

**Email sent:** 10.12.2020

Dear students,

Following the information received this morning from your department or faculty, you are no doubt eager to learn how the return of students in Hilary Term will be managed here at Somerville.

In line with government guidance and following discussions with the university, we have decided to welcome students from **Sunday, January 10<sup>th</sup> to Thursday, January 21<sup>st</sup>**, while also permitting students to arrive as late as the 25<sup>th</sup> January if this is required for reasons of health and wellbeing.

We have specified this return window for the following reasons:

- A large scale return prior to 10<sup>th</sup> January is not possible due to a lack of electricity in several buildings caused by renovation works (ROQ and CHB will not be affected);
- Some courses, particularly those categorised as 'practical' or 'placement', will resume face-to-face teaching from Monday 18<sup>th</sup> January;
- As in Michaelmas, all courses will aim to resume face-to-face teaching where possible by 25<sup>th</sup> January;
- Our return window (January 10<sup>th</sup> – January 21<sup>st</sup>) will therefore allow you to plan your return in accordance with your academic commitments AND so that you can take two lateral flow tests, three days apart, before resuming face-to-face teaching within your subject (a third test is recommended 10 days after returning).

In reaching this decision, we considered two important factors: first, the negative impact that a phased return from 25<sup>th</sup> January would have on you given the relative shortness of the Oxford term; and, second, the positive role we could play in keeping cases down across Oxford by staggering our return with Brookes, who start their term later than us.

We hope that makes sense. In addition to the information given above, please take note of the following:

- The phased return advocated by the government may require some online teaching in certain subjects, confirmation of which will be provided by your department or faculty;
- You must email Teresa to give notice of the date on which you intend to return;
- Due to the electrical works, you are **not** allowed to return to college before Sunday 10<sup>th</sup> January unless you have already arranged for vacation residence;
- If you wish to arrive on the 10<sup>th</sup>, 11<sup>th</sup> or 12<sup>th</sup> January, you will need to apply for vacation residence for those days in the usual manner;
- Accommodation charges for HT21 will begin on the Wednesday of 0<sup>th</sup> week (Wednesday 13<sup>th</sup> January), with flexible calculations based on your arrival date until 24<sup>th</sup> January, after which all students will be charged for their rooms as per normal;
- International students should liaise with College to agree the timing of their return so as to facilitate, where possible, the completion of quarantine before face-to-face-teaching resumes (see note below, 'Quarantine Periods for International Arrivals');
- Part-time students are not bound by these arrangements and should continue to travel to Oxford as they usually would;

- If you have spent all or some of your winter vacation in a Tier 3 area, we encourage you to make use of any community testing prior to making the journey to Oxford;
- If you're self-isolating or have symptoms, you should not return until your self-isolation is completed;
- You are strongly advised to take three lateral flow tests (the same tests used in the Christmas Travel Tests) when you return to Oxford: on the day you arrive, three days later and on your tenth day in Oxford – the tests will be waiting for you when you arrive in College;
- You will be asked to take your first test as soon as possible after your arrival, and you should limit your social interaction until you receive the result (usually within 30 minutes).

Thank you for your continued forbearance and positivity in accommodating these changes. Fingers crossed, it won't be for much longer!

My warmest best wishes,

Jan Royall  
Principal

### **Quarantine Periods for International Arrivals**

Individuals arriving in the UK from countries not included on the Government's travel corridor list, are currently required to quarantine for 14 days. However, on 24 November, the Government announced that a 'Test to Release' program will be in place from Tuesday 15 December, that will enable the quarantine period to be reduced on receipt of negative PCR test result from a private provider after five days of isolation. The University cannot directly provide PCR tests to all of the circa 1700 students who are expected to arrive into the UK from overseas for Hilary term. However, work is now underway to determine whether the University can negotiate a reduced rate with local private providers for students who wish to take advantage of this scheme.