

To: All Students

Date: 14 April

Subject: COVID-19 update #23: Latest government guidance about returning to campus for the summer term

Dear students,

This message is being sent urgently to all students and we recognise that this may include some who have recently completed their studies. Please ignore this message if you are not a current University of Reading student.

Following extensive media reporting over the weekend, the government released [information for universities and students about the summer term](#) yesterday, 13 April, so we are now able to share important information with you about how this impacts you as a University of Reading student. We also have updates on campus services that can re-open in line with government advice.

To help you make plans for the coming weeks and months, please read this email carefully.

Teaching in the summer term (19 April – 11 June)

The government has advised that students should continue to study online until at least the 17 May ([Step 3 on the Roadmap](#)), unless they are undertaking a placement or practical and studio-based activities that cannot easily be replicated online. We wrote to you in the spring term to let you know if your programme had face to face teaching and/or placement activity or if your programme would continue to be delivered online only. Following the latest government announcement, the position remains the same for your summer term teaching, placement and practical activity. If you are unsure if this applies to you, contact your [Support Centre \(or Henley Helpdesk / ISLI Admin Office\)](#). We understand that this will be disappointing to those who were looking forward to a return to face-to-face teaching.

Your academic timetable for the summer term is live on CMISGo. Edits are being made to reflect the new government guidance and will be available on your Outlook calendars and the new UoR student app by Friday 16 April. Please check your timetable each day to keep up to date with any changes.

Students with online-only teaching are encouraged by government to remain at your current address if possible. However, in addition to returning for face-to-face teaching, government guidance also says you may wish to consider returning for other reasons, for example:

- international students who cannot amend their travel plans
- if you do not have facilities to continue your studies online at your vacation address
- for health and safety reasons
- to continue to access specialist medical or mental health services.

As we have previously informed you, most exams will be online this summer, with a very small number of exceptions where in-person assessment is necessary (if you have timetabled in-person exams you can travel to campus).

Travelling to the UK from overseas: If you are travelling to the UK from overseas, you must follow the updated government rules which we have [published on Essentials](#).

Travelling out of the UK: It is currently illegal to travel outside of the UK without a reasonable excuse. If you have plans to travel internationally (for example, to return home if you normally live overseas) please read the [important guidance on Essentials](#).

Regular lateral flow testing

If you are planning to return to campus for face-to-face teaching or other essential reasons, you are encouraged to take a test before travelling back to Reading, either through local community testing or by [ordering a test online](#). When you return to Reading, you should take three lateral flow tests at an on-site testing facility (3 - 4 days apart) to confirm that you have not inadvertently brought the virus with you.

Students on campus are strongly encouraged to continue to take a [free lateral flow test](#) twice a week, either at the SportsPark or by [ordering a home test online](#). Please note, it is recommended that wherever possible students should undertake three supervised tests at a test centre before using home testing.

Keeping us all safe

While we all welcome the easing of restrictions, and the hope that brings for a return to normal university life, we must not become complacent. We know all too well from past experience how quickly situations can deteriorate and infections spread if people do not follow the rules. So we must all continue to be careful to minimise any ongoing risks. For a summary of the UK government roadmap steps, please [visit Essentials](#).

If you are returning to campus, you may notice new safety measures in place – such as **wearing a face covering at all times in the Library**. Please pay attention to signs in place and follow the rules when using campus facilities.

You **must also follow all [current government restrictions](#)** – this means that you can only socialise indoors with members of your household. Outdoors, you can meet in groups of 6, or two households of any size. Please also note that the ‘no visitors’ policy still applies in halls. The rules will change in the coming weeks as the roadmap progresses, and it is your responsibility to keep up to date.

Any breaches of university or government safety measures will be investigated in accordance with our Student Disciplinary Procedures, which may result in fines or a ban from buildings such as the Library.

Please do also remember to be considerate of your housemates and neighbours at this time when we are all spending more time at home, whether you are living in Halls or private accommodation. If you are returning to Reading, consider saying ‘hello’ to your neighbours – you might be able to help one another with parcel deliveries or picking up essentials from the shops.

Research

If you are a research student who needs access to the campus and facilities for your research, you can work on the campus, subject to Head of School approval. Some research activities that bring non-University people to the campus can now resume, where the activity cannot be reasonably conducted remotely subject to appropriate risk assessments and with Head of School approval. Please talk to your supervisor if you have questions.

Campus facilities

A range of facilities have continued to operate on campus, and in line with the government's easing of lockdown restrictions, we are pleased to announce the reopening or extended opening of a number of facilities, from the start of term (Monday 19 April).

Library and study space

While students are encouraged to study from their residence wherever possible, the [Library is open](#) for Click & Collect and bookable study space (8:30am to midnight from Sunday to Friday and 08:30 to 21:00 on Saturdays). Students can also use non-bookable study space in Study@URS from 08:00 to 18:00 on weekdays. RUSU's The Study and our PC Labs in Palmer and Agriculture are also accessible 24/7 by Campus Card. A number of other buildings containing study centres and student support centres will be on open access during normal working hours.

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Student support

The Student Services Reception in the Carrington Building will continue to be available for in-person enquiries. The JJT and Earley Gate Support Centres are open for drop-in queries and support from the start of term. Any student can come in for advice regardless of their programme of study, and the Student Services Reception in the Carrington Building will continue to be available for drop-in queries. We will increase the provision of some support services face-to-face, where safe to do so.

Our full range of [specialist advice and support services](#) continue to be available remotely, including Support Centres and the Henley Helpdesk, the ISLI Administration team and the Graduate School. The Careers Service also continues to offer a [full range of activities](#) for the summer term that can be accessed remotely.

Access to Halls and Halls fee waiver

Our halls remain open to students, although you are reminded that government advice is not to return unless you need to be on campus for teaching or the reasons set out above.

The University Executive Board (UEB) has agreed to extend the Halls fee waiver (licence fee suspension) until the 17 May, in line with government directions and the University's previous actions. Students who are not currently in residence and who do not plan to return to their term-time hall room before the 17

May will shortly be contacted to complete a form to apply for the waiver. As before, there are also existing assistance programmes in place within the University should you find yourself in difficulty. Details of the packages available can be found on [Essentials](#).

Catering

Some of our catering facilities reopened for takeaway from Monday 12 April. Outdoor tables will be available at Park House, the Dairy, Eat at the Square and Park Eat. Tables at Park Eat must be booked in advance through the [Catering website](#).

Please be aware that the government has brought in new rules for hospitality venues. All visitors (not just one per household) are now required to check in with the NHS COVID-19 app, or by providing their name and contact details. Venues must refuse entry if visitors decline to do this.

Visit the [hospitality website](#) for more information on individual catering outlets' opening times.

As well as the Marketplace at Park Eat, the Co-Op will also be open from 14 April.

RUSU

The catering outlets and shops in your Students' Union will re-open for the start of the summer term, including takeaway food from Mojo's, with additional outdoor seating provided. All RUSU advice services will continue to be provided online. The nursery continues to be open. For further information visit [RUSU's website](#).

SportsPark

The SportsPark reopened on Monday 12 April for individual exercise. Members will be able to pre-book their gym sessions, individual workout spaces and courts via the [SportsPark website](#), and must exercise alone or with members of their household. Group exercise activities will commence from Monday 17 May, subject to the government roadmap. Face coverings must be worn in communal areas of the SportsPark but can be removed when exercising in the gym.

Vaccination programme in the UK

If you feel you should have been offered a vaccination based on the current eligible groups but you haven't been contacted yet, please speak to your GP for further advice. You can also enter your NHS number on the [NHS website](#), now and in the coming months, to check when you become eligible to book a vaccine.

International students who live in the UK and are registered with a General Practitioner (GP) will be able to access COVID-19 vaccinations when they are contacted to do so. Please read [our guidance on registering with a GP](#).

I hope this has been a helpful update and I wish you all the best for the coming summer term. As ever, we will continue to monitor the government advice and the national situation, and we will update our current plans if needed. Please keep an eye on your University email account and [Essentials](#) for any important updates. The [new UoR Student App](#) is the easiest way to stay up to date with everything happening at the University.

We are continuing to provide a [wide range of support resources](#) for you, both academically and for your wellbeing and mental health. Our [Get Together, Apart diary](#) also highlights a range of online social activities for you to get involved with. If you have any queries relating to your studies, please speak to your Support Centre (or Henley Helpdesk or ISLI Admin Office). You can also contact our COVID-19 Support & Behaviour Team at covid-support@reading.ac.uk.

Best wishes,

Paddy

Dr Patricia ('Paddy') Woodman

Director of Student Services