

Covid-19 – Week Four Check In Survey: Response from the Department of Chemistry – PGR

Dear postgrads,

Many thanks for your continued professional behaviour during the current pandemic. Although there have been a few cases of Covid-19 amongst our postgraduate community, it is clear that the measures put in place when we returned from the first lockdown have been successful and there has been no transmission within the research labs.

I appreciate that, with the colder and wetter weather, there are now fewer places to go for lunch and other breaks. We are continuing to make the case for more social space on the south side of campus and close to 5W, though no promises this will lead to anything. In the meantime, we have opened up 1S 0.01 from 12 noon to 2 pm each day as additional social space, but we appreciate that the room's capacity of six is not going to solve all problems. Please feel free to use this space during these hours but be sure to observe social distancing and keep the windows open to ensure good ventilation.

You will have heard in the news about plans for mass Covid testing for students before they leave universities and go home for Christmas. The University of Bath has applied to be part of this programme, though given limited national capacity we don't know yet whether we will be accepted. Assuming we are, and the kit all arrives in time(!), the University plans to offer tests to undergraduate students from the 3rd-9th December. Tests will then be available for all staff and students (including postgraduates) between the end of this period and Christmas. Please note that although this is the current plan, whether it will happen or not is largely out of the hands of the University. Although this is subject to change, I thought it helpful that you are aware of current thinking, especially as many of you will be starting to make your own plans for pre-Christmas travel.

Thanks to those of you who completed the feedback survey earlier this semester. I note there were a lot of comments from postgraduate students about poor communications from the Doctoral College and hope this feedback has been taken on board. I appreciate it isn't always easy to recognise what you should have been told before you are, but if there's anything that any one of you feels should be communicated more widely at a departmental level please let either myself (as Head of Department) or Jonathan Cox (as Postgraduate Director of Studies) know and we'll try to help.

All the best,
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