

Supplementary file S1. Consolidated criteria for reporting qualitative studies (COREQ): 32-item checklist

Topic and Item No.	Guide Questions/Description	Response
Domain 1: Research team and reflexivity		
<i>Personal Characteristics</i>		
1. Interviewer/facilitator	Which author/s conducted the interview or focus group?	Amani Al-Oraibi, Lauren Fothergill, Mehmet Yildirim
2. Credentials	What were the researcher's credentials? E.g. PhD, MD	PhD researchers
3. Occupation	What was their occupation at the time of the study?	Research Associates (Health Sciences)
4. Gender	Was the researcher male or female?	Female (AA, LF), Male (MY)
5. Experience and training	What experience or training did the researcher have?	Mixed methods researchers, experienced interviewers and focus group moderators, GCP trained
<i>Relationship with participants</i>		
6. Relationship established	Was a relationship established prior to study commencement?	Researchers met the participants during recruitment
7. Participant knowledge of the interviewer	What did the participants know about the researcher? e.g., personal goals, reasons for doing the research	Participants knew that the interviewers were university researchers. They knew that the interviewers were not involved in the delivery of the asymptomatic testing service or RB-TPP scheme.
8. Interviewer characteristics	What characteristics were reported about the interviewer/facilitator? e.g., Bias, assumptions, reasons, and interests in the research topic	Participants knew that AA, LF and MY and LF were interested in the experiences of students during the COVID-19 pandemic.
Domain 2: Study design		
<i>Theoretical framework</i>		
9. Methodological orientation and theory	What methodological orientation was stated to underpin the study? e.g. grounded theory, discourse analysis, ethnography, phenomenology, content analysis	Thematic analysis
<i>Participant selection</i>		
10. Sampling	How were participants selected? e.g. purposive, convenience, consecutive, snowball	Purposive sampling
11. Method of approach	How were participants approached? e.g. face-to-face, telephone, mail, email	Participants were approached and recruited by email
12. Sample size	How many participants were in the study?	Students: 29 across 8 focus groups. Staff: 17 interviewed.
13. Non-participation	How many people refused to participate or dropped out? Reasons?	No participants actively withdrew.
<i>Setting</i>		
14. Setting of data collection	Where was the data collected? e.g., home, clinic, workplace	Data were collected online (video-conferencing platform)
15. Presence of non-participants	Was anyone else present besides the participants and researchers?	No

16. Description of sample	What are the important characteristics of the sample? e.g., demographic data, date	<p>Students: Nationalities, living circumstances (on/off campus), and experiences of COVID-19 (i.e., those who had recently tested positive for COVID-19, or never tested positive), and specifically targeted students who had experienced at least one period of self-isolation.</p> <p>Staff: to represented diversity of occupational role and nature of student contact. Specifically, staff were invited to participate if they held a role providing direct support for international students, provided accommodation support, mental health support or other student-facing services, or worked in another role with a responsibility for pastoral care (e.g., academic tutor or supervisor).</p>
<i>Data collection</i>		
17. Interview guide	Were questions, prompts, guides provided by the authors? Was it pilot tested?	Yes. The questioning guide was pilot tested with students/staff who were not participants in this study.
18. Repeat interviews	Were repeat interviews carried out? If yes, how many?	No repeat interviews.
19. Audio/visual recording	Did the research use audio or visual recording to collect the data?	Interviews and focus groups were audio-recorded using a video-conferencing platform. Interviewers kept cameras on to assist with establishing rapport.
20. Field notes	Were field notes made during and/or after the interview or focus group?	Yes.
21. Duration	What was the duration of the interviews or focus group?	Focus groups ranged from 58 to 90 minutes (mean: 68.8 minutes). Staff interviews were 29 to 69 minutes (mean: 44.5 minutes).
22. Data saturation	Was data saturation discussed?	Yes.
23. Transcripts returned	Were transcripts returned to participants for comment and/or correction?	No – due to time constraints (rapid project to inform service provision during the pandemic).
Domain 3: analysis and findings		
<i>Data analysis</i>		
24. Number of data coders	How many data coders coded the data?	Two.
25. Description of the coding tree	Did authors provide a description of the coding tree?	No, however initial coding was informed by the interview guide, and coding was continuously refined.
26. Derivation of themes	Were themes identified in advance or derived from the data?	These were derived from the data.
27. Software	What software, if applicable, was used to manage the data?	N ³ Vivo

28. Participant checking	Did participants provide feedback on the findings?	No – due to time constraints (rapid project to inform service provision during the pandemic).
<i>Reporting</i>		
29. Quotations presented	Were participant quotations presented to illustrate the themes / findings? Was each quotation identified? e.g., participant number	Yes.
30. Data and findings consistent	Was there consistency between the data presented and the findings?	Yes.
31. Clarity of major themes	Were major themes clearly presented in the findings?	Yes.
32. Clarity of minor themes	Is there a description of diverse cases or discussion of minor themes?	Yes.