



Introduction

As we welcome our students back to University, we want to tell you about the measures we've put in place to help protect our community from the effects of COVID-19.

All our students understand they have a responsibility to their neighbours, and we're committed to making their return to the city safe for everyone. The action we've taken matches the guidance issued by the Department for Education, and we'll continue to review our plans as the academic year progresses.

We want to tell you about the University's plans, including the Safe Community Charter that all our students are bound by, and how we'll be welcoming new and returning students from the UK and overseas. We'd also like you to know how we'll be engaging with the community and how you can stay in touch with us.

We've expanded our Estate Patrol by 25 per cent and we're working with the City Council and Devon and Cornwall Police to respond quickly to complaints about noise and anti-social behaviour. We know that there have been problems in the first week and we have taken rapid action and responded to the concerns raised. We will do everything we can to keep the community safe.

Our staff and students have been working with the NHS and local and national government since the start of the pandemic, helping to save lives, supply PPE and contribute to cutting-edge scientific research. We're proud of what we've achieved, but as we welcome students back for the first time since March, our focus is on limiting the impact of COVID-19 both on and off campus.

Overview

Testing and tracing	Flexible capacity alongside that of the NHS and PHE; we offer one of the most extensive and robust testing programmes of any university in the UK
Risk management	Blend of online and in-person teaching, improved ventilation, mandatory face coverings, social distancing
Accommodation and social interaction	Student Safe Community Charter, induction and accommodation plans, Students' Guild events meet best practice, significant use of digital engagement
Physical and mental health of students and staff	Additional investment for counselling and support, quarantine online support package, flu jabs for all staff
Communication strategy	Weekly email bulletins and comprehensive COVID-19 website, Here to Help team in first two weeks, ongoing social media campaigns



Test and Trace

We've partnered with HALO™, the UK's first commercial provider of saliva-based COVID-19 testing.

This simple and fast test will help us identify cases and isolate them quickly, while also giving those who aren't infected the confidence to return to their work or studies. Results are issued within 24 hours and then fed into the national Test and Trace system. The University has set up a Rapid Response Hub for all students and staff to report symptoms and request tests.



University Registrar Mike Shore-Nye said, "Saliva testing will help make our communities safer. We will not be taking up valuable NHS resources and we are able to direct the testing towards the areas of highest need. Our number one priority is the health and well-being of students, staff and the wider community."

This testing regime is just one of a range of options we've developed in partnership with Public Health England and local NHS services, including the potential for bringing mobile testing centres to campuses if they are needed.



Safe Community Charter

All our students are required to read and abide by our Safe Community Charter, which will be issued to them in Welcome guides and forms part of their induction. The Charter reminds students of their individual and collective responsibilities, which include:

- ✓ following government guidance on social distancing
- ✓ self-isolating and home testing at the first sign of COVID-19 symptoms
- ✓ wearing face coverings indoors and washing hands regularly
- ✓ respecting the safety of everyone in the community.

We know the only way to keep everyone safe is if we all play our part, so the Charter also explains our commitment to students.

We pledge to

- ✓ carry out enhanced cleaning of all University premises
- ✓ operate a one-way system on campus
- ✓ implement a Test and Trace system
- ✓ reduce the number of people in lecture theatres, seminar rooms and study spaces.

These measures apply on campus, but we know the positive effect they will have on reducing the spread of COVID-19 in the community. We take seriously our role in influencing our students' behaviour and want these best practices to become second nature – not just at University, but while they're living, working, exploring and shopping in our city.

Our student pledge

"I agree to abide by the University of Exeter's COVID-19 secure protocols to keep me, my fellow students, our University and our local community safe in these uncertain times."



Welcoming Freshers

Our new students all understand and accept that their Freshers' Week experience will be unlike those in previous years. We hope you'll join us in giving them a warm welcome to our city, but this can't come at the expense of public safety or pose a risk to Exeter's and Devon's rate of COVID-19 infection.

With this in mind, we'll be taking the following actions to help manage and reduce the impact of their arrival:

- whenever possible, we'll be organising outdoor events to allow Freshers to meet one another at a distance and minimise the risk of transmission
- issuing all new and returning students with face coverings and digital thermometers
- organising online-only meet-and-greet events and providing optional remote attendance to students who want to limit the number of trips they make to campus, or who will be arriving to the city later
- supporting international and EU students who need to quarantine on arrival by providing an airport pickup service and arranging deliveries of food and other supplies.

We are also aware that several companies and promoters are currently advertising and selling tickets to unofficial 'Freshers' events. These are not linked to the University in any way, and our Students' Guild is actively advising students not to share or promote details of these events, and not to purchase tickets.

How our graduates are helping

An incredible 95 final-year medical students opted to graduate early in 2020 so they could join the NHS in the fight against COVID-19. Several clinically trained members of our College of Medicine and Health staff paused their work with us to return to the NHS too.

Our academics have helped produce laboratory research into COVID-19 genome sequencing, test development and contact tracing. Meanwhile, our staff have sent and even produced thousands of items of PPE to local healthcare services including the Royal Devon and Exeter Hospital. Around 2,000 face shields were developed by volunteers from the College of Engineering, Mathematics and Physical Sciences, who collaborated with local businesses on our Streatham Campus.

Meanwhile, a partnership between the University of Exeter and North Devon based Applegate has secured a £50,000 government grant to help develop Artificial Intelligence technology to help match supply and demand for vital health equipment during the pandemic. The partnership project is a free, non-commercial service to help provide masks, face shields and hand sanitiser to address the pandemic.



As University life begins again, our neighbours will understandably be concerned that the return of students to the city might increase the possibility of COVID-19 transmission.



- **Over 2,500 sanitiser dispensers and screens across our campuses**
- **More than 25,000 signs to direct students around one-way systems, remind them about social distancing measures and limit numbers in teaching spaces**
- **2 marquees on our Exeter campuses so meetings can be held outdoors, in line with government advice**

You may also be concerned about members of student households breaking local or national rules on public gatherings and house parties. We've expanded our Estate Patrol by 25 per cent and we're working with the City Council and Devon and Cornwall Police to respond quickly to complaints about noise and anti-social behaviour. The Exeter Violence and Night-Time Economy Forum (EVANTE), whose members include key University staff, will also be listening to residents and taking action when necessary.

Our team of Student Community Wardens will be providing peer-to-peer support to students living in University and private halls of residence, as well as areas of the city with a high concentration of private student rental properties. The team will be able to raise concerns to the University and will help deliver important safety and security messages to the community.



5	As level four and there is a material risk of healthcare services being overwhelmed
4	A COVID-19 epidemic is in general circulation; transmission is high or rising exponentially
3	A COVID-19 epidemic is in general circulation
2	COVID-19 is present in the UK, but the number of cases and transmission is low
1	COVID-19 is not known to be present in the UK



Resident Liaison Group meetings

Recently, we held a special Resident Liaison Group meeting with representatives from Devon and Cornwall Police, Exeter City Council, Public Health Devon, City Councillors and members of local resident associations.

We described the comprehensive suite of measures we've taken to ensure the safety and well-being of staff, students and the community.

This includes our constant monitoring of local conditions; we are committed to matching our alert level to the local, rather than the national, level. Currently, we are following guidance for alert level 3, but if Devon and Cornwall raise the alert to level 4, so will we.

Other points of discussion included:

- Our additional investment into CCTV and Estate Patrol, which includes 25% more staff coverage and an extra patrol van
- News about our testing capacity, Rapid Response Hub and student pledge
- Support and advice for members of the community and students in private sector accommodation.

The group will hold its next meeting online in November, with subsequent meetings scheduled for January and March 2021.

Term dates

Freshers' Week:

Monday 14 September – Sunday 20 September 2020

Autumn Term:

Monday 21 September – Friday 11 December 2020

Spring Term:

Monday 4 January – Friday 26 March 2021

Summer Term:

Monday 26 April – Friday 11 June 2021

Key links and contacts

University of Exeter COVID-19 mini-site:
exeter.ac.uk/coronavirus/

Safe Community Charter:
exeter.ac.uk/media/universityofexeter/coronavirus/imagesanddocs/Exeter_Charter.pdf

Impact on services for alert level 3:
exeter.ac.uk/media/universityofexeter/coronavirus/imagesanddocs/Alert_level_3_impact_on_activities_and_services.pdf

DfE guidance for universities:
gov.uk/government/news/updated-guidance-for-universities-ahead-of-reopening

If you have any questions please contact us via coronavirusequiries@exeter.ac.uk

Estate Patrol: 01392 723999

COVID-19 social distancing breaches (inside or outside) should be reported to the Police on 101/999 – depending on the seriousness of the breach.

The University's Estate Patrol (01392 723999) can assist with noise disturbances from student premises (if direct contact is not possible).

If you are unsure whether a student noise disturbance also represents a social distancing breach, the University's Estate Patrol can pass relevant details to the Police and Council if they are leading with a noise investigation. These investigations are often conducted in partnership.

Please note that the University, Police and City Council are regularly sharing information and coordinating their response based on the information they are receiving.

Please also note that some households have significantly more than six members and could be socialising legitimately. The 'rule of six' would not apply to these households.

