

NEWSLETTER

YOUR NEWSLETTER FOR WHG STAFF AND STUDENTS



Director's Update

Following the Government announcement of the COVID-19 'Living with COVID-19 strategy', the University will remain in BCP Stage 1, with the expectation that it will move back to BCP Stage 0 on 27th March. Further details are provided in this newsletter, and more details will follow. The WHG's DSAC meets on Tuesday 8th March – if you have any specific questions about the University's response to the 'Living with COVID-19 strategy', please contact the WHG's Business Manager Sue Wilson sue.wilson@well.ox.ac.uk

The WHG IT team have been working tirelessly to switch our Wellcome email server over to University's Nexus365, a project that was long overdue and much needed. I would like to extend my huge thanks and appreciation to the WHG IT team and the MSD IT team who have provided huge support through the process, which is still ongoing due to major complexities. There are a number of other IT improvement projects on the horizon, and we are actively looking to add more people to the team to ensure that we continue to offer great desktop support, as well as modernising our IT infrastructure to strengthen its security and resilience.

In February we wished **Marek Biadon** a fond farewell from the fantastic Building and Facilities team. We wish him all the very best for his new role outside of academia.

March will also see the departure of **John Broxholme**, who has worked in the WHG for 24 years in our Bioinformatics Core. Thank you John for all of your hard work and dedication over the years.

Ben Davies will be leaving the WHG after 15 years of outstanding service as Head of Transgenics Core. Ben will be leaving in mid-May for an exciting post at the Crick Institute. He will be sorely missed as an excellent citizen of the WHG who has made huge contributions to WHG General Purposes Committee and is an active and visible member of the WHG community.

But March brings new arrivals to the WHG, including our new Health and Safety Manager **Tiphonie Bouriez-Jones**. I hope you will join me in making Tiph welcome when she starts on 7th March.

These words from Max Perutz, one of my science heroes, encapsulate my vision for the centre and are so profound and visionary even now, 60 years after the LMB was opened. This is exactly how we can create the perfect environment for scientific excellence.

Making people talk and listen to each other

"Experience has taught me that laboratories often fail because their scientists never talk to each other. To stimulate the exchange of ideas, we built a canteen where people can chat at morning coffee, lunch and tea. It was managed for over twenty years by my wife, Gisela, who saw to it that the food was good and that it was a place where people would make friends. Scientific instruments were to be shared, rather than being jealously guarded as peoples private property; this saved money and also forced people to talk to each other"

John Todd, March 2022



NEWSLETTER

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COVID Update

If you have any questions related to the information below, please get in touch with Sue Wilson (sue.wilson@well.ox.ac.uk) or Fiona Williams, WHG Deputy Business Manager (fiona.williams@ndm.ox.ac.uk).

Arrangements for the remainder of the term following the Government announcement of the COVID-19 Response: Living with COVID-19 strategy

Silver Group met on Thursday 24 February to discuss the latest situation following the decision to remove all remaining COVID-19 restrictions in England - as outlined in the Government's *COVID-19 Response: Living with COVID-19 strategy*. Having earlier solicited advice from the Health Measures Advisory Group, and with transmission levels remaining high, Silver have decided largely not to alter the University's current COVID-related arrangements until soon after the end of term (i.e. end of week 10, Saturday 26 March). More specifically:

BCP level

University remains at BCP Stage 1.

Face coverings

Current face coverings guidance will remain in place until the end of 10th week in Hilary term (26 March), with the exception, that libraries will now 'strongly encourage' face coverings rather than mandate them.

Twice-weekly asymptomatic LFD testing

On 21 February 2022 the Government announced that it was discontinuing its guidance for staff and students in most education settings to undertake twice weekly asymptomatic testing. To protect one another from infection, the University continues to encourage twice weekly testing for staff and students who are on site until the end of 10th Week (26 March). LFD test results should continue to be reported to the [Early Alert Service](#) (EAS) and the [NHS](#) for this period. The Early Alert Service has distributed sufficient stocks of LFDs to collection points around colleges and the University. [Tests](#) can also be ordered from the NHS online.

EAS PCR testing

As with asymptomatic testing to protect each other, access to the University's own PCR testing will continue until the end of 10th week (26 March) in Hilary term. The University continues to encourage staff and students to take PCR tests in line with its [health guidance](#).

Changes to the SPOC role

Department and college SPOCs will continue to receive notifications from the EAS whilst testing continues (until the end of 10th week, 26 March), but are no longer required to support contact tracing or notification of close contacts. Once PCR and LFD testing ends, the SPOC role will revert to an advisory function only. The University is hugely grateful to all colleagues who have taken on the role of SPOC during the pandemic.

Enhanced cleaning regimes and hand sanitising stations

All enhanced cleaning regimes should now stop with areas now moving back to pre-pandemic cleaning regimes. Hand sanitising stations will also be discontinued.

Ventilation

The University continues to encourage as much ventilation as possible.

Changes expected to take place at Easter and the planned arrangements for Trinity term

BCP Stage

Given that we are currently in week 6 of Hilary term, Silver Group decided that it would be too disruptive to make further changes now - and so the University will remain at Stage 1 of its [Business Continuity Planning \(BCP\) framework](#) until the end of week 10 in Hilary term. It is expected that the University will move to Stage 0 of the BCP framework with effect from 27 March; Silver will meet in due course to confirm this decision.

End of COVID-19 rules and restrictions and governance arrangements

Under BCP Stage 0, the University will move to a 'new normal' with all current COVID-specific health and safety mitigations in University spaces removed and replaced by new health advice on safe behaviours. The intention (subject to any resumption of the pandemic) is that the Crisis management framework will be suspended, with Silver and Bronze formally dissolving at the end of the academic year, and all decision-making integrated back into normal university governance.

EAS ceasing operations

The EAS testing service will cease to operate when the University moves to BCP Stage 0. The University is hugely grateful to the many volunteers who worked tirelessly to provide this fabulous service for our staff and students throughout the pandemic

Arrangements for students

[The University's Teaching Expectations for Hilary term](#), will continue to be in place for the remainder of the term with teaching normally expected to take place in-person (while retaining online content that students value as inclusive).

[The Centre for Teaching and Learning website](#) provides advice and examples of flexible and inclusive approaches, helping staff to offer in-person teaching while still supporting students who need to access teaching remotely or at a later date. Student services should continue to operate both online and in-person.



NEWSLETTER

YOUR NEWSLETTER FOR WHG STAFF AND STUDENTS



COVID Update continued....

Easter student testing

To continue to protect against transmission, students will also be advised to take an LFD test before they return home for the Easter break. A reminder for students will be placed in Monday's all student email.

Hospital settings

Please note that those working in hospital settings should continue to follow NHS guidance as appropriate.

Self-isolation expectations

From Thursday 24 February the UK Government removed the legal requirement in England to self-isolate (for anyone testing positive and for unvaccinated close contacts) alongside the end to routine contact tracing.

The University's own guidance for individuals who test positive (via a PCR or rapid LFD test) will also change to reflect the revised government approach. Anyone who has COVID-19 should:

- o Stay at home and minimise contact with others for at least five full days, in line with NHS advice
- o Only return to work or study onsite once they are feeling better *and* after either two negative LFD test results (taken 24 hours apart) or after Day 10, whichever is earlier
- o Make close contacts aware of their positive result
- o Follow the regular local absence notification procedure.

The University's department and college COVID case response protocols will be reviewed and updated, as necessary, with this information in the coming days along with the University's COVID-19 webpages.

Websites (for all staff)

[University Coronavirus website](#)

[Staff homepage](#)

[Health information](#) and the [testing service](#)

[University Safety Office](#) and [Safety Office-specific Coronavirus updates and advice](#)

[Information for students](#)

An advertisement for 'The Summer Internship Programme' featuring a background image of a red double-decker bus and a building. The text is overlaid on the image. On the right side, there are two dark blue boxes with white text. At the bottom right, there are logos for the University of Oxford and the Careers Service.

The Summer Internship Programme

 THE INTERNSHIP OFFICE

www.careers.ox.ac.uk/sip

Funded internship opportunities exclusively available to Oxford University students in the summer vacation.

Apply by 14 March 2022 for UK internships, carried out in person or remotely in a wide variety of sectors.

 UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD  CAREERS SERVICE

NEWSLETTER

YOUR NEWSLETTER FOR WHG STAFF AND STUDENTS



EDI Update

International Women's Day: Tuesday 8th of March

Join the Mathematics and Statistics departments on Tuesday 8 March 2022 for an afternoon of in-person events at the Mathematical Institute:

Register for either or both events plus a drinks reception [here](#).

13:00-14:30: 'How Women Rise in Professional Services'

We are delighted to welcome a number of incredible speakers, who will share their experiences of working in professional services roles. Speakers include:

- Sophie Brotherston, Senior Organisational Development Consultant, POD
- Jocasta Gardner, Head of Administration and Finance, MI
- Daisy Hung, Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Manager, MPLS

14:45-17:00: Screening of 'Picture a Scientist' and panel discussion

Join us to watch a live screening of the incredible "Picture A Scientist" film, followed by a panel discussion and Q&A with:

- Matt Jarvis, Associate Head of MPLS (People)
- Christl Donnelly, Deputy Head of Department (Statistics)
- Aprajita Verma, Senior Researcher in Physics

WHG EDI Seminar Series: Friday 29th April @12:00

On Fri 29th of April at midday we welcome Drs Saher Ahmed and David Adams, who will be giving a talk on EDI initiatives at the Wellcome Sanger Institute,

"EDI - What's in it for me? An organisational and personal perspective".

The strategic EDI vision for Sanger is to foster an inclusive culture where everyone can thrive and diversity is celebrated. This encompasses working towards a diverse, representative workforce at all levels; staff, students and leaders taking personal ownership and responsibility of EDI and an inclusive working environment where we all celebrate, respect and value each other's diversity.

In their joint talk, Saher Ahmed will discuss some of the actions we are taking to move towards a more equitable, just and inclusive environment, with a focus on the new Sanger Excellence Fellowship - a new three-year Fellowship aimed at people from Black heritage backgrounds. David Adams will give a personal perspective on his own EDI journey, as the Faculty Lead for the new Fellowship scheme, and as an advocate for cancer genetic studies in low/middle-income countries. Invitation to follow.



Dr Saher Ahmed



Dr David Adams

WHG EDI & Mental Health Symposium 2022: Friday 27th of May, "Living with chronic immune illness and working in academia"

Mental health permeates a range of EDI issues, including chronic illness, and for many individuals with immune-related illnesses mental health problems have been exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic. Our goals are to raise awareness of these problems, help break down barriers for such individuals in academia, promote and sustain positive culture change in this area in academia and beyond, and foster research into this topic. To address these aims, with funding from the British Society for Immunology, we are holding a dedicated symposium including expert presentations, interactive sessions, and panel discussions, coupled with pre-symposium engagement events for improving psychological safety, and longitudinal participant follow-up for impact evaluation.

If you would like to find out more and/or are interested in helping out, please contact Maddie Welland (madeleine.welland@ndcn.ox.ac.uk) or Calli Dendrou (cdendrou@well.ox.ac.uk).

Want to learn more about EDI in the Centre?

To find out more about EDI in the Centre and to get involved, please contact us:

WHG EDI Champion: cdendrou@well.ox.ac.uk
Wellcome EDI Officer: madeleine.welland@ndcn.ox.ac.uk
WHG EDI Committee: edicommittee@well.ox.ac.uk

For anonymous posting of EDI-related comments or queries please use the WHG EDI padlet: https://padlet.com/whg_edi/5tbw7eb2q



NEWSLETTER

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MSD Update

Returning Parents Workshop, Wed 16 March

An online workshop for expectant, new and returning parents on maintaining a successful work/life balance.

This online workshop is being offered across the University to parents/carers who have recently returned or are about to return to work after a career break. The goal is to provide recent returners with the information, tools, support, and networks they need to ensure a successful and smooth return to work. The workshop will be open to all who have recently returned or will be returning to work after taking a break for caring responsibilities, with a particular focus on those returning to work following a period or periods of parental leave, paternity leave, maternity or adoption leave.

Over the two hour workshop, you will:

- Learn about childcare and other family support;
- Learn about relevant HR policies and practices, and have your questions answered by an HR team member and a Childcare Services team member;
- Discuss how the landscape has changed post-pandemic;
- Hear from a panel of returning carers (academics, researchers, and professional and support staff) who will share their tips on time management and balancing home and work demands.

For more information and to register, please see <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/returning-parents-workshop-tickets-259511825857>

Registrar's Update for Professional Services Staff - Professional Services Together, Thursday 24 March, 10am

At the Mathematical Institute, and online; 10am to 11.15am (followed by refreshments until 12pm for those attending in-person). All colleagues in administrative and professional roles are welcome to attend, both in the central University and in academic divisions and departments

Registration details: please visit the [registration page](#). Please ensure you register by noon on Friday 18 March, in order to receive joining instructions the day before the event. If you have any queries about the event, please contact the [UAS Communications team](#).

StEP Ignite, from OUI (for students)

The team at OUI, OxSciences and the Centre for Entrepreneurship, Said Business School are delighted to announce that applications are now open for this year's Student Entrepreneurship Programme (StEP Ignite 2022). Applications are open NOW, so don't miss the opportunity! [More info and to apply click here](#). **Deadline: noon on 14 March**

Lasker Foundation 2022 Essay Contest

The **Lasker Foundation** proudly launches its **2022 Essay Contest**, which is accepting submissions now through March 30, 2022!

Graduate and post-graduate students and aspiring researchers are encouraged to enter! International submissions are particularly encouraged. Now in its ninth year, the Lasker Foundation **student essay contest** is open to medical students, biomedical and public health graduate students and post-docs.

Winners receive up to **\$5,000 in educational expenses**. This year's theme: *Solving complex questions often calls for expertise in many fields. Describe how multidisciplinary collaborations and approaches (or future opportunities for them) have already or will in the future impact your own training, research, or career.* The 800-word essays are due March 30, at 2 p.m. EDT.

For detailed submission guidelines and stories on past winners please read [HERE](#).