

To: All students

Date: 5 January 2021

Subject: COVID-19 update #16: New national lockdown and teaching on campus

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 were able to find some time to rest and relax over the recent Christmas break, after such a challenging period for us all.

While we all hoped the national picture would be more positive as we head into the spring term, the government has made it clear that the rapid rise in COVID-19 cases in the UK requires immediate further action from us all. A strict [new national lockdown](#) comes into effect in the UK from today, very similar to the initial lockdown last March. Please familiarise yourself with the [latest government advice](#) about what is and is not permitted.

We are currently awaiting the legal regulations for this new lockdown to determine the full implications for our community. We will send a more detailed email to all students as soon as possible with further information, including Library opening hours, student support services, access to buildings, and student research activities. In the meantime, however, we wanted to clarify a few particularly important points.

Please rest assured that you, our students, are at the heart of our decision-making. We are committed to offering you the best possible learning experience, while complying with government guidelines to contribute to the national efforts to fight the pandemic. We are very mindful that every time we need to make changes to our approach based on new government guidance, this has an impact on you and your planning, and we thank you sincerely for your patience and understanding.

- **Teaching**

In line with government guidelines, the majority of teaching will be moved online until the week of Monday 22 February at the earliest, following Week 6. The government is set to review the current arrangements in mid-February. We will await further advice from the government then about whether we can resume on-campus teaching then and we will of course keep you updated.

The government has confirmed face-to-face teaching can continue where necessary for specified subjects. As [previously communicated](#), for us this applies to:

- Education
- Physician Associates
- Speech & Language Therapy
- Pharmacy

Your School will update you shortly with specific information about the impact of these new arrangements on your modules, as well as any planned placements or other activities.

- **Student travel**

The new national lockdown means we must all stay at home, other than for a [very limited number of reasons](#), such as to shop for basic necessities, to exercise, or to seek medical assistance.

If you are already in Reading, please be assured that we are here to support you. Our Halls have remained open and we have reopened the Library and Student Services Reception in the Carrington Building this week. We will share more information about how the national lockdown will impact all of our campus services and facilities as soon as possible.

For our international students, if you need further advice or support about the impact of this updated advice on you, please contact our International Student Advisory Team on immigration@reading.ac.uk for immigration or Home Office inquiries and Int.Adv@reading.ac.uk for general questions.

- **Booking a Lateral Flow Test**

If you are returning to campus because you are studying on the programmes listed above or if you have already returned to Reading the government has asked that you [book two Lateral Flow Tests](#), three days apart, or self-isolate for 10 days when you return. Please note you should not take a Lateral Flow Test if you are required to [self-isolate after travelling from overseas](#), or if you have tested positive for COVID-19 from a PCR test in the last 90 days.

Given the reduced amount of teaching on campus, the Test Centre will be running reduced hours from Monday 11 January. If you have a booking that is affected by this, you will be contacted directly.

- **Student support**

The current situation is affecting all of us in many different ways. It is understandable that you may be feeling worried or concerned, particularly when the situation is changing so quickly. Please remember that we are here to offer help and support. If you are unsure who to speak to, please contact your Academic Tutor or Support Centre, or check out the suite of resources on our [Wellbeing Toolkit](#).

Our COVID-19 support hotline (0118 214 7813) has also reopened and is available from 9.15am to 4.30pm on weekdays.

We will be in touch again later in the week with more detailed information about plans for our campus services and facilities in the coming weeks.

Best wishes,
Paddy

Dr Patricia (Paddy) Woodman
Director of Student Services