

Date: Tuesday 13 July

Subject/Header: COVID-19 update #26: Changes on campus from Monday 19 July

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.

The [Prime Minister announced yesterday](#) that Step 4 of the roadmap out of lockdown would be going ahead from Monday 19 July.

While this is welcome news, it is important to remember that case numbers in the UK are still increasing and those in Reading are above the national average. Young people who have not yet had one or both doses of the vaccine are particularly at risk. Even if you've been vaccinated, you can still transmit the virus to others without experiencing any symptoms yourself.

We encourage all students to **take responsibility to minimise the risk of transmission and help protect those around you**. In particular, we recommend that you continue to:

- not attend in person if you are experiencing the relevant symptoms, even mildly, and get a PCR test [through the NHS system](#)
- wash your hands regularly
- keep indoor spaces ventilated with fresh air, and
- wear a face covering when coming into contact with others you do not usually meet.

Changes in England from 19 July

From 19 July, COVID-19 legal restrictions on how many people can meet in any setting, indoors or outdoors will be lifted. Similarly, the legal requirements to wear a face covering in certain environments will be lifted, though it remains strongly recommended to wear face coverings in enclosed and crowded spaces to reduce your risk and the risk to others. A full summary of the proposed changes is [published on the government website](#).

While the government has lifted general restrictions, it has asked universities to take the measures necessary to minimise the risk of COVID transmission and to keep staff and students safe.

Keeping some health and safety measures on campus

Protecting the safety of our community is our top priority and, at times, we have implemented additional control measures beyond those required or recommended by the government.

We have carefully reviewed our current control measures in the context of the risk related to our local circumstances – that case numbers in Reading are still above the national average and many of our students have not yet been vaccinated.

We have therefore decided to take a measured approach and to **keep many control measures in place** for the time being, with a further review date set for late August.

So from Monday 19 July, until the review point in August, the following will apply:

Social distancing

Social distancing in all indoor areas on campus will remain at 2 metres. All teaching will continue to be undertaken at '1m+' with all current control measures in place (such as wearing a face covering).

Face coverings

We continue to encourage wearing of face coverings in all shared indoor areas.

In the Library, you will no longer need to wear a face covering when sitting at a desk (which are spaced 2 metres apart), although they should be worn when moving around inside the building.

Lateral Flow Testing

The government continues to support regular lateral flow testing for everyone in England and we strongly encourage students on campus to participate. We've increased the opening days of our [Library Café collection point](#) to make it as easy as possible for you to pick up a pack of kits on campus. From Monday 19 July, this will be open from **Monday to Thursday from 13:00 – 16:00**. If you prefer, you can also collect kits from a local pharmacy, or order online for home delivery.

If you are planning to travel home or elsewhere this summer, please do take a test before you leave Reading and again before you return.

In-person attendance

You must not come to campus, including to collect a Lateral Flow Test, if you experience the relevant symptoms, even mildly. Instead you should stay home and access a PCR test [through the NHS system](#).

Positive test results and self-isolation

If you test positive, from any type of COVID-19 test, you should self-isolate. Please let us know using [our online form](#) as soon as possible. If you are living in Halls, please also use the Home at Halls app or Halls Hotline to notify the team. Our [COVID-19 Support & Behaviour Team](#) continue to be available to support you if you need to self-isolate.

QR codes: The government is still encouraging the use of QR codes and we recommend that you use them to check in to buildings on campus.

COVID-19 vaccination programme

We strongly encourage all students to take up both doses of the COVID-19 vaccination as soon as possible when you are offered the opportunity. The earlier you have your first dose, the more likely you will be able to have the second before the start of term. Everyone over the age of 18 in England, including international students, can book [on the NHS website](#).

Please do remember that it can take up to three weeks after receiving the first dose of the vaccine for you to develop some immunity, and you can still transmit the virus to others even if you have had one or both doses and have no symptoms.

Supporting one another

It took time for us all to adapt and adjust to the COVID-19 restrictions over the past 18 months and it is important to remember that it will equally take time to get used to the easing of restrictions from 19 July.

We all feel very differently about the coming weeks, from a personal and professional perspective. Please treat those around you, including neighbours, with kindness and respect as we take this next step together. In particular, if you live with other people, make sure you discuss how you are feeling and make joint decisions about things like welcoming visitors to your home.

Thank you for taking the time to read this message. Please keep an eye on your University email account and [Essentials](#) for any important updates. You can also use the [UoR Student App](#) to stay up to date with everything happening at the University.

Kind regards,

Paddy

Dr Patricia ('Paddy') Woodman

Director of Student Services