHS COVID testing portal or using the phone booking line.

You should book your test 48 hours before you plan to travel.

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On the **NHS COVID** testing portal or using the phone booking line number, you should:

- answer the questions normally and honestly
- when asked if you have symptoms, select 'No'
- when asked if you are an essential worker, select 'No' (unless that is true for you)
- when asked 'Why are you asking for a test?' you should choose the option 'I'm a student returning to university in Wales'

We strongly recommend that you book a test at a drive through facility so you are not exposed to others at the testing site who may be infectious with COVID-19.

Test results

The results of the test will not be shared with your institution.

Negative

On receiving a negative test, you should travel to your term-time address within 48 hours.

Positive

On receipt of a positive result, students must self-isolate immediately and, therefore, not travel. You and anyone you live with must follow the **self-isolation** guidance and any instructions a contact tracer gives you.

If you've tested positive for COVID-19, or have been told to self-isolate by the NHS Wales Test, Trace, Protect (TTP) service you must stay at home. You are breaking the law and could be fined if you do not stay at home and self-isolate.

We recommend that you let your university know if you test positive since this can be helpful in terms of the institution providing pastoral support and further

advice. This may also mean you will not be back on campus for the start of in person teaching.

If you require support while self-isolating, you should contact your university to discuss what support is available.

On campus asymptomatic testing

We are asking all students to take part in asymptomatic COVID-19 tests when they return to university. This will help those who are asymptomatic but could spread the virus know that they have to self-isolate [to protect others]. The majority of universities in Wales are offering the government funded lateral flow test.

All students using campus facilities or receiving in person education will be offered asymptomatic tests when they return to campus. You should book your first two tests with your university. Try to plan ahead and book your tests before you arrive. You should book two tests, three days apart.

After the initial two tests, you will need to book twice weekly tests for the first 28 days. This will help to control the spread of the virus and help stop and contain any clusters which can happen in student accommodation when you re-join your term time household.

Testing is totally voluntary but we strongly recommend you take part in the asymptomatic tests to help keep your university community safe and to help keep in person university activity safe and open.

If you do not take an asymptomatic test, we recommend you self-isolate for the first 10 days – this means reducing contacts, staying in as much as possible and maintaining social distance and wearing a face covering even within your student household.

Cardiff University is offering its own screening service.

Responsible Behaviours

The Minister for Education and the Welsh Government are committed to ensuring that students are able to access their education as a priority and we need to work together to do the right thing to help us maintain the current reduction in the transmission of the virus in Wales.

Research by the ONS shows that the majority of students are doing the right things, or at least trying their best to do the right things and follow the rules.

The Welsh Government is very grateful to students for maintaining high levels of compliance in difficult circumstances, no other generation has been asked to endure such a different university experience.

COVID-19 is highly infectious and unfortunately, it can spread very quickly especially to the people you live with. We also know that some people can get very unwell, and although we know that the first priority groups have received a vaccine, we still need to be cautious to help protect the vulnerable.

We all know that COVID-19 transmits easily when people have contact with other people and we have all been limiting contacts and staying home to keep Wales safe.

We don't want people to be worried unnecessarily and we know that universities in Wales have had low numbers of students who have tested positive with COVID-19.

However, we also know that some people, and more frequently young people, will have COVID-19 and have no symptoms at all. This is known as an asymptomatic case and is particularly worrying as if you don't know you have the virus you're unable to take steps to prevent passing it on to other people that you live with and come into contact with.

We have all made huge changes to the way we live our lives and we know that since the first lockdown in March 2020, it's been a particularly difficult time for students. However, we also know that students have played their part and self-isolated when it has been necessary to do so and on the whole followed the

range of other COVID-19 rules. Your collective efforts have kept the number of infections in the student population down. Reducing travel around the country will help allow the Welsh Government to prioritise education and allow more in-person activity at your university to resume.

We know your university experience this year has been very different from your expectations and you've missed out on many of the social aspects of university life. But in doing so you have helped to keep the virus under control, reduced the risk of catching and spreading the virus and this will certainly have saved lives.

We know you have a strong desire to socialise but it is this activity which gives rise to the risks and whilst we know it's a big ask we need everyone to continue in their efforts to live their lives as safely as possible.

Most importantly, you must not meet other people who are not part of your household indoors, **avoid large gatherings or house parties** - these types of events are against the law and significantly increase your risk of catching COVID-19 and increase the risk of COVID-19 spreading quickly between you and your friends.

Remember these things are about keeping education open, so you can continue your studies on campus.

What can I do?

Please see our **FAQs** for more information.

Stay local restrictions in Wales were changed to 'Stay within Wales' from 27 March.

People can meet family and friends who live in Wales as long as it is outdoors, including in private gardens, up to a maximum of six people (excluding any carers or children aged under 11 from either household) from two households whilst socially distanced.

Please try and reduce the number of different people you see. It is better to see

the same people regularly than to see lots of different people occasionally

Please maintain social distancing and hand hygiene.

You cannot leave Wales without a reasonable excuse. People living outside Wales also need a reasonable excuse to be able travel in to Wales.

Outdoor sports courts, including tennis courts, golf courses and bowling greens, can open.

Outdoor environments are lower risk in relation to coronavirus transmission. However, the risk cannot be eliminated. People should ensure that they maintain social distancing and hand hygiene when visiting these facilities. The operators of these facilities must take all reasonable measures to manage risk and maintain physical distancing.

Can I travel to exercise or access sport and leisure facilities?

You can travel for these purposes, but you must stay local. Generally, this means that you should not be travelling more than 5 miles from your home.

Who can I exercise with?

You can exercise in public outdoor places with:

- members of your household or support bubble, or
- with people from one other household, as long as the total number of people exercising is no more than 6 (excluding any carers or children under 11 from either of those households)

You should ensure that you maintain social distancing from the people you are exercising with if they are not in your household or support bubble. You should also be mindful that exercise must start and finish from your home. You should not travel to meet with someone outside of your household or support bubble.

Are picnics and barbecues with my household allowed?

Yes, as long as you stay within Wales.

Are picnics and barbecues with one other household allowed?

Yes, as long as you stay local and the maximum number of people meeting is six people from two households (not including any carers or children under 11 from either household). You should maintain social distancing and avoid sharing or using the same items as the other household, for example plates, cups and food packages. Any item that is passed between two households will increase the risk of the spread of the virus.

If you choose to have a picnic or barbecue with members of your support **bubble**, the maximum number of four people does not apply. If you are meeting members of your support bubble outdoors, you should not meet with any other household at the same time.

Can I travel to parks, beaches, visitor attractions and beauty spots to meet another household?

Travel within Wales is permitted and some outdoor spaces for tourists are open. However, we ask that you avoid unnecessary travel and crowded spaces where possible. You should take care to always maintain **social distancing** and **hand hygiene**, particular if using toilets and other facilities.

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