

Exceptional circumstances for Taught Students not travelling to London for the 2021/22 Academic Year

This has been updated with an additional category at 6(c).

This note applies to taught programmes within the Faculties of Medicine, Engineering and Natural Sciences.

1. The College position regarding the 2021/22 academic year is that all students who are following a programme which is not delivered wholly remotely must return to campus.
2. This note covers the exceptional circumstances which the College would consider acceptable for a taught student to study remotely during all or a significant part of the 2021/22 academic year. It is anticipated that such circumstances are considered at an individual student level. It is expected that if a student does not return to campus using the provisions in section 6, then they will return as soon as the situation preventing their return is resolved.
3. The list of exceptional circumstances in section 6 will normally apply to students on all taught programmes in the faculties of Medicine, Engineering and Natural Sciences. However, there may be specific programmes for which attendance on campus is critical to achieve the Learning Outcomes and, therefore, the exceptional circumstances may not apply. In such instances, this will be confirmed in the OfS/CMA letter specific to the programme.
4. This list of exceptional circumstances is not intended to cover the following situations:
 - a. A short delay at the start of the programme and/or the academic year (up to two weeks) to allow students to arrive in London and complete their quarantine in order to start their in-person education due to:
 - i. late changes to travel arrangements,
 - ii. visa/ATAS processing delays,
 - iii. contracting COVID-19,
 - iv. the need to self-isolate having been in contact with a positive COVID-19 case.

In these cases, students will be expected to study remotely initially and then join the main student cohort in London.
 - b. Changes to the overall UK Government policy regarding travel within or into the UK, meaning large numbers of students cannot travel to London.
 - c. Circumstances where students should not be studying and should be placed on an Interruption of Studies (continuing students) or be deferred (new students). [See 7]
5. Our default position is that students travelling from countries which require self-isolation upon arrival in the UK (either in their residence or a managed quarantine facility) will be expected to

have completed this self-isolation period by the first day of term. It is accepted that any late additions of countries to the UK red list or changes to the UK Government general inward travel policy may mean students will need to self-isolate at the start of the academic year.

6. Exceptional circumstances:
 - a. Where (non-UK Government) COVID-19 travel restrictions do not permit a student to leave the country that they are residing in to travel to the UK,
 - b. Where a student cannot travel to a location (within their current country of residence) to apply for a visa to travel to the UK,
 - c. Where there are COVID-19-related administrative delays in processing visa applications by the UKVI,
 - d. Where a student cannot arrange a travel route to reach the UK (lack of direct flights is not considered an exceptional circumstance),
 - e. If travelling from a Red List country, where a student is unable to secure accommodation in a Managed Quarantine Facility (I.e. Quarantine Hotel),
 - f. Where the UK Government place a total travel ban (or ban covering access to Higher Education) on entry from the country the student is residing in or would transit through to reach the UK,
 - g. Where the UK Government or the devolved administrations place specific restrictions on travel from certain parts of the UK to London,
 - h. COVID-19 specific health issues that require regular access to local medical facilities or practitioners, but do not hinder the student's participation in remote learning,
 - i. COVID-19 related caring responsibilities (or management thereof) that do not hinder the student's participation in remote learning.
 - j. COVID-19 related clinical responsibilities that do not hinder the student's participation in remote learning.

7. Synchronous remote teaching activities will not be timetabled to accommodate multiple time zones. In addition, if a student requires a visa to study in the UK, and an exceptional circumstance is used in order to delay their arrival in the UK then this can only be applied up until 6 April 2022 under current UKVI concessions.

8. Circumstances where students should normally be placed on an interruption of studies or deferred:
 - a. Serious illness/health issues of student,
 - b. Physical or mental illness or disabilities that hinder the student's participation in remote learning, including being severely affected by bereavement,
 - c. Caring responsibilities that hinder the student's participation in remote learning,
 - d. Compulsory military/clinical/National Service,
 - e. Non-release from work in a critical industry, if sponsored,
 - f. Visa or ATAS application of candidate not granted by authorities due to COVID-19,
 - g. Sponsorship is deferred to a subsequent year with no way to change it
 - h. Cannot afford fees/living costs due to pandemic-related financial hardship.

9. There could be many reasons a continuing or new student may wish to study remotely, but a non-exhaustive list of reasons not considered to be acceptable are:
- a. Lack of direct flights to London from country of residence – students will be expected to arrange a travel with connections,
 - b. General concern about the safety of the College or of London,
 - c. Difficulty finding accommodation in London or other students to share with (the College has support available for this).

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