

## GENERAL GUIDANCE

- Indian students in the UK are advised to follow all government guidelines outlined on: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/covid-19-coronavirus-restrictions-what-you-can-and-cannot-do>.
- The Indian Government has issued fresh guidelines for travelling to India in wake of the recent **Omicron variant** of Coronavirus. This operating procedure has been valid from 1<sup>st</sup> December 2021 (00.01 Hrs IST) till further orders. See <https://www.mohfw.gov.in/pdf/GuidelinesforInternationalarrivalsdated30thNovember2021.pdf> for details.
- The Home Office's Coronavirus Immigration email address is [CIH@homeoffice.gov.uk](mailto:CIH@homeoffice.gov.uk).
- As a general rule, guidance issued by the governments of the four UK countries starts at the following links:
  - England: [gov.uk/coronavirus](https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus)
  - Scotland: [gov.scot/coronavirus-covid-19](https://www.gov.scot/coronavirus-covid-19)
  - Wales: [gov.wales/coronavirus](https://www.gov.wales/coronavirus)
  - Northern Ireland: [nidirect.gov.uk/campaigns/coronavirus-covid-19](https://nidirect.gov.uk/campaigns/coronavirus-covid-19)
- If you have financial difficulties, let your education provider or Students' Union know and ask if they can help you in any way. International students are [defined by the Office for Students as vulnerable](#), which means that you should have guaranteed appropriate accommodation, immediate access to hardship funds if necessary, and support with obtaining food, cleaning and medical supplies. Sometimes these hardship funds may not be prominently advertised, so ask at your university about these if you need financial help. If your university refuses to or is unable to help, let us know.
- If you need help with your mental health, with feeling lonely, with your finances, or with your study, we advise you to tell your education institution so that it can offer you the support you need. If your institution refuses to or is unable to help, let us know.
- International students from India usually do not have access to public funds, which is a [specific list in the Immigration Rules of benefits and other payments](#). If you have the immigration condition 'No recourse to public funds' or 'No access to public funds' in your passport or Biometric Residence Permit, it is unlikely you will be able to achieve any of these benefits. However, the UK Government has confirmed on its 'Coronavirus (COVID-19): get support if you're a migrant living the UK web page' that the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme and the Self-Employment Income Support Scheme do not count as 'public funds' for immigration purposes. Source: <https://www.ukcisa.org.uk/Information--Advice/Fees-and-Money/Welfare-Benefits#layer-3690>.
- **If you have any queries or need any help, please feel free to contact us at [team@nisu.org.uk](mailto:team@nisu.org.uk).**
- You can also contact the UKCISA Student Advice Line on +44 2077889214 which is open Monday to Friday (except for public holidays): 1.00pm to 4.00pm (UK time).

## TRAVELLING TO INDIA – RECENT CHANGES

The travel bubble arrangements wherein limited flights are in operation between India and the UK continue. India's Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) has recently [extended the suspension on scheduled commercial international flights till Jan 31 22](#).

### **ALL THOSE PLANNING TO TRAVEL SHOULD:**

- Submit self-declaration form on the online Air Suvidha portal (<https://www.newdelhiairport.in/airsuvidha/apho-registration>) before the scheduled travel, including last 14 days' travel details.
- Mandatorily pre-book RT-PCR test through the Air Suvidha portal as the UK is currently considered to be an 'at-risk' country.
- Upload a negative COVID-19 RT-PCR report. Test should have been done within 72 hours prior to undertaking the journey.
- Submit a declaration with respect to authenticity of the report. Liability for criminal prosecution if found otherwise.
- Give an undertaking on the portal or otherwise to Ministry of Civil Aviation, Government of India, through concerned airlines before they are allowed to undertake the journey that they would abide by the decision of the appropriate government authority to undergo home/institutional quarantine/ self-health monitoring, as warranted.

**BEFORE BOARDING:**

- All passengers are advised to download Aarogya Setu app on their mobile devices.
- At the time of boarding the flight, only asymptomatic travellers will be allowed to board after thermal screening.
- Travellers arriving from the UK are currently considered by India to be 'at-risk'. Your airline is expected to inform you of the necessary post-arrival requirements, do-s and don't-s etc.

**ON ARRIVAL:**

- Thermal screening would be carried out for all passengers by health officials at the airport. The self-declaration form filled online shall be shown to the airport health staff.
- Passengers found to be symptomatic during screening shall be immediately isolated and taken to medical facility as per health protocol. If tested positive, their contacts shall be identified and managed. There is a specific protocol for this outlined on <https://www.civilaviation.gov.in/sites/default/files/GuidelinesforInternationalarrivalsdated30thNovember202.pdf>

**TRAVELLERS ARRIVING FROM UNITED KINGDOM ARE CURRENTLY CONSIDERED BY INDIA TO BE 'AT-RISK' AND MUST FOLLOW THE AT RISK COUNTRY PROTOCOL:**

- Self-paid post-arrival Covid-19 test at airport; await test results at the arrival airport before leaving or onward flight
  - If tested negative, home quarantine for 7 days. Re-test on 8<sup>th</sup> day of arrival in India. If negative, self-monitor health for next 7 days.
  - If tested positive, samples should be sent for genomic testing at INSACOG laboratory network. Management will be at separate isolation facility and treated as per laid down standard protocol including contact tracing as per <https://www.civilaviation.gov.in/sites/default/files/GuidelinesforInternationalarrivalsdated30thNovember202.pdf>
- The contacts of such positive case should be kept under institutional quarantine or at home quarantine monitored strictly by the concerned State Government as per laid down protocol.

**NOTE:**

- If travellers under home quarantine or self-health monitoring develop signs and symptoms suggestive of COVID-19 or test positive for COVID-19 on re-testing, they will immediately self-isolate and report to their nearest health facility or call National helpline number (1075)/ State Helpline Number.
- Children under 5 years of age are exempted from both pre- and post-arrival testing. However, if found symptomatic for COVID-19 on arrival or during home quarantine period, they shall undergo testing and treated as per laid down protocol.
- Contacts of the suspect case are the co-passengers seated in the same row, 3 rows in front and 3 rows behind along with identified Cabin Crew. Also, all the community contacts of those travellers who have tested positive (during home quarantine period) would be subjected to quarantine for 14 days and tested as per ICMR protocol.
- As at 30 November 2021, countries at-risk include countries in Europe including the United Kingdom, South Africa, Brazil, Botswana, China, Mauritius, New Zealand, Zimbabwe, Singapore, Hong Kong, and Israel.

## TRAVELLING TO UK – RECENT CHANGES

- From 4am Tuesday 30 November 2021 face coverings have been compulsory in shops and other settings such as banks, post offices and hairdressers, as well as on public transport unless individuals are exempt from doing so. See details at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/asures-against-omicron-variant-come-into-effect-30-november-2021>
- All travellers arriving into the country from 4am on Tuesday 30 November 2021 are required to take a PCR test on or before day 2 and self-isolate until they have received a negative test result. These PCR tests can be purchased from private providers. Free NHS tests are not valid for this purpose.
- All contacts of suspected Omicron cases must self-isolate, regardless of their vaccination status. They will be contacted by NHS Test and Trace.
- Travellers from India should ensure you have fully familiarised yourself with the travel requirements as outlined by the UK Government on <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/travel-to-england-from-another-country-during-coronavirus-covid-19#current-rules>.
- What you need to do when you travel to England depends on whether you qualify as fully vaccinated or not. To qualify under the fully vaccinated rules for travel to England, you must have proof of full vaccination (India's vaccine certificate is valid) with a full course of an approved vaccine. You must have had a complete course of one of the approved vaccines at least 14 days before you arrive in England. India's Covishield and Covaxin are both approved vaccines. If you were vaccinated with a 2-dose vaccine, or a combination of them, you must have had both doses to be considered fully vaccinated for travel to the UK. For details and further info see: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/countries-with-approved-covid-19-vaccination-programmes-and-proof-of-vaccination>.
- If you are fully vaccinated, before you travel to England you must:
  - take a COVID-19 test - to be taken in the 2 days before you travel to England
  - book and pay for a COVID-19 PCR test - to be taken after you arrive in England
  - complete a passenger locator form - to be completed in the 48 hours before you arrive in England
- After you arrive in England you must take a COVID-19 PCR test. This is the test that you booked before travel.
- You can take the test any time after you arrive and before the end of day 2 at the latest. The day you arrive is day 0.
- You must quarantine in your home or the place you are staying while you await your test result.
- If your test result is:
  - negative, you can end your quarantine.
  - positive, you must self-isolate for 10 full days. The day of the test is day 0.
  - unclear, you must self-isolate for 10 full days. The day you took the test is day 0.
  - unclear, you can choose to take another private test. If the result of that test is negative, you can stop self-isolating.
  - delayed, you must quarantine until you receive a negative test result or until day 14 after arrival, whichever is sooner.
- If you're changing flights on your way to Scotland, you'll need to take your COVID-19 test in the 2 days before you board your first flight. Details at <https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-international-travel-quarantine/>.
- If you are not fully vaccinated, follow the guidance at <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/travel-to-england-from-another-country-during-coronavirus-covid-19#if-you-are-fully-vaccinated>.
- If you need to quarantine, you may be able to end quarantine early subject to fulfilling the requirements laid out on <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-test-to-release-for-international-travel>.

Additionally, the UK Council of International Student Affairs has provided further information in this context <https://www.ukcisa.org.uk/Information--Advice/Studying--living-in-the-UK/Coronavirus-Covid-19-info-for-international-students>.

We urge you to follow this advice.

We also recommend you contact your institution, airline and travel agent as applicable to seek advice from them on your travel plans.

***Please note, this advisory and any communication from the National Indian Students and Alumni Union UK (NISAU) is intended to support Indian students in the UK and should not be construed as legal, immigration or health advice in any shape or form. NISAU UK does not provide any such advice and the information provided is subject to change. Contact the relevant government, university, airline, travel agent or other service provider as required. No liability will be accepted under any circumstance.***