**Guidance to Heads of Departments / Directors of Operations / Deans / Directions for issuing confirmation letter to “critical workers”.**

The Department of Education confirmed in November 2020 that staff working in Higher Education are considered “critical workers”, vital to the continuation of education. Those critical to the continued operation of UCL; those teaching and supporting students; those working on critical research; those working on the COVID-19 virus or response to the pandemic; those advising the government, the NHS or PHE; those working for the NHS; and those supporting these professionals or the coronavirus effort are all making an important contribution to the national effort. Whether University staff are working on campus or from home, their children are eligible to attend school for face-to-face teaching.  Please see link to relevant guidance [Critical workers and vulnerable children who can access schools or educational settings](https://eur01.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.gov.uk%2Fgovernment%2Fpublications%2Fcoronavirus-covid-19-maintaining-educational-provision%2Fguidance-for-schools-colleges-and-local-authorities-on-maintaining-educational-provision&data=04%7C01%7C%7Cdfae7fe7a3394c57d71f08d8b1715e0d%7C1faf88fea9984c5b93c9210a11d9a5c2%7C0%7C0%7C637454447747743060%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C1000&sdata=1AcZr5vzHS75zKd5xNRM4Hd7PhiiCalE6dlFdvaK7Pc%3D&reserved=0).

Specifically, as outlined in government guidance, Higher Education staff fall under the category of:

* Support and teaching staff
* specialist education professionals who must remain active during the coronavirus (COVID- 19) or EU transition response
* clinical staff working for the NHS

However, it is important to note that many schools have introduced their own criteria/priorities which a critical worker may also need to meet. Parents should be mindful of these and, if necessary, initiate discussions regarding their own status and eligibility against the school criteria as appropriate.

Heads of Departments / Directors of Operations / Deans / Directors may issue the attached template letter to parents they consider critical and who have requested it.

We understand the additional pressure on all parents prompted by the pandemic and encourage our staff to seek appropriate support, engaging with their line manager for advice as appropriate. UCL staff who do not meet their school’s criteria, and have caring responsibilities which mean they are unable to work can request to be put on [furlough or flexible part-time furlough](https://www.ucl.ac.uk/human-resources/covid-19-support/coronavirus-hr-policies-and-guidance/leave-absences-related-coronavirus/coronavirus) via their line manager. Line managers should also allow for flexibility around working hours and outputs for parents and carers and consider reprioritising work accordingly.

In terms of additional resources, all staff are encouraged to read about and access [Wellbeing support](https://www.ucl.ac.uk/human-resources/wellbeingucl). Managers may also find the following useful in terms of supporting their staff through what is a challenging time for many:

* [**Covid 19 Support for line managers**](https://www.ucl.ac.uk/human-resources/covid-19-support/coronavirus-hr-policies-and-guidance/support-line-managers)
* [**Work life blend guidance**](https://www.ucl.ac.uk/human-resources/covid-19-support/coronavirus-hr-policies-and-guidance/support-line-managers/worklifeplus-blend)
* [**Leave and absence related to Coronavirus guidance**](https://www.ucl.ac.uk/human-resources/covid-19-support/coronavirus-hr-policies-and-guidance/leave-and-absences-related-coronavirus)
* [**Learning Academy personal development resources**](https://www.ucl.ac.uk/human-resources/learning-development/learning-academy/personal-development)

If you have any queries on this please contact your HR Business Partner.



**LONDON’S GLOBAL UNIVERSITY**

**EVIDENCE OF CRITICAL WORKER STATUS**

**[TODAY’S DATE]**

**RE: [STAFF MEMBER'S NAME], [DEPT], [DIVISION / FACULTY]**

This is to confirm that the above named has been identified by UCL as a critical worker according to UK Government guidelines during the Covid-19 outbreak.

This is because their role falls under the category of either:

* support and teaching staff
* specialist education professionals who must remain active during the coronavirus (COVID-19) or EU transition response

If you have any queries please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours faithfully

**[Director / Dean’s Electronic signature or print name]**

**[Print name]**

**[Job title]**

**[UCL Email address]**

**[UCL contact telephone number]**

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