

**Regarding the return dates of students:**

HE providers should allow students on practical courses to return to campus in line with their planned start dates of between 4 January to week commencing 18 January 2021.

We encourage you to offer testing to allow students and staff to get a test as soon as possible after arrival back, and before they access teaching and learning facilities at the organisation. This might be possible prior to 4 January, but equally we recognise that it may not be possible for a range of logistical reasons. Limited contact and social distancing measures should be adhered to until a student has had two negative LFD tests. Alternatively, you may wish to stagger arrivals from your original start date, to enable students to get tested as soon as possible after they travel to university.

Students on the remaining courses should be taught online from the beginning of term so that students can continue their studies from home. HE providers should plan for students to return gradually from 25 January, over a 2-week period. Testing should again be offered as soon as possible after arrival back.

These dates are set out in guidance to manage the numbers of students arriving back at institutions and should be adhered to by providers - providers should not plan to bring back students early even if testing capacity could be in place to facilitate this.

**For students on placements from 4 January:**

For those students starting placements on 4 January away from the HE provider, the provider and the student should make arrangements for the best way to minimise transmission risk. If the placement is local to the HE provider's campus or teaching spaces then the students should be offered test facilities. However, if the student is placed away from campus or HEP's facilities then it is understood that these students cannot be offered testing. Students should continue to follow social distancing measures for the tier that their placement is within. If they develop symptoms they should request a test from the NHS.

If practical, and large number of your students (i.e. greater than 30) are placed in a similar location and will interact, then you should consider how they might access testing in their placement location. This could be via partnering with a provider in the location of your students placements. If students are placed in small groups and are unlikely to interact in large groups then it is not necessary to offer testing at their placement location.

Where students return back from placements to your campus or facilities and will interact with other students then you should make testing available at the right point in time for their return, but not beyond 7 February 2020.

**To respond to queries relating to small groups of students or providers operating in fairly unique or specific situations:**

- If you have a campus that your students will attend regularly from January and interact whilst there- you should be testing when students arrive back from the Christmas break. This is particularly important if they are returning to accommodation, or to teaching facilities where they will congregate.
- If you have a residential accommodation facility, testing should be offered when people arrive back

- If your students commute, or live in private accommodation of any kind, please ensure testing is available around the time of their first visit to your campus for teaching – if this is beyond 7 February please await further guidance on regular testing through the spring term.
- If your students only attend for a very short period of time, for example they attend your campus for one day before being placed then please refer to the placement guidance above.
- If asymptomatic testing is available locally to the wider community, you should encourage your students to take advantage of this if they are eligible.
- If students work in isolation across several campuses or are on work placements - and don't interact as a group or won't be interacting before 7 February then it is not necessary to offer testing on return and please await further guidance on regular testing throughout the spring term.

#### **FE involvement:**

We are offering a number of FE residential providers the opportunity to test their residential students when they return in January. Due to limited testing capacity, we have prioritised FE providers in higher risk areas and providers with over 100 residential students studying any course in the college, regardless of whether they are in term time / weekly / block residency.

Where residential students are aged under 18, parental consent is required to take part in the lateral flow testing. The college will be responsible in collecting the consent data and capturing the test results.