

To: All students

Send date: 16 December

Subject line: COVID-19 update #12: Guidance over the Christmas period and returning in January

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.

I hope you are beginning to relax and enjoy the Christmas break. Before we finish for the closure period from 22 December to 4 January, I am writing with some reminders and advice for this period and for the start of the spring term.

Support over Christmas

For information on the support available over the Christmas closure period, including advice for students staying in Reading, how to access support, and opportunities to make connections with other students over Christmas, please visit our [Christmas support pages](#).

Remember – most University buildings will be card access only until we reopen on Monday 4 January.

Let us know if you are staying in Reading

To keep you informed with what's happening in and around Reading and to contact you if there are any significant updates you need to know, use our [online form](#) to let us know you'll be in Reading over the Christmas period.

COVID-19 hotline

While the University is closed for the Christmas break (22 December – 4 January) the hotline will transition to an email service only and the phone line will be closed. For **urgent** COVID-19 related questions that cannot wait until we return on 4 January, such as access to testing or self-isolation support, email covid-hotline@reading.ac.uk. We will check the inbox daily, apart from 24 – 26 December and 1 January, to respond to urgent queries only.

Students living in halls should contact the **Halls Hotline on 0800 029 1984**.

The COVID-19 phone line will reopen on Monday 4 January (0118 214 7813).

Reporting positive COVID-19 tests

Please continue to use our [positive case reporting form](#) over Christmas, even if you are not in Reading during the break. If you are in halls, continue to use the home at halls app to let us know.

If you are at your term-time address, in halls or private accommodation and you receive a positive test result, make sure you inform your housemates and any other close contacts as they will need to self-isolate too.

Looking ahead

Spring term and testing

In my last email, I gave more details about the [‘phased return’ to-face-to-face teaching](#) – you can check when your programme is due to return to on-campus teaching on [Essentials](#).

I also announced that we will again hold [on-campus free rapid testing](#) in the sports hall at SportsPark from Tuesday 5 to Friday 29 January 2021. If you haven’t done so already, [book a test](#) for when you return. Increased waiting times are likely if you book on the hour and half hour, so please consider booking one of the other slots, which are scheduled every ten minutes. By taking a test in January, you will be helping to reduce the spread of the infection in the student community and reduce the number of students who need to self-isolate.

Remember that if you have any of the [main symptoms of COVID-19](#), you should **not** take one of these Lateral Flow Tests at the SportsPark – you should [book a PCR test](#) through the national NHS system. If you test positive for COVID-19, from any type of test, you must [let us know](#) as soon as possible so we can support you and your close contacts within the University community.

Further information about testing is published on [Essentials](#).

International student travel – returning to campus in January

On your return to campus in January, you will need to self-isolate in line with [UK government advice](#) at the time. Currently, this is 10 days from your arrival in the UK, unless you have travelled from an [exempt country](#). You should not book one of our Lateral Flow Tests on campus if you are required to self-isolate after arriving from overseas.

Alternatively, you can use the [‘test to release’](#) scheme to reduce the time you need to self-isolate by paying privately for a COVID-19 test if you are returning from a [non-exempt country](#). This is optional and you may choose to self-isolate for the full isolation period rather than pay for a test. If you wish to opt in, you can do this when you complete the [Passenger Locator Form](#) prior to travelling to the UK.

Brexit

Information for EU students currently studying in Reading, as well as those on Erasmus+ study and work placements, is published on our [Brexit pages on Essentials](#).

You should also regularly check the [Foreign Office website](#) for the latest information and sign up for their [Brexit alerts](#). If you have any queries, please email the team at immigration@reading.ac.uk.

Coming to Reading for the first time after the Christmas break

If you are coming to study on campus at Reading in January after studying 'at a distance' during the autumn term, you should log into the [RISIS portal](#) and follow the link to switch your mode of attendance to 'on campus'.

As acknowledged in the Vice Chancellor's [end of term video message](#), it's been a challenging term but I very much hope you enjoy your Christmas break wherever you are. We wish you happy holidays from all of us here at the University of Reading and look forward to welcoming you back in January.

Best wishes,
Paddy

Dr Patricia 'Paddy' Woodman
Director of Student Services