

Absences due to COVID-19

The following text is taken from the “**Coronavirus (COVID-19): EU Settlement Scheme – guidance for applicants**” (updated on 10/06/2021)

Read the full guidance.

Other than the ones set out above, restrictions due to Covid-19 pandemic can be considered as an “important reasons” for your absences.

An ‘important reason’ also includes (but is not limited to) where you can show you were:

- ill with coronavirus
- in quarantine, self-isolating or shielding in accordance with local public health guidance on coronavirus
- caring for a family member affected by coronavirus
- prevented from returning earlier to the UK due to travel disruption caused by coronavirus
- advised by your university that, due to coronavirus, your course was moved to remote learning and you were advised or allowed to return to your home country to study remotely
- advised by your university or employer not to return to the UK, and to continue studying or working remotely from your home country
- absent from the UK for another reason relating to coronavirus, for example, you left or remained outside the UK because there were fewer coronavirus restrictions elsewhere; you preferred to work or run a business from home overseas; or you would have been unemployed in the UK and preferred to rely on support from family or friends overseas

This means you can rely on any coronavirus related reason (including where you chose to leave or remain outside the UK because of the pandemic) as being an ‘important reason’ permitting an absence of up to 12 months. In these circumstances, you will not have broken your continuous qualifying period of residence.

Absences exceeding 12 months

Where, after an absence of 12 months for an ‘important reason’, coronavirus meant you were prevented from, or advised against, returning to the UK within 12 months, you will be treated as not having broken your continuous qualifying period of residence.

The period of absence exceeding 12 months will not be counted towards your continuous qualifying period of residence under the EU Settlement Scheme. Your continuous qualifying period will be paused from the point your absence reached 12 months and will resume from the point you return to the UK.

Where you hold pre-settled status, and this is due to expire before you can complete the continuous qualifying period of residence required for you to be eligible for settled status, you will be able to apply for a further grant of pre-settled status.

You have already been absent from the UK for up to 12 months for an ‘important reason’ and now need to be so for a second time, and one of those absences is because of coronavirus.

Under Appendix EU, you can only have a single period of absence of up to 12 months for an ‘important reason’. Where you have a second period of absence exceeding 6 months in any 12-month period for an ‘important reason’, you have exceeded the absence permitted under Appendix EU. However, you can still apply to the EUSS where you can evidence that one of those periods of absence of up to 12 months is because of coronavirus. This means you can rely on any coronavirus related reason (including where you chose to leave or remain outside the UK because of the pandemic) as the basis for requiring a second period of absence of up to 12 months for an ‘important reason’. In these circumstances, you will be treated as not having broken your continuous qualifying period of residence.

Either period of absence may exceed the 12-month maximum for a period of absence for an ‘important reason’ permitted by Appendix EU because coronavirus meant you were prevented from, or advised against, returning to the UK earlier, as set out above. In these circumstances, that excess absence will not be counted towards your

continuous qualifying period of residence under the EU Settlement Scheme, as set out above.

Up to the first 6 months of the second period of absence will be counted towards your continuous qualifying period of residence under the EU Settlement Scheme, where the period counted means you have not been absent for more than 6 months in any 12-month period. Your continuous qualifying period will be paused from that point and will resume from the point you return to the UK.

Where you hold pre-settled status, and this is due to expire before you can complete the continuous qualifying period of residence required for you to be eligible for settled status, you will be able to apply for a further grant of pre-settled status.

You should provide evidence to support the fact that your absence was due to an important reason. Examples of acceptable evidence include (but are not limited to):

- used travel tickets confirming the dates you left the UK and returned
- confirmation of flight cancellations detailing the dates and times
- doctor's letter confirming you contracted coronavirus
- doctor's letter confirming you were identified as vulnerable and advised to shield
- email or letter confirming you, or a person you were living with, received a positive coronavirus test result
- official letter confirming you were in coronavirus quarantine
- doctor's letter confirming your family member, who you have been caring for, contracted coronavirus or was identified as vulnerable and advised to shield
- email or letter confirming your family member, who you have been caring for, received a positive coronavirus test result
- letter from a university advising you that, due to coronavirus, your course was moved to remote learning and you were advised or allowed to return to your home country to study remotely
- letter from a university or employer advising you not to return to the UK, and to continue studying or working remotely from your home country, due to coronavirus
- letter or other evidence from you accounting for your absence for another reason relating to coronavirus, for example, you left or

remained outside the UK because there were fewer coronavirus restrictions elsewhere; you preferred to work or run a business from home overseas; or you would have been unemployed in the UK and preferred to rely on support from family or friends overseas.