

What does the new variant and the latest UK National Lockdown (January 2021) mean for travel if I am in the UK?

If you are in the UK then you are subject to the National Lockdown rules:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/national-lockdown-stay-at-home>

When considering travel you should refer particularly to the sections headed:

When you can leave home - <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/national-lockdown-stay-at-home#when-you-can-leave-home>

Travel - <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/national-lockdown-stay-at-home#travel>

International Travel - <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/national-lockdown-stay-at-home#international-travel>

These rules are somewhat open to interpretation and it is not explicit as to whether an international work or study placement would definitively be deemed a 'reasonable excuse' albeit it would seem to fall under the work and education justifications. We have sought clarification from the Department for Education but have been advised to date that additional clarity will be hard to secure. IF you decide to travel then you should make sure that you are carrying documentation to evidence your need to do so eg. the admission letter from your host university, contract with your host company etc. You should also recognise that if you are challenged when traveling there is a possibility that you will be considered in breach of the rules unless your journey is considered necessary by the police officer challenging you.

You should review your Risk Assessment:

We would urge you to give very serious consideration to the risks associated with travel at this time as numbers escalate rapidly not just in the UK but also elsewhere. You should revisit your risk assessment in light of the recent changes and review in particular:

- (a) Any updated Covid-19 measures in place in your host country;
- (b) Any updated Covid-19 measures in place at your host organisation;
- (c) Any changes to entry requirements;
- (d) Travel restrictions and transport challenges – flight cancellations are widespread particularly to/from the UK; border closures, restrictions on travellers from the UK;
- (e) Health/Healthcare – what is the situation with healthcare services in your host country and how robust are those services with rising Covid cases should you become ill;
- (f) Accommodation arrangements – challenges with securing housing during lockdowns, suitability of housing if living there for an extended lockdown;
- (g) Individual Considerations – how you will cope in a new place with limited local connections if you are in lockdown/isolation for an extended period.

For each of these you should consider whether the mitigations in place are appropriate and sufficient. Whilst we do not require you to re-submit any risk assessment already approved, if the risk associated with any element of your placement has increased and/or mitigations are no longer appropriate you should carefully consider the implications of such changes for continuing/going ahead with your placement, taking account also of the below.

You should review the insurance exclusions and limitations:

Some of the key exclusions that are relevant in the context of Government lockdowns/borders closures etc. can be referenced in the 'Semester 2 Travel – Supporting Information' document that can also be found on this website.

Remote study/work is strongly encouraged if viable:

If you are not already in your host country and have the option to continue/commence your placement remotely from the UK/your home country we would strongly encourage you to pursue this at this time because of the risks associated with travel under the current circumstances and the wider need to reduce levels of transmission domestically and internationally. However, we recognise that everyone's circumstances are different and if you have received approval to travel we are not revoking that.