



Michelle Donelan MP
Minister of State for Universities

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2nd November 2020

Dear students,

I understand the questions that many of you may have following the Prime Minister's announcement on Saturday, outlining the new national restrictions due to come into place on 5 November 2020.

Things have moved quickly as we continue to respond to the pandemic, but I wanted to write to you at the earliest opportunity to explain how these restrictions will affect you and your studies.

We are in the process of finalising guidance setting out what these new restrictions will mean for Higher Education, universities, and students, and this will be available shortly.

This guidance will explain that:

- By keeping universities open, we are prioritising education so that there is no gap in your academic journeys and lives.
- As for everyone under the new national restrictions from 5 November, you should stay in your current home. This means you should not leave your term time address to return to your parents' or carer's home until at least 2 December - and should continue to learn at university for the remainder of this term.
 - The reason we are asking you to remain at your university area and not to travel home before the new restrictions come into place on Thursday is to prevent any further spread of COVID 19 – any movement around the country will risk the lives of our loved ones.
 - I know and appreciate that a number of you may want to be back with your family during this difficult time, but I urge you to stay where you are in order to save lives. I can assure you that I will work with universities to ensure well-being, communications and mental health support are prioritised.

- We as a government recognise the importance of face to face teaching, including for your mental health and wellbeing, and we expect this to continue. Universities have worked hard to make teaching and learning COVID-secure, and we have not seen evidence of increased transmission within these environments. If you have any concerns, please do speak to your university – it is crucial that you and staff members feel safe.
- Your university must ensure the quality of the tuition you receive. If more teaching is moved online, standards must be maintained. This means ensuring that courses provide a high-quality academic experience, students are supported and achieve good outcomes, and standards are protected. We have been very clear about this and have worked with the Office for Students to regularly review the online tuition being provided.
 - If you have any concerns please do speak to your university. If you need to, you can make a formal complaint, and if you are still not happy you can refer your case to the [Office of the Independent Adjudicator](#).
- I know that the current year has been hard, but I want to reassure you that your education, health and wellbeing remain my top priority. Universities are required to provide mental health and pastoral support and this will be available to you in the coming weeks. Please also take a look at the [Student Space](#) platform, which you may find helpful.

I want to thank you again for your hard work and perseverance. I remain committed to helping you to continue your university studies during these unprecedented and challenging times.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Michelle Donelan". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, sweeping flourish at the end.

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