Dear Chinese students,

The current Coronavirus situation in China is deeply worrying to all of us, but we know that you will be particularly worried about what is happening – about the effect on your friends and family back home – and about the impact on you and your studies. The University wants to do everything it can to support you at this difficult time, so I am writing to update you on the support available. I also want to highlight some additional forms of support that we are putting in place.

First of all, the University already has a range of support services which you may find helpful if you are worried about the situation in China and want help. Your first point of contact should be Health.Safety@ed.ac.uk. For other forms of support you can speak to the student support team in your school; the University Chaplaincy (it doesn’t matter if you are not at all religious, they are there to support all members of the University community), the Residence Life team (if you are staying in University accommodation), and the Students’ Association Advice Place. There is also lots of advice on managing stress and anxiety online from the Student Counselling Service.

You can find more information about all these services and how to access them in this online leaflet, which is in Chinese.

Secondly, you may be worried that the Coronavirus poses a risk to you and others here in the UK. Last week, two confirmed cases of Coronavirus were reported in England. There have been no cases reported in Scotland so far. The UK risk level has also been raised from low to moderate – however this does not mean that the risk to individuals in the UK has changed at this stage.

However, the official advice is that if you have returned to the UK from Hubei Province in the last 14 days, you should self-isolate. This means that you should stay at home, avoid contact with other people, and follow basic hygiene advice. If you need to self-isolate, please let us know by emailing Health.Safety@ed.ac.uk and we will provide you with further information and support.

- You need to self-isolate if you have returned to the UK from Hubei Province in the last 14 days, even if you have no symptoms of the virus (fever, cough, or difficulty breathing).

- If you have returned from elsewhere in China (not including Macao or Hong Kong) in the last 14 days, you are asked to actively monitor for symptoms. If you develop any of the symptoms, even if mild, you should self-isolate and contact the NHS for further advice, by calling the 24-hour NHS helpline on 111.

The situation and the advice can change quite rapidly, so the University is publishing information updates regularly on its website.

Thirdly, we understand that you may have lots of other questions that you want to ask but are not sure who to ask. Please send your enquiries to infopoint@ed.ac.uk in either English or Chinese and we will get back to you as soon as we can.
Finally, we understand that there is the unfortunate possibility that events in China might cause an increase in incidents of racial harassment, aggression or abuse which you might face either on or off campus. This is never acceptable. We would urge that if you face any negative or abusive comments or behaviour from anyone, you should tell someone and seek support from the Student Support team in your School, from your personal tutor or supervisor, or from the Students’ Association Advice Place. Any conversations will be handled with due care and confidentiality, and our staff will work with you to find the appropriate means of safety and redress.

Best wishes,

Gavin Douglas
Deputy Secretary, Student Experience