**Response to student queries: Template email and supporting statements**

**How to use this document**

Below is an outline template communication that can be used to respond to incoming correspondence from students to Faculties/Schools, regarding a variety of COVID-19 related matters.

This includes:

* Signposting for the formal University Complaints procedure (highlighted) – include this if you feel the correspondence if bordering on a formal complaint and you wish to provide a route for this. If not, take this out.
* Further information links – please leave these in all correspondence as they signpost key information. Feel free to add any further local signposting of importance.

University-level statements are then included, to help you address the substantial points raised in the correspondence. You may wish to supplement some of these with additional local detail, as relevant to the particular matters raised.

**Other useful links**

Please be aware also that there is a **centrally managed inbox for self-isolation support queries**. This is signposted from the [self-isolation support webpages](https://www.manchester.ac.uk/coronavirus/self-isolation/). You may wish to refer students to this, should they have specific queries about self-isolation support that you are unable to address locally.

* Email: [coronavirus-isolation-support@manchster.ac.uk](mailto:coronavirus-isolation-support@manchster.ac.uk)

**Further references**

* UK Government:
  + [Download the NHS COVID-19 app](https://www.covid19.nhs.uk/)
  + [Latest NHS information and advice about coronavirus](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/)
  + [National restrictions](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-outbreak-faqs-what-you-can-and-cant-do/coronavirus-outbreak-faqs-what-you-can-and-cant-do)
  + [Local restrictions](https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/local-restrictions-areas-with-an-outbreak-of-coronavirus-covid-19)
* University of Manchester:
  + [Student COVID-19 safety](https://www.welcome.manchester.ac.uk/welcome-and-induction/arriving-on-campus/staying-safe/)
  + [Report a case](https://survey.manchester.ac.uk/pssweb/index.php/878934/lang-en) (of self-isolation and/or a positive COVID-19 test)
  + [Self-isolation support for students](https://www.manchester.ac.uk/coronavirus/self-isolation/)
  + [Accommodation commitment](http://www.accommodation.manchester.ac.uk/current/here/)
  + [Student coronavirus FAQs](https://studentnews.manchester.ac.uk/2020/05/12/coronavirus-frequently-asked-questions/)
  + [Student News](https://studentnews.manchester.ac.uk/)

**Template response**

Dear [NAME]

Thank you for taking the time to write to me. I hope I can provide some reassurance and further information to you, on the points that you raise.

[Substantial points, briefly addressed]

I want to thank you again for taking the time to write to me and hope that this has addressed some of your concerns. However, if you wish to receive a more detailed response to the concerns you have raised, you may wish to refer to our [Basic Guide to Student Complaints](https://documents.manchester.ac.uk/display.aspx?DocID=23875) document, which will provide advice for pursuing a formal complaint.

Please be assured that the safety and wellbeing of our students and staff is the University’s highest priority.

Further information:

* [Download the NHS COVID-19 app](https://www.covid19.nhs.uk/)
* [Report a case](https://survey.manchester.ac.uk/pssweb/index.php/878934/lang-en) (of self-isolation and/or a positive COVID-19 test)
* [Self-isolation support for students](https://www.manchester.ac.uk/coronavirus/self-isolation/)
* [Student coronavirus FAQs](https://studentnews.manchester.ac.uk/2020/05/12/coronavirus-frequently-asked-questions/)

Kind regards,

[NAME]

**Supporting statements**

* **COVID restrictions**

Along with national COVID-19 restrictions that we all need to adhere to, there are currently [additional restrictions in place across Greater Manchester](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/greater-manchester-local-restrictions)for all residents, including students.

We continue to keep all students up-to-date on the local restrictions in place in Greater Manchester, as well as reminding them of the symptoms to look out for and the actions they should take if they think they may have been infected with COVID-19.

* **COVID rule breaches**

Unfortunately, we have had several instances of non-compliance with COVID regulations and we have been forced to issue reminders, and take disciplinary action in some cases. This is about protecting both those students, and our wider community. We are clear that this is a minority and we are very grateful to the majority who are continuing to follow the rules.

* **Self-isolation**

A process is in place for students to [report](https://survey.manchester.ac.uk/pssweb/index.php/878934/lang-en) if have they have symptoms or test positive for COVID-19, with cases being reviewed each day, in consultation and co-ordination with Public Health England.

We have put in place a [comprehensive support package](https://www.manchester.ac.uk/coronavirus/self-isolation/) for all students who are self-isolating, which includes a partnership with a major food retailer, delivery of parcels, wellbeing support, and assistance with practical matters such as arranging for laundry and prescription medicines.

We will absolutely do everything we can to support you during this period. If you have a question about this period of self-isolation, you can contact the University’s dedicated self-isolation team via email: [coronavirus-isolation-support@manchster.ac.uk](mailto:coronavirus-isolation-support@manchster.ac.uk)

* **Mental health and wellbeing**

You can access online mental health and wellbeing support 24/7 through [Togetherall](http://www.studentsupport.manchester.ac.uk/taking-care/togetherall/) – an online community monitored by trained clinicians. They can also request a 1-2-1 appointment with one of our own counsellors via the [University’s Counselling Service](https://www.counsellingservice.manchester.ac.uk/).

* **Socialising**

We realise that the current restrictions on socialising are difficult for our students. We have worked with our [Students’ Union](https://umsu.unimelb.edu.au/support/covid-resources/covid-online-events/) to put in place a welcome programme with a large number and variety of events, many of which are available online. There are also many activities also available to take part in through [UoM Sport](https://www.sport.manchester.ac.uk/).

* **Accommodation**

If you are in University halls of residence, more information about the support in place can be found on the [accommodation commitment](http://www.accommodation.manchester.ac.uk/current/here/) webpage. If you require further assistance, your [ResLife](mailto:reslife-admin@manchester.ac.uk) team is there to help you. Your [Duty ResLife Advisor](http://www.accommodation.manchester.ac.uk/reslife/info/contact/) can also be contacted out of hours.

If you have further concern or issue with your University accommodation, you can contact the accommodation team at: [accommodation@manchester.ac.uk](mailto:accommodation@manchester.ac.uk). You may also wish to review the [Accommodation Terms and Conditions](http://documents.manchester.ac.uk/display.aspx?DocID=20985) which were updated to cover scenarios arising, as a consequence of the pandemic.

If you have issues with privately rented accommodation, you can contact [Manchester Student Homes](https://www.manchesterstudenthomes.com/contact) for advice, guidance and support.

* **Remote study**

We are aware that as a consequence of the pandemic, some students may not be able to join us on campus for the start of the semester. At the end of August 2020, the University issued a communication to students asking if they intended to begin studies on-campus, or remotely… [Add further local detail such as: how the student responded to the survey (if known); whether the individual student is able to study remotely for semester 1, or not; anything else they may need to do/know with regards to remote study for their programme].

* **Fees and refunds**

I can confirm that students will be charged the full published tuition fees for 2020 entry. You can read more about this and what tuition fees are spent on, on our [student coronavirus FAQs](https://studentnews.manchester.ac.uk/2020/05/12/coronavirus-frequently-asked-questions/#fees-and-refunds).

If you are struggling financially, the [Living Cost Support Fund](https://studentnews.manchester.ac.uk/2020/04/29/here-to-help-living-cost-support-fund-open-for-applications/) is open all year round, to offer practical support. The fund can award small grants and loans to support you, if you find yourself experiencing unexpected or additional financial worries.

* **Communications with returning students**

Throughout the summer the University has kept in contact with returning students through a fortnightly [UGs] / weekly [PGTs] newsletter [delete as appropriate] and has also issued email updates on important specific matters, including [our plans for the 20/21 academic year](https://studentnews.manchester.ac.uk/2020/06/11/the-2020-21-academic-year-a-message-from-april-mcmahon/) in response to the pandemic, and [‘10 things to know’](https://studentnews.manchester.ac.uk/2020/09/09/10-things-you-need-to-know-about-your-next-year-at-manchester/) about the next academic year.

Our Student News platform is home to our [student coronavirus FAQs](https://studentnews.manchester.ac.uk/2020/05/12/coronavirus-frequently-asked-questions/), which cover a wide variety of topics and are updated regularly. We have also communicated clear [safety advice and guidance](https://www.welcome.manchester.ac.uk/welcome-and-induction/arriving-on-campus/staying-safe/) to all students, ahead of returning to campus and accommodation.

In addition to University-level communications, the Faculty/School/Programme team has… [Add any further local detail].

* **Communications with new students**

Throughout the year, the University has kept in contact with prospective and new students through monthly My Manchester newsletters, our webpages for offer holders and we have also issued email updates on important matters, including our plans about the academic year with subject specific information for new students. As students have confirmed their places they have been directed to our [Get Ready](https://www.welcome.manchester.ac.uk/get-ready/) and [Welcome](https://www.welcome.manchester.ac.uk/welcome-and-induction/) website.

In addition to University-level communications, the Faculty/School/Programme team has… [Add any further local detail].