**Lifting of Covid restrictions – further guidance for Managers and Staff – Questions and Answers**

**Updated 3 February 2022**

Dear colleagues,

When I commenced our Q&A communications in the Spring of 2020, I didn’t expect that I would be providing updates in response to rapidly changing government guidance throughout 2020, 2021 and early into 2022. But here we are – very much firmly into the new semester.

With the lifting of Covid restrictions, I have updated with one or two new Q&A’s you might find useful – if not for yourselves, then for other members of your team(s) to share or to answer queries they might receive. A couple of reminder Q&A’s from previous versions are included, where noted.

While restrictions have lifted and a sense of normality is returning, we are still in a pandemic and need to be particularly mindful of those who may be more vulnerable to Covid, understanding that some people will feel more comfortable with the lifting of restrictions than others. Please continue with regular testing and reporting of positive tests via the channels indicated below. We continue to monitor the number of positive test results for both staff and students on a daily basis.

Please contact me, Lissie Whitaker, E.Whitaker@chi.ac.uk, if you have any questions you feel would be useful to share. More importantly, it will be helpful to hear whether it might be useful to consider a more general set of Q&A’s covering aspects of our working lives and arrangements in the university, as a general update. As ever, I will look forward to hearing from you.

Warm wishes to you all throughout the year ahead.

Lissie

***1. What is the latest guidance for Universities?***

There are no longer restrictions on the approach to teaching and learning in higher education as a result of COVID-19. There is no requirement for social distancing or other measures within in person teaching. Universities are therefore able to shape their courses without restrictions to face-to-face provision.

* You can access the latest guidance for Universities (as at 20 January 2022): [Higher education COVID-19 operational guidance (publishing.service.gov.uk)](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1048605/180122_Higher_education_COVID-19_operational_guidance.pdf)

***2. Where can I find more general guidance?***

One of the elements of the DfE guidance is for us to consider the approach to managing the virus and to conduct risk assessments in light of this for our particular circumstances.

* More general guidance for all members of the public is available via this link (updated 27 January 2022): <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/covid-19-coronavirus-restrictions-what-you-can-and-cannot-do?priority-taxon=774cee22-d896-44c1-a611-e3109cce8eae>

***3. I have got Covid – how do I report it?***

We are required to make a note of the number of new and/or ongoing cases and to support arrangements where staff are not able to come into work due to self-isolating/feeling unwell. For these reasons, you should confirm symptoms of Covid or confirmed cases of Covid:

* to your line manager or Head or Director of Department/Institute without delay
* email covidreportsupport@chi.ac.uk.
* contact: Helen at H.Girling@chi.ac.uk, or Cecile at C.Mould@chi.ac.uk.

***4. Should we continue to wear face coverings at work?***

We strongly encourage all staff and students to continue to wear a face covering in busy and communal areas indoors, including:

* Classrooms, lectures, tutorials, or workshops.
* Corridors
* The Students’ Union shop
* Inter-campus buses
* Chichester and Bognor Regis Learning Resource Centres/SIZ
* Otters restaurant (including Costa and Starbuck counters) unless seated

As the University is a respectful community, you are asked to respond positively if a member of staff or student asks you to wear a face covering, unless you are exempt. The HE guidance is very clear that: "*No student should be denied education on the grounds of whether they are, or are not, wearing a face covering.*”

***5. Should I continue testing?***

Yes.

* Lateral Flow Device tests are free for staff and students on campus, available from the SIZ desks at Bishop Otter Campus and Bognor Regis campus.
* We encourage you to continue **testing at least twice a week.** It is important to take a test (a) before you travel back to the University and (b) in the days after you start back.

If you receive a positive LFD or PCR Covid test, you can now end self-isolation after five days, providing you have two negative LFD results taken on consecutive days, i.e. 24 hours apart. The first test should not be taken before the fifth day after your symptoms started (or the day your test was taken if you did not have symptoms). The self-isolation period remains ten full days for those without negative results from two LFD tests taken a day apart.

***6. I have been a close contact of a positive case – what should I do?***

You should follow government/PHE guidance (updated 17 January 2022).

* Please review this guidance if you have symptoms, you are living with someone who has symptoms, or you have been a close contact of a positive case: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-stay-at-home-guidance/stay-at-home-guidance-for-households-with-possible-coronavirus-covid-19-infection#exempt>

***7. Will the temporary working arrangements agreed in my department continue?***

No. Restrictions have been lifted and in line with government guidance, the University is fully operational. Students and staff will continue to participate in in person teaching and face-to-face interactive sessions on an on-going basis.

* Where temporary working arrangements had been agreed during the lockdown period or when indicated under Plan B, temporary arrangements will now cease.
* If you have been working under a temporary hybrid approach, i.e. working on campus as well as working remotely for some of the time, you will now be expected to return to working on campus, unless you have had your working arrangements formally agreed under the **Remote Working Policy** or the **Flexible Working Policy**, both available under Policies and Procedures on our Staff Intranet/HR page.

***8. Are we continuing with other protective measures?***

Yes. Although legal restrictions have been lifted and many people have been vaccinated, it is still possible to catch and spread COVID-19, even if you are fully vaccinated. COVID-19 will be a feature of our lives for the foreseeable future, and whilst we are all learning to live with it and manage the risk to ourselves and others, we still have a responsibility to protect others from risks to their health and safety, even where staff or students are vaccinated.

***Reminder:***Covid-19 can still be spread through social contact and good hygiene remains an important safety measure.

* Regularly wash hands with soap and water and use the hand sanitisers available across the campuses.
* Wear face coverings on campus, as indicated in Point 4, above.
* Support good ventilation, opening windows/doors to improve natural ventilation where possible.

***9. Reminder: Will the Covid-19 Vaccination be available on-campus?***

No. There is no vaccination centre on-campus.

There are vaccination centres available across the West Sussex district, including a centre at the [Northgate Car Park](https://www.google.com/maps/dir/Northgate%2BCar%2BPark%2BNorthgate%2BChichester%2BPO19%2B6AA/%4050.8415548%2C-0.7775392%2C16z/data%3D%214m5%214m4%211m0%211m2%211m1%211s0x4874528408b8959b%3A0xa4eb72b2821a4979) which is situated across the road from Bishop Otter campus. The closest vaccination centre to Bognor Regis campus is the [Bognor Medical Practice](https://www.bognor-practice.co.uk/Contact) (located at the Health Centre, West Street, Bognor Regis, PO21 1UT).

***10. Reminder: Do I have to be vaccinated against Covid-19 to come into work?***

No. Although staff do not have to be vaccinated to attend work, we strongly encourage staff and students to get vaccinated to help prevent the spread of infection across our University community. Whilst we recommend people to get vaccinated, it is a personal decision whether or not to receive the vaccine, whether this be for health or other reasons. We do, however, strongly encourage the take-up of vaccination.

The University continues to receive external advice from sources such as the government, PHE, the Universities and Colleges Employers Association, UUK and the Office for Students. If you have any health and safety concerns, please contact Kevin Hickman, Environmental Health and Safety Manager: K.Hickman@chi.ac.uk in the first instance.

***11. Is there guidance for staff who have been considered clinically extremely vulnerable?***

The shielding programme [ended in England](https://www.gov.uk/government/news/shielding-programme-ends-for-most-vulnerable) on 15 September 2021.

* You can find further guidance here (updated 24 December 2021): <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-on-shielding-and-protecting-extremely-vulnerable-persons-from-covid-19/guidance-on-shielding-and-protecting-extremely-vulnerable-persons-from-covid-19>

Should you require advice to help you stay safe and well at work, please discuss with your manager or contact Kevin Hickman, K.Hickman@chi.ac.uk, in Health and Safety.

***12. Are there restrictions on travelling to England from abroad?***

Government guidance on travelling to England from abroad can be accessed via the following link (as at 24 January 2022): <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/travel-to-england-from-another-country-during-coronavirus-covid-19>

If you are planning to go abroad keep checking the gov.uk travel guidance for any changes.

***13. Reminder: Does the University’s Sickness Absence policy apply if I am unwell due to COVID-19?***

Yes. The University’s sickness absence policy will apply if you are unwell due to coronavirus or any other illness. It is important for anyone unwell to report this to their line manager as with any period of sickness absence, and to ensure they keep in regular contact with their manager throughout their period of ill-health. The University’s sickness absence procedures can be found on the Human Resources page of the Staff Intranet and your lead HR contact will also be able to provide support and advise. Email: hr@chi.ac.uk

***14. Are facilities open on campus?***

Yes. University halls of residence, libraries, study spaces, food and coffee outlets, sports facilities and other services on campus are open as normal.