



**Email to students regarding Hilary Term
06/01/21**

Dear students,

It's seventh week and we are now well and truly on the home straight of the Michaelmas term. Even better, there is good news on the horizon for all of us.

The big news for Oxford and the world is that the Phase III results of the Oxford and AstraZeneca vaccine trials were published yesterday, showing an efficacy of 70-90%. The fact that our University's scientists, including Somervillians, have managed to produce a brilliant vaccine that: a) can be stored in a household fridge; and, b) will be made available on a not-for-profit basis during the pandemic and in perpetuity to low- and middle-income countries is beyond fantastic.

After a long, exhausting year, the news of this vaccine is bringing hope to millions. Such an outcome is a phenomenal testament to the impact and leverage of world-class scientific research – and our scientists and university leaders deserve all the praise they're currently receiving around the world, with a massive dose of local love from us.

The other crucial development, which is of less concern to the world but is of huge importance for our community, is that all those students who will not be resident over Christmas will be able to return home from the 3rd December. The university is also providing a 'Christmas Travel Test' (poster attached), which you absolutely must take before travelling. This will take the form of two lateral flow tests which you will take in College in 8th week. If your tests are negative, you will then be able to travel home.

If you test positive, you will have to take a PCR test through the EAS. If that test is positive you will have to self-isolate in College for ten days - we will not charge for the room. The great thing, however, is that if members of their household test negative they should be able to travel and self-isolate at home.

Details of the testing are still being worked through and we will provide further information as soon as possible.

The fact that the Christmas holidays can now occur with some semblance of normality is down to you. That's what your amazing patience this term has done for all of us. As a consequence of your efforts to protect each other and our community, the infection rate in College and across the University is low enough for you to travel safely.

Notwithstanding the great advances with the vaccine, sadly the need for Covid-safety won't go away next term. I know that's tough – but do know the end is in sight, and that one day soon, we shall all be able to meet in person and look back on this historic effort in which Oxford has played such a decisive role.

Despite the many stresses and strains of this term, there is much to be thankful for. Thanksgiving on Thursday is a good time to take a moment to be thankful. For those who might want to celebrate in a small way, the Thanksgiving Menu is now available – so book your slots for this Thursday!

All best wishes
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