

LJMU reflections on DfE guidance to universities on reopening buildings and campuses

The DfE guidance is designed to help providers of higher education in England to understand how to minimise risk during the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak and provide services to students, keeping as many people as possible self-isolating and out of educational settings if they are symptomatic, practising good hand and respiratory hygiene and keeping 2 metres apart from those they do not live with wherever possible.

The guidance is designed to give freedom within a practical framework to think about what universities need to do to continue, or restart, operations during the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak. DfE understand how important it is universities work as safely as possible and support the health and wellbeing of staff and students in the current public health emergency.

The guidance is intended to help those in settings that are already operating, as well to help people think about how to prepare for the reopening or restarting of premises or activities. This will ensure that providers can demonstrate that campuses are once again 'open for business' for forthcoming academic years, while minimising the risk to staff and students.

This IMT update is accurate as of: Friday 4th September 2020

	Key points by DfE	LJMU reflection and actions
1	We expect higher education providers to be open for the academic year 2020 to 2021, with measures in place to ensure risks to students and staff, in accordance with public health guidelines are minimised.	<p>LJMU will be open for the academic year 2020/21. COVID-19 secure measures are in place that comply with public health guidance, and measures are being continuously reviewed to ensure we keep step with any changes.</p> <p>The University is formally advised of changes and/or new guidance via the Vice Chancellors Office. This is then forwarded to the Chief Operating Officer to address along with the University Incident Management Team.</p> <p>The LJMU microsite has extensive details for students and staff on COVID-19. See: https://www.ljmu.ac.uk/microsites/moving-forward</p>
2	Higher education providers are autonomous institutions that make their own judgements about provision based on the latest public health guidance.	LJMU acknowledge this, and are taking a measured approach to operating the University. LJMU are following all public health guidance.
	Providers should be clear on how they minimise risks to all students, and staff, in line with the government roadmap and guidance.	<p>The LJMU microsite provides extensive and clearly presented details of safety, health and wellbeing arrangements to minimise risk to students and staff. LJMU are also working closely with local and regional health providers to ensure a co-ordinated approach is delivered across the city region.</p> <p>As part of LJMU's Accessibility Statement, we are committed to making our website and the material provided on it accessible to as many people as possible. People experiencing any difficulties accessing information on the website or if they need information in a different format can email: digitalmarketing@ljmu.ac.uk.</p> <p>See: https://www.ljmu.ac.uk/legal/accessibility</p>
4	It is the responsibility of HE providers to assess the risk of opening other buildings and to implement suitable precautions	<p>The LJMU microsite has full details on steps taken to ensure buildings are COVID-19 secure. A number of additional measures have been put in place to ensure buildings are operationally safe. This includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appointment of marshalls (circa 140 on duty) to manage flow through buildings, adherence to social distancing, the wearing of face coverings, and a point of call for building evacuations.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Safety, Health, and Environment Department have a SharePoint site with all risk assessments stored within them. These are audited and consulted upon with the Department. • Students will be encouraged through the MyLJMU app to raise issues of concern with academic tutors. Equally they can raise any concern with a member of estates staff, and/or contact the Helpdesk on 0151 231 5555 • Local Health and Safety networks will continue to take responsibility for safety matters in their areas of locality.
5	<p>Library service providers have been required to cease their business during the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak, apart from servicing orders made online or by telephone, text or post. Libraries can now open in a COVID-secure way. Libraries Connected has drawn up guidance for public libraries to support reopening that will also be relevant for university libraries.</p>	<p>The Libraries Connected advice is in line with University plans for re-opening campuses. With regard to library-specific aspects, a booking system is in place for study space, and a drop and go (plus postal return service) for book returns. Staff and students using these facilities will be required to follow social distance rules, and wear face coverings. We will operate a click and collect service from the print stock initially to limit the handling of books to library staff only (who will be working to a temporary operating procedure with social distancing and hand hygiene measures in place).</p>
6	<p>In order to determine what level of attendance is appropriate in HE settings and in conducting open days, outreach activity, and the assessment of prospective students on campus, particularly in the forthcoming academic year, you should conduct risk assessments in order to understand the number of students and staff likely to be included in a learning space and how they can be accommodated as safely as possible.</p>	<p>The LJMU microsite has full details of risk assessments to manage on campus activity. Open days have taken place virtually, as have other events such as Graduation. Activities are being kept under review and adjustments will be made as necessary</p>
7	<p>Providers should implement a range of protective measures including increased cleaning, reducing 'pinch points' (such as at the start and end of day), and utilising outdoor space</p>	<p>The LJMU microsite has details of enhanced cleaning regimes across the campus.</p> <p>See: https://www.ljmu.ac.uk/microsites/moving-forward/information-for-staff/building-safety</p>

8	<p>Certain types of course, for example in the performing arts involve a degree of practical face-to-face teaching and assessment. Some providers have found alternative methods during the outbreak, and this should continue where feasible.</p>	<p>Detailed discussions have taken place at School-level to ascertain the exact nature of the face-to-face element, so that it supports the needs of the discipline. For activity in the Liverpool Screen School as an example, face-to-face delivery takes place exclusively in specialist teaching space. All face-to-face elements are being delivered in a Covid-19 secure manner.</p>
9	<p>As part of the process of opening up buildings and campuses to staff and students, you should produce risk assessments for both working and communal environments.</p>	<p>The LJMU microsite have details of institutional, and local risk assessments. A SharePoint site managed by the Safety, Health and Environment Department are collating and auditing risk assessments. Trade Unions have access to the SharePoint.</p>
10	<p>Some people with particular characteristics may be at comparatively increased risk from coronavirus (COVID-19). If people with significant risk factors are concerned, we recommend providers discuss their concerns and explain the measures the provider is putting in place to reduce risks.</p>	<p>Details on Guidelines for staff returning to campus; and HR FAQ's are accessible on the LJMU microsite. The University has a risk assessment process in place where staff can disclose any factors they consider may increase health risks. These are then considered with HR and Occupational Health, and/or an individual's GP as appropriate.</p> <p>The LJMU microsite have a whole range of support in place for students with disabilities and will make sure all reasonable adjustments are made. In each academic School we have disability coordinators who will be able to help and guide students to the support available.</p> <p>The Student Advice and Wellbeing are available for phone, or scheduled face-to-face meetings.</p> <p>See: https://www.ljmu.ac.uk/microsites/moving-forward/information-for-students/health-and-wellbeing</p>
11	<p>To keep transmission in the UK as low as possible, all international arrivals will be required to complete a passenger locator form on arrival in the UK and passengers travelling from countries not on our exemption list will need to self-isolate in their accommodation for 14 days.</p>	<p>Registry have detailed plans for students entering the country and Student Advice and Wellbeing is working to ensure that support (food, bed packs etc.) are in place for those that are required to self-isolate for 2 weeks.</p>

12	<p>We recognise that many students and staff are facing additional mental health challenges due to the disruption to study and working practices and uncertainty caused by the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak. Providers should reflect on the services they offer.</p>	<p>Provision of services through counselling and mental health has been reviewed in light of the pandemic and a flexible structure put in place to allow for assessment of need, appropriate self-help mechanisms (SilverCloud, togetherall etc) and counselling and mental health appointments via telephone, using remote technology and face to face where necessary.</p> <p>This flexible support can be moved to be more remote or less remote dependant on the external factors and the individual need. In addition, a new U-COPE (Universities Community Outreach Psychiatric service) will launch at the beginning of September as part of the OfS Mental health project with UoL. This will focus on self-harm.</p>
13	<p>HE providers should satisfy themselves with regard to their duties of care towards staff, students and visitors, including under the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974, and the Equality Act 2010.</p>	<p>LJMU are satisfied this is being addressed through both its standard operating procedures; and also the institutional COVID-19 risk assessment.</p> <p>The institutional, and local COVID-19 risk assessments have an equality impact assessment provision within them. This ensures reasonable adjustments are made for disabled staff and students, alongside consideration of our anticipatory duty to make such adjustments.</p>