



Michelle Donelan MP
Minister of State for Universities

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11th August 2021

Dear International Students,

As the Universities Minister for England, I want to write directly to international students to emphasise how proud I am that so many of you have chosen or are considering a course of Higher Education (HE) at a UK university.

The past year and a half has been challenging for everyone, and I want to thank our current international students for the wonderful contribution you have made to the UK, as well as the patience and resilience you have demonstrated whilst studying here in light of the Covid-19 pandemic. I am sure that your academic experience this year has been rewarding and valuable and will contribute to the success of your future career.

Now, as we begin to unlock areas of society owing to the success of the vaccine rollout, I want to provide support and guidance in this letter to those joining (or re-joining) a UK university for the new academic year. Whether you are currently at your chosen university, are studying remotely from your home country, or plan to study here in the future, I hope you find this information useful.

Joining or returning to a UK university in the 2021/22 new academic year

Universities will be able to continue to welcome students back to campus for face-to-face teaching in the new academic year. HE teaching settings remain one of the safest and most Covid-secure environments, and I am confident that students will be able to come here to receive world-class tuition from UK universities that consistently produce top global graduates, with a focus on student experience.

I believe that this world-leading teaching offer, taken together with new visa flexibilities and the progress we have made in our Covid-19 vaccine rollout, makes the UK a great prospect for any international student considering their destination of study for the new academic year.

Travel to the UK

Although our borders are open for both returning and new international students wishing to study in the UK, and our universities are looking forward to welcoming you to campuses in the new year, there are some Covid-19 measures in place to keep you and the wider public safe.

First and foremost, you should check whether the country you are coming from is on the [red, amber or green travel list](#).

For those arriving from red list countries, you will be required to [quarantine in a managed](#)

[quarantine hotel](#) on arrival, which is an important measure to prevent the spread of potentially harmful Covid-19 variants in the UK. This pandemic has shown us that there is a need to have strict rules in place, and quarantine in a managed quarantine hotel will continue to apply to students arriving from the [red list](#) in the new academic year.

If you are coming from overseas – especially from a red list country - it is very important that you contact your university to speak with them about the date of your travel. This is so that they can ensure you are properly and fully supported to join or re-join your university and to make sure you are aware of the correct [arrivals procedure](#). If you are studying a practical course you should look to travel in accordance with course requirements, and your university should be able to advise you on this.

It may be that your university recommends you begin your course via distance learning and travel to the UK at a later date, or they may give you a specific window in which to arrive. As each provider will operate slightly differently, it is imperative that you do contact your university before you travel. This will ensure that you are able to travel at a time that is convenient to you, and will allow you to be fully supported in your arrival to the UK.

If you are asked to begin your course online and join at a later date, you can be assured that you will not lose out on the high-quality academic experience offered by our UK universities, who have consistently delivered excellent remote learning options. Your visa will also not be affected by this, and I have provided more details in the immigration section below.

If you are arriving from an [amber list country](#), you may be asked to complete a period of self-isolation in your university accommodation. This will depend on whether you have been vaccinated or not before you arrive, and the type of vaccine you have had. More information is available on [gov.uk](#).

If you are currently studying, or are considering studying, in [Scotland](#), [Wales](#) or [Northern Ireland](#), please ensure that you check relevant guidance in each respective country and follow the guidance from your institution.

Covid-19 immigration concessions and post-study work offer

Since the start of the Covid-19 pandemic, the UK Government has implemented a number of concessions to assist UK visa-holders who have been impacted by global travel and health restrictions, to ensure you can travel when you need to.

Demonstrating similar flexibility for next academic year, we have extended visa concessions for those on Student (or Tier 4) visas, to allow for the provision of online learning outside the UK until the 6 April 2022. This means that if you are asked to join via distance learning and travel to the UK at a later date, you can do so with the confidence that your visa status will not be affected.

Again, my advice to all students travelling from overseas is to contact your university for advice on when to arrive, and to inform them of your intended date of arrival, so that you can be given appropriate support.

We have also confirmed that international students who commenced their degree course of 12 months or less in the academic year 2020 – 2021 will remain eligible for the Graduate route, our post study work offer, as long as they successfully receive a Student visa, travel to the UK, and make their Graduate route application before either their Student visa ends or 27 September 2021, whichever is earlier. Students who begin a

course of 12 months or less this autumn or early next year will need to enter by 6 April 2022.

Covid-19 health support and vaccination

Thanks to the effort of our National Health Service (NHS), the UK is making great progress with vaccinating our entire adult population. This has allowed us to safely and methodically unlock many areas of society, which will ensure students can enjoy a full and enriching experience while they are studying at a UK university in the new academic year.

Students don't need to have been vaccinated in order to come to study in England, but if you are offered a vaccine in your home country, I would highly encourage you to take it. If you require a second dose, you will be eligible to receive it once you are in the UK. The NHS has established procedure on ensuring individuals are fully vaccinated even if their first dose is from a vaccine that is not offered in the UK.

All students enrolled on UK courses are eligible to register for medical services with a General Practitioner (GP), and I encourage you do this as soon as you arrive at your HEP. You will be entitled to receive a Covid-19 vaccination while here, in the same way as domestic students, registration with your local GP services is the quickest and smoothest way of doing this. If you are not offered a Covid-19 vaccine before you arrive here, I would encourage you to get one as soon as is feasible once you arrive.

If you have further questions regarding vaccines, you should consult the [COVID-19 vaccination FAQs for students in Higher Education Institutions](#) which has been published by NHS England and provides a range of important information. Students can also [read about being an international student in England](#) during the pandemic.

Lastly, I want to thank those of you who have already made the decision to study at our excellent universities, and I look forward to welcoming those who plan to study at an English HE provider in the future. Our world-leading universities will always be open to international students, and I will continue to work with universities to ensure we provide a world-leading academic experience for all our students.

Yours faithfully,

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

Michelle Donelan MP
Minister of State for Universities