St Catz Start of Term Arrival and Covid-19 Testing Arrangements

This document contains important information about your return to College at the start of Hilary Term 2021, including arrangements for booking a return date and taking post-arrival Covid-19 tests.

The Government guidance is that undergraduate and graduate taught course students should be offered a staggered return to university after the Christmas vacation, and that students traveling from within the UK or from a country on the Government’s travel corridor list (https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-travel-corridors) should be offered three Covid-19 lateral flow tests (LFTs)* in the ten-day period immediately after their return. Postgraduate research students will return to university as they would usually.

Following this guidance, the University has divided all taught courses at Oxford into two groups: the first to resume in-person teaching from Week 1 of Hilary Term, and the second to resume in-person teaching from Week 2 of Hilary Term. Your department or faculty will confirm the teaching arrangements for your course as soon as possible. Once it has done so, please book your return to College as instructed by the Accommodation Office (details to follow soon). Return dates from Sunday 3 January 2021 will be available.

Returning to College

All students traveling from within the UK or from a country on the Government’s travel corridor list should ensure they are back in College in time to take two LFTs, three days apart, before their in-person teaching is scheduled to resume. This means that students of group 1 courses should return to College no later than Thursday of Week 0, and students of group 2 courses should return no later than Thursday of Week 1.

All students traveling from a country that is not on the Government’s travel corridor list should ensure they are back in College in time to self-isolate before their in-person teaching is scheduled to resume. You may be able to reduce your self-isolation period through the Government’s ‘Test to Release’ scheme (https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-test-to-release-for-international-travel). This scheme is likely to be heavily subscribed, so any students intending to make use of it are advised to make the necessary arrangements, including by booking with an eligible test provider, as early as possible.

Students who have a reason for wanting to return to College before this time may also be able to do so. In this case, please contact the Accommodation Office.

Students with pre-existing travel plans do not need to change their bookings.

Taking your Covid-19 tests

LFTs will be available to St Catz students from Monday of Week -1 (4 January), and should be taken on days 1, 4 and 10 of your return. Hence, if you are booked to return to College on 4 January, you should take an LFT on 4 January, 8 January and 14 January.

You will need to collect your testing pack on return to College from the Porters’ Lodge, read the attached leaflet, complete the remote training at https://canvas.ox.ac.uk/enroll/KJNBLX, and contact the College’s Covid Admin team (covidadmin@stcatz.ox.ac.uk) for further support, if needed. All LFTs will be taken in your College room or other residential setting. You should limit your social contact and interaction with others until you have received your first negative LFT result and continue to be cautious until you have received your second negative LFT result. Any student who receives a positive LFT result should inform the Porters’ Lodge (lodge@stcatz.ox.ac.uk) immediately. You will then need to self-isolate and book a regular EAS test (https://earlyalert.medsci.ox.ac.uk/earlyalert/).

For more information about these arrangements, please see the University’s website at https://www.ox.ac.uk/coronavirus/students/christmas-vacation or contact the Covid Admin team.
For questions about returning to College, contact the Accommodation Office (accommodation@stcatz.ox.ac.uk).

*LFTs are self-administered nose and throat swab tests for use by asymptomatic and pre-symptomatic COVID-19 carriers. They involve taking a nose or throat swab to collect a sample, inserting the swab into a tube of liquid, and then putting the liquid into a kit from which results are returned within 30 minutes. By using LFTs it is hoped to identify those most at risk of spreading COVID-19 – those who are infectious but unaware of being infectious – so that they can self-isolate before resuming face-to-face teaching and other in-person activities and reduce the risk of transmitting the virus to their peers, tutors and others in their College and wider communities.