Queens’ College – Plans for Michaelmas Term 2020

Government rules have been changing rapidly in the UK and may change again, but we still think it is important to keep you updated with our progress on plans for Michaelmas Term.

There is a dedicated team of tutors, staff and students who have been working tirelessly to create robust and thorough plans for the new term to ensure it is both safe and welcoming for everyone, and will continue to do so for as long as is needed. In fact, I would like to take the opportunity to personally thank the invaluable contributions of our excellent JCR and MCR members in helping us work towards these goals.

- To ensure you are kept up to date, as things will undoubtedly continue to change, please ensure that you read any emails from the University, your Department/Faculty and from Queens’.
- Please also regularly check the University (https://www.cam.ac.uk/coronavirus) and College (https://www.queens.cam.ac.uk/coronavirus-guidance) websites for updates.

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1. Education

Teaching will be delivered by the University and the College through a blend of in-person and online formats, and we will adapt our teaching and supervising methods to achieve this.

It is our aim to provide a residential educational experience with students having suitable and sufficient access to learning and research facilities for their studies. Provision will be subject to evolving Government guidelines and social distancing restrictions.

As part of the effort to minimise risk to our community, all University and College buildings are being risk-assessed and managed on an ongoing basis, following government guidelines and advice.

Our focus will be - as always - on providing the best teaching and learning experience for students. Queens’ will be encouraging face-to-face supervisions and group work where possible.

We are surveying Directors of Studies to determine the room requirements to allow this. However, some supervisors will need to supervise remotely, due to limited spaces, health requirements, and since anyone may have to self-isolate at any time, student or supervisor.

A great deal of thought is going into teaching next year, within both the College and the University.

Your Department/Faculty may be in touch with you directly about teaching, and you should also regularly look at their website for information and updates.

2. Queens’ Library and Extra Study Space

Study space
We are fortunate in having multiple rooms across the site suitable for study, we have also made additional arrangements to convert alternative locations which are being upgraded over the summer
with large screens, web cam facilities and seating ideal for socially distanced supervisions, group study, or just a space to relax and make a video call to friends and family.

These spaces will be bookable through the Catering Office, and we are working on having an online booking system ready for Michaelmas – Detailed instructions will follow when this service is available.

**Library**
The College is aiming to have the War Memorial Library (WML) open daily (7.00am-2.00am) for students to browse shelves, access books, borrow and return them. However, there may be restrictions on numbers or a booking system to help with social distancing.

Due to social spacing considerations, there will be limited reading spaces in the WML itself (on the first floor) although further reading space will be made available in the following places:

- The Old Hall. Open daily (it will occasionally be necessary to close early if the space is needed for an evening event).
- The Munro Room. Open on weekdays from 9.00am until 5.00pm.

Library staff will be available as usual to answer enquiries in the WML office during staffed hours (Mon-Fri 9.00-5.00) and via email (library@queens.cam.ac.uk).

Although the library will, as usual, be providing a full range of inductions and research skills sessions, some of these will be provided via zoom. Details will be provided later in the summer.

**3. Wi-Fi Upgrades in College**

The College is investing in a major upgrade of its Wi-Fi network in all parts of the College this summer, to improve everyone’s internet experience.

**4. Wider Student Experience**

**Events**
The College, the JCR Committee and the MCR Committee are all working hard to devise a programme of meetings and events for the first week back: virtual, blended and in person. Of course, the University is doing the same.

We will provide more details nearer the start of the new academic year, and we will also create a process for creating events, so that societies, the JCR and MCR can organise events safely. Please bear with us while we finalise the process for this.

We are expecting more events to be held outside throughout the term, both in Queens’ and in the University, since COVID-19 transmits less easily outdoors. Please make sure you pack warm clothes and waterproof coats, shoes or boots!
Guests
There will be review of the current restrictions on bringing non-Queens’ members into College as guests, including family dropping off you and your belongings, as well as friends from outside of Queens’. We understand socialising is a major part of your life at Queens’ and we want to make sure this can be done safely.

We are not taking any external conference bookings to allow all our meeting rooms to be used for Queens’ activities, as there will be capacity limits on rooms.

Catering
Our Head of Catering and Executive Chef are working hard to ensure we can offer a high standard of catering in both the Cafeteria and Café/Bar. The style of service (whether take-away only, served and/or plated) will be dictated by the Government’s guidelines at the time.

There will be fewer (perhaps no) sit-down formal events. However, we are working on making some seating available in Cripps Hall for those who want to eat there for lunch and dinner, with appropriately distanced seating. We will also be equipping the outside spaces across site with additional bench seating.

Facilities
We are looking to make as many of the College’s facilities available as possible such as squash courts, music rooms, the JCR Room, and the Gym.

5. Community Management

Testing
We are pleased to say that the University itself is offering testing to all students in Cambridge who have symptoms of possible COVID-19; this is in addition to the NHS testing system.

There are testing sites in Addenbrooke’s Hospital and the Engineering Department on Fen Causeway. This is a big step forward towards our goal of helping you protect yourself, your friends and colleagues, and the wider Cambridge community from a new escalation in cases.

Face coverings
It is currently mandatory to wear a face covering on public transport in the UK, and it is also one of the mitigations if 2 metre social distancing cannot be observed. We recommend that you bring your own supply of masks with you.

Queens’ will also provide a ‘starter pack’ of masks in your pigeonhole.

Laundry facilities
Laundry facilities have been set to free vend for the entire year so you can wash your masks and your clothes often.

Students with increased susceptibility to infectious diseases
In line with guidance from Public Health England, one crucial part of the intercollegiate University’s preparations for the coming year is to make sure that we are aware of students who may have increased susceptibility, or particular vulnerability, to infectious diseases (ISID) such as COVID-19 and
also those with disabilities/impairments that are impacted by COVID-19 related social distancing measures. The University will soon be writing to all students about this. Following on from this, College will be writing separately to ask you to let us know if you have increased susceptibility to infectious disease or a disability or impairment which is impacted by COVID-related social distancing measures.

Welfare
The Welfare Team are available to all students to provide support in what we appreciate is a time of anxiety and stress. Questions and concerns about physical and mental health, support and care can be directed, as usual, to the Welfare Team. Concerns that may be pastoral, academic and those matters relating to College or the University can continue to be directed towards your Tutor. If you are not sure who your specific Tutor is, this can be found on your CamSIS account.

6. Accommodation

Student rooms
We are pleased to say that having reviewed all our accommodation, we are working with the JCR and MCR to finalise a process of room allocation. Our intention is for some room preferences to be expressed, to allocate third years ahead of second years, and to allow groups to be placed together. Final allocation will occur after first years have had their offers confirmed, and many more details will follow.

There will be a special process for those with welfare, health or disability needs.

We can also confirm that gyp rooms and kitchens will be in full operations across the whole estate. Current Public Health England guidelines supports this, and we welcome the news! ‘Sharing’ of Old Court sets (not Fisher) that are available will be allowed.

Some undergraduates will live in Owlstone Croft and will be able to use all the Main Site’s facilities (subject to observing any restrictions that might be placed upon the College as part of local Government lockdowns).

Households
Student rooms will be organised into ‘households’. These will be defined by the facilities (bathrooms, toilets and kitchens) that residents share.

This will allow household-isolation procedures to be implemented should anyone become ill with symptoms of COVID-19 or be tested positive for the virus.

These procedures will conform to government guidance:


Visitors to any ‘household’, and interactions between households, will be permitted in line with the government guidelines and the College policy as outlined in the Student Handbook. These guidelines are liable to change and to be updated at short notice as the situation in the UK and in Cambridge specifically evolves.
**Code of conduct**
You will be expected to sign up to Queens’ Code of Conduct on COVID-19 as a condition of your room licence.

This is still being finalised, but it will include things like agreeing that you will be tested if you have symptoms and will isolate until you receive a negative test result, agreeing that you will self-isolate if one of your household has symptoms and/or tests positive for COVID-19, and agreeing to adhere to the Government guidelines, e.g. on social distancing and wearing of masks.

**7. Hygiene Measures**

**Cleaning**
Extra cleaning will continue to be necessary.

In public areas and supervision and meeting rooms: ‘hygiene cleaning’ is taking place 7 days a week, by Housekeeping staff.

Sanitiser and cleaning materials will be left in each supervision or meeting room, and we will be asking all room users to sanitise their hands and wipe the work surfaces before and after use (local signage will provide instructions and also confirm the maximum number of people allowed in each space with social distancing in place).

**Communal kitchens and bathrooms**
The Housekeeping staff will clean these areas Monday to Friday. However, students will need to respect hygiene measures in these areas much more seriously than previously.

- No dirty washing up or clean drying up can be left on the work surfaces in case they become contaminated from people using the room (i.e. droplets containing COVID-19 landing on crockery).

All the work surfaces will have to be left completely clutter free, so the Housekeeping staff can clean and sanitise the areas. Local signage will be posted to inform those sharing the communal kitchen and bathrooms about the cleaning arrangements and expectations.

**Bedrooms**
Students will be responsible for cleaning their own bedrooms; we will provide access to cleaning materials and vacuums and directions for the disposal or recycling and mixed waste.

**8. International Students**

**Visas and travel disruption**
For returning students, in most cases your visa should be valid for the duration of your course.

- If you have updated your passport (or received a new visa) whilst you have been at home, the Tutorial Office will need to see it; please contact tutorial.office@queens.cam.ac.uk for advice.
If you have any queries regarding visas, please contact the University’s International Students Team office (international.students@admin.cam.ac.uk; https://www.undergraduate.study.cam.ac.uk/international-students/visas).

We are expecting further guidance for students who may experience difficulty travelling to Cambridge at the start of the academic year due to disruption to flights or travel restrictions in the UK or overseas.

**Self-isolation**

We do not yet know what the UK Government rules on self-isolation will be by October. However, we do now need to plan on the basis that they will still be in force for some countries. Students arriving from overseas may need to isolate for fourteen days when they arrive in Cambridge because of Government regulations.

*Students who need to self-isolate should plan to arrive in Cambridge sufficiently early to allow this to happen before their course begins, and should inform the Tutorial Office of their plans (tutorial.office@queens.cam.ac.uk) copying in the Accommodation Officer (rooms@queens.cam.ac.uk) if they are in college accommodation.*

Information on countries in travel corridors with the UK where no self-isolation is required (this will be subject to change) can be found at:


**Self-isolation and room licenses**

The standard undergraduate room licence period starts on Saturday 3 October. For any student returning to Queens’ accommodation from a country which is on the UK Government’s list of countries that require a self-isolation period (currently 14 days), at least two weeks before, you will be able to move into College early.

Any student required by the UK Government to go into self-isolation will be charged for any part of the self-isolation period spent in College accommodation before 3 October.

Other early arrivals for reasons other than self-isolation will be charged in the normal way.

(If you are arriving early for academic or College-related reasons, we will confirm arrangements once we have received further details from your Department/Faculty – do not assume you can arrive early until you have received confirmation from the College.)

9. The Future

**UK Government guidance**

UK Government guidance is changing regularly and will continue to change over the summer, so you may want to keep an eye on: https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus.
University Code of Conduct
The University and Colleges are committed to a Code of Conduct and positive approach to keeping each other safe. This is the start, and there will be more to come:

Potential future lockdowns
Although we cannot make any guarantees, as we do not know what the Public Health England rules would be in any future lockdown, we are planning on the basis that we would manage any future lockdown with those students who wish to stay remaining in College.

The change in testing arrangements makes this possible. However, students living in will have to comply with whatever Government lockdown rules are announced.

30 July 2020