



I last wrote to you in November 2020, as we approached the end of the first term, during which we were able to offer our students face-to-face teaching combined with online teaching and learning support. This spring term has been very different. In line with Government instruction, all teaching has been online only, with the exception of a small group of students that require access to laboratories, specialist facilities and performance spaces who were able to return to face-to-face teaching from 8 March. Although teaching has been online, many of our students have returned to study from campus, making use of our Library and study spaces, and continuing to access online academic, welfare and wellbeing support.

The third, summer term, will be different again as it represents the main exam and assessments period, which means students should now be revising and preparing to submit academic coursework and essays. Throughout the pandemic, our priority has been to ensure that no student is academically disadvantaged as a result of Covid-19. In response, we have once again adapted our approach to exams and assessments to ensure that a student's results reflect their performance in these challenging circumstances. You can read more about our arrangements below.

Exams and assessments can be intimidating and we understand that the circumstances of the pandemic might be amplifying concerns. We strongly encourage our students to seek support if they believe that feelings of stress or anxiety are beginning to overwhelm them. Our Student Advisory & Wellbeing team have developed some simple self-help resources for [exam anxiety](#) and [exam help](#) which are a useful starting point for conversations about how to manage exams. Your student's department and our study support team also publish a range of support for taking online exams. Whether your student is studying at home, on campus or in the campus area, please encourage them to talk to their course lecturer or tutor if they are unsure about any aspect of the assessment programme.

On Wednesday 17 March, we sent all students an update on our plans for term three and you can read more about the current arrangements below. We are expecting to receive further guidance from the Government on options for a return to campus in mid-April. As soon as we have more information on what campus will be able to offer to our students, we will share this with them.

Best wishes  
Helen Groenendaal  
Head of Student Advisory & Wellbeing

## **Safety on and off campus - a message from our Deputy Principal (Operations), Dr David Ashton**

We want to create an environment where our students feel safe and whilst our Egham campus is in a relatively safe area, we can never be complacent. You can read [here](#) a message from our Deputy Principal on campus safety.

### **Our plans for term three**

On Wednesday 17 March, we provided our students with an update on our plans for term three. The current Government guidance allowed only students on practical and practice-based courses to return to face-to-face teaching.

For students on courses that are not practical or practice-based we do not yet have a date for their return to campus therefore, as far as their studies go, their learning will continue to take place online in term three. We expect to have some news from the Government on options for a return to campus in mid-April and we will send our students an update on what campus will offer for them before the start of term three.

While current restrictions mean we have very limited options to provide face-to-face support and facilities for our students, we have plans to increase what's on offer as soon as we're able to. We understand that some students may have already made decisions on where they wish to be for term three, regardless of any change in Government restrictions. However, we want to ensure that our students are aware of what we are planning so that they are able to make an informed decision as and when the Government guidance for term three is published, and we can hopefully go ahead with our plans for activities on campus.

As has been the case throughout the whole of term two, if a student has a compelling reason to return to campus, they may do so. Compelling reasons include; if they are better able to study from campus, or because they believe that studying from campus would improve their wellbeing. If your student believes that this applies to them and they have a room in Halls, please encourage them to get in touch with the Student Services Centre.



## On-campus lateral flow testing

In order to be able to keep our campus safe and avoid widespread self-isolations, our College and Government guidance requires all of our students and staff on campus to take a lateral flow test twice a week. All students must test if they are visiting campus to use facilities or are attending face-to-face teaching (unless they have had Covid-19 in the last 90 days).

Our Asymptomatic Testing Site is currently open on **Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays** and booking availability will change to **Monday-Friday from 7 April**. Our students who are returning back to campus for the first time, or who are commuting students are encouraged to take tests through their local authority, if they are available, before travelling to campus. Further information, including how students can book their twice-weekly lateral flow tests, can be found on the [student intranet](#).

## Study Support Grant

As part of our ongoing support for students during the pandemic, last term we re-launched the [Study Support Grant](#) - an amount of money available to eligible students who are facing financial difficulties. The fund includes £150,000 from the Government plus £200,000 from the College and a donation of 10% of salary from the Principal, Paul Layzell. Money from the fund can be used towards a range of expenses including; students who are experiencing broadband/internet issues or need a laptop, to cover outgoings/living costs for students who have experienced a loss of employment, rental payments for students living in private accommodation or who are having to contribute financially at home. More information, including how students can apply can be found on the [student intranet](#).



## Travel over Easter

Government guidance on student travel has recently changed and students are permitted to travel to their out of term addresses once for Easter. Further information can be found in the Government's FAQs [here](#). Please note that students who travelled back to campus to attend classes from 8 March are asked to not travel back to out of term addresses for the Easter break.

## Exams and assessments

The majority of summer written examinations will be held online (with the exception of Accounting and Finance). Students have been provided with a further update on specific exam arrangements for their department. Information on exams, including a preparation checklist and important dates can be found on the [student intranet](#). Exam timetables were published on **Tuesday 23 March** and the spring exam period begins on **Monday 26 April**.

## Graduation postponed

Within the Government's roadmap out of lockdown, an expectation has been created around the lifting of restrictions on 21 June however, this date might change – it may come forward, but it might also most to later in the year. As a result, the roadmap does not give us the guarantees and certainty we need to be able to plan and safely deliver the graduation ceremony our students have told us they want, nor does it give our students and alumni living overseas the assurance necessary to confidently organise international travel.



In light of these challenges and continued uncertainty, we have taken the difficult decision to postpone summer 2021 graduation ceremonies. We are committing instead to providing graduation ceremonies in 2022 for every student eligible to graduate in summer 2021, and every student who graduated in 2020, assuming conditions allow. This commitment means our students will have the opportunity to come to campus and experience the graduation ceremony they have told us matters to them. We have written to all students who graduated in 2020 and to all students eligible to graduate in 2021 to advise them.

Final year undergraduate and postgraduate students who successfully complete their studies at the end of the academic year 2021, will receive their Degree Certificate within three months of the award date of their degree; which is 1 August for undergraduate students. Final transcripts of results will be posted by the College within one month of the completion of their degree and publication of their final results.



## **What's on campus – term three**

In line with the Government roadmap, we are identifying how we can provide more on-campus, face-to-face events and activities during term three for students who are on campus or living within the local area. We'll have more detail before term starts but we hope that this will include sports and fitness, career planning, information on placement opportunities and job hunting, study support, volunteering projects and wellbeing events and support. There will be something for your student to get involved in, whatever the stage

of their studies and there will continue to be a version accessible for students away from campus.

This will be a mix of live streaming, recorded webinars, and/or online interactive resources. We will be confirming details with students at the end of April.