

Returning to Campus: A message for students' unions

We know that everyone has been working extremely hard on their plans for returning to campus and giving students a good experience when they arrive. In our calls with sabbatical officers, it has been really exciting to hear how your unions have been innovating your Freshers' plans to fit our 'new normal.'

We want to share the key things that we're saying on return to campus, and what we're planning to do.

Our key messages

- **Safety, not scapegoating:** Students have always wanted to act safely and our concerns and fears about the virus are no different to the general population's. We've been told to move to campus, told to go to busy restaurants, told that we can meet friends – however now in the absence of a national strategy the government is trying to lay the blame at students' feet and abdicating all responsibility. Students and students' unions want clear leadership from the government on returning and acting safely, not individual blame.
- **Right to move:** students have the right to move to their term time locations and form new households. For many students, this is the best way to access their learning. We believe the focus for face to face teaching should be practical subjects in labs and studios, with other courses delivered in person only if it is safe. All students should be able to make decisions based on their safety and access to education, so if their situation changes due to the impact of Covid they should be allowed to leave rental contracts, or delay taking them up.
- **Mass testing now:** Coronavirus tests should be available for anyone who needs one, and not need you to take an 80 mile round trip. There should be much greater capacity on campuses and the communities they are a part of, so that everyone impacted by students moving can get tested. There has to be national oversight of this, not a postcode lottery.
- **Students need support:** We know that jobs are much scarcer this term, and students will need additional hardship funding to counter this. We also know a third of students would struggle to access online learning because of resources: there needs to be urgent, governmental funding to address digital poverty.

Our work

As a campaigning organisation, the role of NUS UK at this time is to defend students and young people who are being unfairly blamed for a potential second wave. We know that the most impactful way to do this will be through our reach in the national press, and we are actively pursuing these so that our messaging is high on the agenda.

For more detail on our position you can read our [Return to Campus Q&A](#)