

Dear medical student,

3rd January 2022

This guide covers most COVID related questions you may have as a QUB medical student.

\*\*\*\* Please read it all carefully. I hope it is useful. QUB have useful information online too, here:

<https://www.qub.ac.uk/home/coronavirus-faqs/information-for-students/>

\*\*\*\* Contact us if you have any other queries. We want to know about any issues as soon as they arise: email [m.williams@qub.ac.uk](mailto:m.williams@qub.ac.uk) anytime.

\*\*\*\* QUB have an excellent website on self isolation, highlighting sources of support:

<https://www.qub.ac.uk/sites/my-queens/self-isolation/>

The risk of your catching or transmitting COVID cannot be eliminated, but we can minimise the risk. Students' behaviour is an important part of maintaining safety. We know that you do your best to be diligent in keeping patients, your peers, tutors, healthcare workers and all their relatives and contacts safe: thank you.

The basics still apply such as washing hands regularly and keeping rooms well ventilated where possible.

- social distancing is not mandatory between students, but must be maintained between students and staff
- face masks are mandatory whilst in face-to-face teaching sessions, including Case-based learning sessions, practical classes exams and while circulating around corridors and communal areas

Clinical Attachments: the premise is that you should follow the practices of the clinical team you are attached to.

We strongly urge all students to do the following:

- If you have ANY SYMPTOMS that could relate to COVID – DO NOT ATTEND YOUR ATTACHMENT. GET a PCR test as soon as possible (DON'T USE A LATERAL FLOW TEST)
- Ensure you are fully vaccinated. Some General Practices have communicated that they will only take students who are fully vaccinated.
  - Any student who is not fully vaccinated and is in clinical placement MUST inform Prof N Kennedy if you have not already done so, to perform a risk assessment.
- Download the Stop COVID NI app
- Wear the correct PPE
- Get a supply of Lateral Flow Tests and undergo asymptomatic testing regularly.
- If you test positive on a lateral flow test you MUST book a PCR test as soon as possible

We want to highlight the particular responsibilities of students going to any General Practice attachments. The visible impact on service delivery if General Practice staff have to isolate due to contact with a student who has COVID is very high, i.e. many patients are affected. In the first week of 2021/22, two Practices had to have large proportions of their team isolate which has significant impact on a service already under great pressure. News of such events quickly spreads among the GP community, and potentially erodes GPs' ongoing willingness to host students. Please help with the efforts to keep the clinical attachments going while keeping everyone safe.

Its important to remember that support is always available, from the CME pastoral support

team, or from QUB at: [studentwellbeing@qub.ac.uk](mailto:studentwellbeing@qub.ac.uk). Your mental wellbeing is important. Personally, I strongly believe that mental wellbeing is best served by striving for perspective, cultivating company, protecting regular exercise (like a long walk) and even remembering the basics like healthy eating and sleeping. None of this will happen without your planning. Please click and browse here: [www.qub.ac.uk/directorates/sgc/wellbeing/Covid-19/](http://www.qub.ac.uk/directorates/sgc/wellbeing/Covid-19/)

Best wishes,

Dr Michael Williams  
CME COVID Coordinator

Professor Neil Kennedy,  
CME Director

With thanks to Prof Nigel Hart, Dr Ciaran O’Gorman and Mr David Norwood

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## Q1. What do I do if I have symptoms of COVID?

If you develop any symptoms of COVID (e.g. high temperature, a new continuous cough or loss or change to sense of taste or smell or other symptoms suggestive of COVID-19), then:

1. **self isolate right away.** Put on a face covering, return to your accommodation immediately, avoiding public transport if possible. **See 2b for info. on transport.**
2. **book a PCR test**  
If the result is negative, then you can return, if you haven't had a fever for over 48 hours.  
*If you are on placement*, you can arrange a test by phoning the appropriate COVID19 Helpline from the Health Trust in which you are placed:

Health Trust	COVID19 Helpline
Belfast	028 96152828
Northern	028 94424401
Southern	028 37562600
South Eastern	028 92680803
Western	028 71611281

The Health Trust will then arrange for you to receive a COVID19 test at the Trust Testing Facility and will phone you with the result within 48 hours.

*If you are not on clinical placement*, arrange a test, via this link:

<https://www.gov.uk/get-coronavirus-test>

... or call **119**

3. **and as soon as possible:**
  - a. **if you live in QUB accommodation**, inform QUB, here: <http://go.qub.ac.uk/covidupdate> (previously every QUB student had to complete this online form, but this is not the case now)
  - b. If you are on clinical placement, you must inform your Clinical Supervisor AND the Trust's Undergraduate Office / GP Practice that you are self isolating, and then with your PCR result when you get it
  - c. Please complete an online "self-cert" to inform CME of your absence.
  - d. Inform Dr Williams, on [m.williams@qub.ac.uk](mailto:m.williams@qub.ac.uk) and Ms Lewis on [p.lewis@qub.ac.uk](mailto:p.lewis@qub.ac.uk)

## Q2a. What do I do if I test positive for COVID on PCR?

### If required to self-isolate, who should I contact?

- **only if you live in QUB accommodation**, inform QUB, here: <http://go.qub.ac.uk/covidupdate> (previously every QUB student had to complete this online form, but this is not the case now)
- If you are on clinical placement, you must inform your Clinical Supervisor AND the Trust's Undergraduate Office / GP Practice that you are self isolating, and then with your PCR result when you get it
- Please complete an online "self-cert" to inform CME of your absence
- Inform Dr Williams, on [m.williams@qub.ac.uk](mailto:m.williams@qub.ac.uk) and Ms Lewis on [p.lewis@qub.ac.uk](mailto:p.lewis@qub.ac.uk)
- All students are encouraged to download the COVIDCareNI and the STOPCOVID apps. If you test positive, please 'inform' the app

**The Public Health Authority will contact you and conduct contact tracing: there is no need for you to do this.** However you are *encouraged* to inform any possible close contacts: see later for how 'contact' is defined.

### If I have to self isolate, what do I do?

- If you must self isolate, and are on placement, we suggest you return to your Belfast accommodation / home if possible: see 2b for information on transport
- QUB have a useful 'FAQ for Students' page, including advice on self-isolation: [qub.ac.uk/sites/my-queens/self-isolation/](http://qub.ac.uk/sites/my-queens/self-isolation/)

### When can I return to normal?

- after day 10 if you haven't had a fever for over 48 hours (you do not need to keep self isolating if you have a cough, or loss of taste or smell, as these symptoms can last weeks)
- the self isolation time period starts from the date your PCR was positive, or from the first date you had symptoms, whichever was sooner
- if you have two consecutive negative lateral flow test results, from day six onwards. This means the earliest you can end self isolation is day 7.

## Q2b. What do I do if I need COVID secure transport?

COVID- secure travel can be arranged for medical students in the specific circumstance of needing to self isolate, either as a contact or a case, and needing then to move from hospital or GP-placement related accommodation anywhere in Northern Ireland, back to your usual accommodation. You will not need to pay for the taxi yourself.

If you need this, please email **all** of:

- Dr Michael Williams: [m.williams@qub.ac.uk](mailto:m.williams@qub.ac.uk)
- Mrs Bernie McKeivitt: [b.mckeivitt@qub.ac.uk](mailto:b.mckeivitt@qub.ac.uk)
- Prof Neil Kennedy: [n.kennedy@qub.ac.uk](mailto:n.kennedy@qub.ac.uk)
- Ms Perpetua Lewis: [p.lewis@qub.ac.uk](mailto:p.lewis@qub.ac.uk)

We will respond as quickly as possible to arrange this.

If you need transport to get a PCR test, arrangements are different: the University can assist you in booking a special COVID-secure taxi to transport you to a PCR test if you need this: call: 90973550. There will be a cost to you for this taxi service.

## Q2c. Where can I pick up lateral flow tests?

Order from the government site:

<https://www.gov.uk/order-coronavirus-rapid-lateral-flow-tests>

Or take home kits are available from QUB at:

- Mondays: MBC Foyer, 10 00 – 15 00
- Tuesdays: David Kier Building Hub, 10 00 – 13 00
- Wednesdays: Main site Tower Building, beside Junction Cafe, 10 00 – 15 00
- Thursdays: Ashby Foyer, 10 00 – 13 00
- Elms receptions, BT1, BT2 and BT9, McClay library reception
- Security Control in the Administration Building (24/7)

Or kits can be obtained from Trusts at:

- South Eastern Trust: contact [Undergrad@setrust.hscni.net](mailto:Undergrad@setrust.hscni.net)
- Northern Trust: pick up kits from Education Offices in Causeway or Antrim Hospitals
- Southern Trust: pick up from a “Cascade Trainer” (there is one on each ward), or in Craigavon Hospital from the COVID Priority Screening Pod, or ‘Donning and Doffing’, or in Daisy Hill Hospital from domestic staff
- Western Trust: contact Medical Education, for example here: [medical.education@westerntrust.hscni.net](mailto:medical.education@westerntrust.hscni.net)

### Q3. What is 'contact'?

The current PHA criteria defines close contact as:

- anyone who lives in the same household as someone with COVID symptoms or who has tested positive for COVID
- anyone who has had any of the following types of contact with someone who has tested positive for COVID with a PCR test:
  - face-to-face contact, including being coughed on, or having a face-to-face conversation within 1 metre
  - being within 1 metre for 1 minute or longer without face-to-face contact
  - being within 2 metres for more than 15 minutes (either as a one-off contact, or added up over 1 day)
  - skin to skin or any sexual contact
  - travelled in the same vehicle or plane

Closeness may be assessed on a case-by-case basis. Contact tracers may ask about who you have seen in the 48 hours before symptoms began. You may be asked about duration of contact, proximity of people and use of PPE such as facemasks.

## Q4. What do I do if I am a contact of someone who is COVID positive?

### Do I have to self isolate?

As a QUB medical student, if you are a contact, **you have to self isolate (whatever a PCR test shows) for ten days after the last day of contact with the case if you are not fully vaccinated OR you have ongoing household contact with the case, or both.**

- o 'Fully vaccinated' means you have had 2 doses of an approved COVID vaccine AND the booster, with the booster at least 14 days prior to the date of contact
- o If you haven't had the booster because you had your second dose less than 3 months ago, then you are considered fully vaccinated if your second dose was at least 14 days prior to the date of contact. Arrange your booster when you can.
- o Transmission in household settings is more likely than in other settings

### If I have to self isolate, what do I do?

- If you must self isolate, and are on placement, we suggest you return to your Belfast accommodation / home if possible: see 2b for information on transport
- QUB have a useful 'FAQ for Students' page, including advice on self-isolation: [qub.ac.uk/sites/my-queens/self-isolation/](http://qub.ac.uk/sites/my-queens/self-isolation/)

### What do I do if I'm fully vaccinated and have no ongoing household contact with the case?

If you are fully vaccinated and have no ongoing household contact with the case, then get a PCR test as soon as possible, and do not come in while awaiting the result. (If you have had a positive COVID PCR test result in the last 90 days, do not take another PCR test: instead do a lateral flow test and use that result.)

- o If the PCR result is positive, then self isolate for ten days
- o If the PCR result is negative, then take a daily lateral flow test, before leaving for class or placement each day, till ten days after the last day of contact with the case
- As long as lateral flow tests remain negative and no COVID symptoms emerge, you can attend class or placement.
- If a lateral flow is positive or COVID symptoms emerge, then do not come in, and do arrange a PCR test.

There are some clinical areas that are exceptions to these guidelines. These are areas with particularly vulnerable patients. In these areas staff and students must not attend for 10 days after contact with a COVID case, irrespective of vaccine status and PCR test results. These include Intensive care units, haematology/ oncology wards and renal dialysis centres. This list is not exhaustive.

If you have any doubts, ask your clinical supervisor or occupational health department in the Trust you are placed.

### 2. If required to self-isolate, who should I contact?

- **only if you live in QUB accommodation**, inform QUB, here: <http://go.qub.ac.uk/covidupdate> (previously every QUB student had to complete this online form, but this is not the case now)
- If you are on clinical placement, you must inform your Clinical Supervisor AND the Trust's Undergraduate Office / GP Practice that you are self isolating, and then with your PCR result when you get it
- Please complete an online "self-cert" to inform CME of your absence
- Inform Dr Williams, on [m.williams@qub.ac.uk](mailto:m.williams@qub.ac.uk) and Ms Lewis on [p.lewis@qub.ac.uk](mailto:p.lewis@qub.ac.uk)





## Q5. What is the correct PPE?

Note that when in any clinical area, whether there are known COVID positive patients or not, you must wear appropriate PPE. This means apron, gloves and fluid repellent face mask in all clinical settings. The use of a visor or other eye protection is encouraged in all settings. The use of a visor or other eye protection is mandatory if there is a risk of blood/ body fluid splashing. In areas of greater risk, and if COVID prevalence is high, Trusts may mandate use of visors or eye protection for all patients. Take advice from the clinical team you are placed with.

Gloves and aprons are changed between each patient contact. Hands must be sanitized between each patient contact. Masks, visors or other eye protection may be worn for a 'session' of care when multiple patients are seen - for instance a ward round. Masks must be changed if they are damaged or damp.

You should follow the practices of the medical and other healthcare staff in that area. If you are using PPE as described above you are protecting your patients, your colleagues and yourself. If you do not use PPE as described above when attending a COVID patient, you will be considered a contact and be required to leave placement and arrange PCR testing as above.

As a QUB medical student you may meet patients undergoing aerosol generating procedures (AGP). In these settings you must wear a 'face-fit-tested' FFP3 masks. Trusts will arrange testing for available masks. If you have not been fit tested, you must not be present when an AGP is taking place.

For more detail on donning and doffing PPE see:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-personal-protective-equipment-use-for-non-aerosol-generating-procedures>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-personal-protective-equipment-use-for-aerosol-generating-procedures>

## Q6. Who should I contact in the CME for pastoral support in relation to COVID?

Professor Mark Harbinson, Lead for Student Support: [m.harbinson@qub.ac.uk](mailto:m.harbinson@qub.ac.uk)  
Perpetua Lewis, Student Support & Guidance Officer: [p.lewis@qub.ac.uk](mailto:p.lewis@qub.ac.uk)

Year Pastoral Leads

Year 1: Dr Mairead Corrigan [m.corrigan@qub.ac.uk](mailto:m.corrigan@qub.ac.uk)

Year 2: Dr David Bell [d.bell@qub.ac.uk](mailto:d.bell@qub.ac.uk)

Year 3: Dr Ciaran Mulholland [c.c.mulholland@qub.ac.uk](mailto:c.c.mulholland@qub.ac.uk)

Year 4: Dr Aidan Turkington [aidan.turkington@belfasttrust.hscni.net](mailto:aidan.turkington@belfasttrust.hscni.net)

Year 5: Dr Janitha Costa [j.costa@qub.ac.uk](mailto:j.costa@qub.ac.uk)

## Q7. Who should I contact if I am still unsure what to do?

If you are not sure whether you need a COVID test or not, phone the NHS advice line: 111  
If needed, please email Dr Michael Williams ([m.williams@qub.ac.uk](mailto:m.williams@qub.ac.uk)) with any queries.

For the latest guidance, please look at:

<https://www.qub.ac.uk/home/coronavirus-faqs/information-for-students/>  
END.