



Alex Burghart MP

Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Skills

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To: International students studying at UK universities

22 December 2021

Dear all,

As the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Skills, with responsibility for international students, I wanted to write to you directly to emphasise how proud I am that you have chosen to study in the UK.

The past two years have been challenging for everyone, and I want to thank our current international students for the wonderful contribution you have made to the UK, as well as the patience and resilience you have demonstrated whilst studying here in light of the Covid-19 pandemic.

We have worked closely with the higher education sector throughout the pandemic to ensure that international students are supported throughout their studies whether this has been in the UK or remotely in their home country.

As we now approach the end of the term for 2021, I want to provide some support and guidance for the next few weeks, given the new Omicron variant and the UK Government's implementation of Plan B.

Travel to the UK

Our borders are open for both returning and new international students wishing to study in the UK, and our higher education providers are looking forward to welcoming you to campuses in the new year. I want to take this opportunity to make sure that you are aware of the Covid-19 measures in place to keep you and the wider public safe.

For those needing to quarantine on arrival I would advise you to speak with your higher education provider before you leave your home country so that they can be best placed to support you upon your arrival.

I would encourage you all to consult the latest [government travel advice](#) to ensure you are aware of the latest requirements including testing and self-isolation on arrival where necessary. Please be sure to check the requirements for testing before travel and on arrival. I would encourage you to speak to your higher education provider about any support available during this time.

As we have seen throughout the past two years, the current situation regarding the

pandemic can change rapidly so I would encourage international students who are in the UK at the moment, and who are considering travelling home during the winter break to be prepared that the travel situation around the world may change in the next few weeks. Students should carefully consider the possibility of travel disruption and be assured that if you decide to stay in the UK for the winter break your higher education provider should be ready to support you.

We are conscious that given the current circumstances more of you may choose to stay in the UK over the Christmas holidays. We have been working with higher education providers to ensure they are ready to provide you with the mental health and wellbeing support you need over this period. We encourage you to speak to your higher education provider if you are intending to stay in the UK during the holidays and to reach out to them directly if you need any help. Universities UK has also provided a [check list](#) for higher education providers to ensure you can be supported if you are required to self-isolate. In addition, students experiencing financial hardship can contact their higher education provider. Many providers have hardship funds which students can apply to for assistance.

Vaccines for international students

International students are eligible for a free COVID-19 vaccine including the booster vaccine. This remains the case if you have had a partial vaccination elsewhere in the world and I would encourage you all to register with a local GP once you are in the UK. Primary care such as this is free in the UK. Vaccines remain our best defence against the spread of the virus.

Vaccine certification

As part of England's move to 'plan-B' vaccine certification is now a condition of entry for attendees to certain venues and events in England. International students that have been vaccinated in the UK will be able to use the NHS app to show your NHS COVID pass. For international students that have been vaccinated outside of the UK, if your vaccination proof is [accepted at the UK border](#), this will also be accepted for entry into places where the [NHS COVID Pass](#) is required. You may be required to show evidence of your COVID status from the country in which you were vaccinated. For those that have been vaccinated but whose vaccines are not yet recognised in the UK there is also the option to do a COVID test in order to gain access to certification, more information about this is available on the [NHS site](#).

Covid-19 immigration concessions

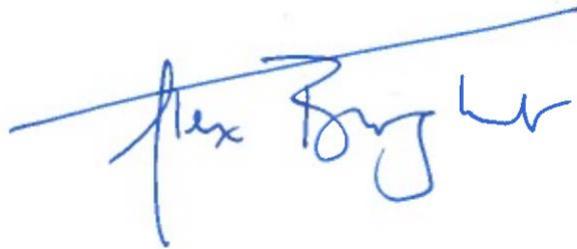
Visa concessions for those on Student (or Tier 4) visas allow for the provision of online learning for students outside the UK until **6 April 2022**. These visa concessions have been implemented so that students have a greater degree of flexibility on when they travel into the UK, if required

I would encourage international students to speak to their higher education

provider to understand their course requirements and whether their higher education provider will require face-to-face learning in the new year.

Lastly, I want to thank you once again for your decision to study in the UK at our world-class higher education system. We truly value the impact you make to our country and I look forward to welcoming you to the UK once again in 2022.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Alex Burghart". The signature is written in a cursive style and is enclosed within a thin blue rectangular border.

Alex Burghart MP
Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Skills