

Undergraduate and Postgraduate Taught students received an email on 15 July 2021 explaining how 'study at a distance' requirements apply to them based on their own programme. You will need to check your emails to check whether your programme allows for 'at-a-distance study', or [check with the Support Centres, Henley Helpdesk or ISLI Admin Office](#).

A copy of these emails is provided below for reference. The first email was sent to students on programmes where requesting to study at a distance temporarily in the autumn term is possible. The second email was sent to students on programmes where this is not possible).

Suspended students received a similar email on 27 July 2021.

## Email 1: Students on programmes where studying 'at a distance' is permitted in the autumn

**To:** Continuing UG and PGT students on programmes where studying 'at a distance' is permitted in the autumn (using new list in RISIS Campaign Manager: DIS-PERMIT Distance Permitted)

**Date:** Thurs 15 July

**Subject line:** Update on our Teaching & Learning plans for 2021/22

**Reply-to email address:** [studentcomms@reading.ac.uk](mailto:studentcomms@reading.ac.uk)

Dear <NAME>,

We hope you are well and enjoying the summer so far.

In our [previous email sent in May](#), we outlined our plans for teaching and learning in 2021/22 in the context of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. We have since published [further information on Essentials](#), which we would encourage you to read if you have not already done so.

We are looking forward to welcoming more students back to studying on campus this autumn and we hope you are excited about continuing your studies here at Reading.

This email is to provide advice for students who, due to the pandemic, will be unable to join us in-person on campus and may need to request to study 'at a distance' temporarily in the autumn term. We have also provided important information for students with Tier 4 / Student Route visas.

**If you know that you will be able to join us on campus, and you do not have a Tier 4 / Student Route visa, then you do not need to read this message.**

## **Requests to temporarily study remotely in the autumn term**

With government rules in England easing, we expect you to join us on campus from the start of the autumn term. After the restrictions of the past months, being on campus will allow you to engage with your learning in person and to be part of our vibrant, active community.

However, we understand COVID-19 is still causing disruption and there may be situations that prevent students from being able to come to campus at the start of the academic year.

## **Criteria for requesting to study 'at a distance' temporarily**

If your specific circumstances meet the criteria below you will be able to request to study 'at a distance' temporarily. This request will be part of the online re-enrolment process for the new academic year, with the expectation that you will travel to Reading to continue your programme in person, as soon as possible – and **by the start of the spring term at the very latest (Monday 10 January 2022)**.

Please note, for students who will be studying abroad or on placement year in 2021/22 this information about studying at a distance at Reading is not relevant.

You do not need to do anything further at this stage if you intend to request to study at a distance. We will contact you closer to the start of the autumn term with information about how to do this as part of the re-enrolment process.

**You can only request to study at a distance temporarily if you meet one of the following permitted criteria:**

- Due to government regulations or restrictions related to COVID-19, you are not permitted to leave your home area/country
- You are not permitted to enter the UK due to UK Government COVID-19 regulations or home country regulations or restrictions
- You are not permitted to attend university in person due to restrictions imposed by your study sponsor relating to COVID-19
- You cannot book a flight to the UK due to COVID-19 restrictions or disruption (for example, there are no flights available)
- You are unable to get a Visa to travel as a result of COVID-19
- A doctor has specifically advised you not to attend university in-person at this time due to COVID-19
- You cannot attend university in person as you have primary caring responsibilities as a result of COVID-19

Studying at a distance will not be possible in other circumstances.

When you make your request to study at a distance at the start of the year, you will be asked to submit a short supporting statement about why you believe you meet the criteria, and either provide evidence or confirm that you can provide evidence to support it (for example a link to a government website confirming that travel to the UK is not permitted).

We do not currently have plans to support study at a distance after the end of the autumn term. However, we learnt this year that the situation is unpredictable, and we will of course continue to closely monitor the situation related to the pandemic and let you know if this position changes. If you know that you will not be able to come to Reading by the start of the spring term (ie Monday 10 January 2022), you may wish to consider suspending your studies until the start of the next academic year.

### **Information for students with Tier 4 and Student Route visas**

UK Visas and Immigration (UKVI) has [published updated concessions](#) for students who are unable to travel to the UK (due specifically to travel restrictions) and need to continue their studies 'at distance'. If you think that you will not be able to travel to the UK for reasons other than travel restrictions (eg due to health or caring responsibilities) please [contact our International Student Advisory Team](#) for advice.

If you re-enrol with a Student Route visa, you will not have your visa sponsorship affected, as long as the reasons you cannot travel meet the published UKVI concessions and that you travel to the UK as soon as you are able to do so. Once in the UK, students must be attending face –to-face teaching that is provided by the university in addition to any continued online learning provided. At-a-distance learning whilst inside the UK is not permitted. Absences from face-to-face attendance due to quarantine after travelling to the UK or individual periods of self-isolation due to COVID will not affect visa sponsorship.

If you started your studies with us last year and did not apply for your Student Route visa but you are now planning on travelling to the UK for the autumn term, you will need a new CAS (Certificate of Acceptance for Studies) if your previous one was not used. If you did apply for a Student Route visa last year but could not travel to the UK to collect your Biometric Residence Permit (BRP), you may need to apply for a new travel visa. For advice on both these situations, please [contact the International Student Advisory team](#).

If a visa is issued and you cannot then travel, UK Visas and Immigration do not refund the visa application fee or Immigration Health Surcharge.

### **Future changes**

The UK government is planning for most COVID-19 legal restrictions in England to be lifted from 19 July and we are optimistic that we will be able to resume many activities on campus in the autumn term.

We learnt this year that the situation is unpredictable. A new variant or further wave later in the year may require new social distancing measures or lockdowns being introduced with little notice. That's why our plans have been designed to offer flexibility and adaptability – to support our students and their unique circumstances, and to be prepared in case we need to change our approach if the situation worsens.

As the COVID-19 pandemic is an ever-evolving situation we cannot guarantee that changes will not be required as a result of changing national or local government guidance or direction, ministerial direction, local public health guidance or direction, required safety measures or changing local or national circumstances.

There may be circumstances outside our control that cannot currently be foreseen or prevented that require us to make further changes to your University experience next year. Examples may be local or national lockdowns, changes to the law, staffing shortages arising from the effect of the pandemic and guidance, or instructions issued by bodies such as national or local governments, councils or public health authorities. Our responses to these circumstances may mean that we need to make other changes to programmes, including, but not limited to, changing the mode of teaching such as moving all learning online where we are not permitted or it is not safe to teach face to face; changing field trips, study visits or placements (including making these virtual or altering their physical destination); changing assessments and/or moving the order of teaching activity to different times of the year or amending term dates. In such circumstances we will use all reasonable endeavours to minimise any disruption to students and will communicate any changes as clearly and as quickly as possible.

## Next steps

If you have any questions about continuing your studies next year, including suspending your studies, please contact your Support Centre using '[Ask A Question](#)'. Students in Henley Business School should email [henleyschooloffice@henley.ac.uk](mailto:henleyschooloffice@henley.ac.uk) and students in ISLI should contact [isli-admin@reading.ac.uk](mailto:isli-admin@reading.ac.uk). Further information about how to get in touch is [published on Essentials](#).

We will contact you again closer to the start date of term with instructions for how to complete online enrolment, and how to request to study at a distance if needed.

Thank you for taking the time to read this information, which we hope has been helpful. We will continue to do all we can to offer our students a fulfilling university experience and we look forward to welcoming you back to campus in September.

Kind regards,

Elizabeth & Julian

Professor Elizabeth McCrum & Professor Julian Park

Pro-Vice-Chancellors (Education & Student Experience)

## Email 2: Students on programmes where studying 'at a distance' is not permitted in the autumn

**To:** Continuing UG and PGT students on programmes where studying 'at a distance' is not permitted in the autumn (using new list in RISIS Campaign Manager: DIS\_NOT\_PERMIT Distance Not permitted)

**Date:** Thurs 15 July

**Subject line:** Update on our Teaching & Learning plans for 2021/22

**Reply-to email address:** [studentcomms@reading.ac.uk](mailto:studentcomms@reading.ac.uk)

Dear <NAME>,

We hope you are well and enjoying the summer so far.

In our [previous email sent in May](#), we outlined our plans for teaching and learning in 2021/22 in the context of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. We have since published [further information on Essentials](#), which we would encourage you to read if you have not already done so.

We are personally looking forward to welcoming more students back to studying on campus this autumn and we hope you are excited about continuing your studies here at Reading.

This email is to provide advice for students who may have difficulties returning to campus in the autumn term due to the pandemic. We have also provided important information for students with Tier 4 / Student Route visas.

**If you know that you will be able to join us on campus, and you do not have a Tier 4 / Student Route visa, then you do not need to read this message.**

### **Requirement to be on campus**

With government rules in England easing, we expect you to join us on campus from the start of the autumn term. After the restrictions of the past months, being on campus will allow you to engage with your learning in person and to be part of our vibrant, active community.

However, we understand COVID-19 is still causing disruption and there may be situations that prevent students from being able to come to campus at the start of the academic year.

While we can support students on some programmes to study at a distance temporarily, subject to specific criteria, there are some programmes that contain practical, placement or studio-based elements that students need to attend in person to meet required learning outcomes. It is therefore not possible for these programmes to be studied remotely.

**Your programme has been identified as one that falls into this category and so you need to plan to be on campus for the start of the autumn term.**

If you believe that you will not be able to attend in-person teaching on campus by the end of the third week of the teaching term (15 October 2021 for programmes that start on 27 September 2021), you will need to suspend your studies until the start of the next academic year so that you are able to complete the required practical, placement or studio-based activities on campus. Please contact your Support Centre (or Henley Helpdesk or ISLI Admin Office) if you wish to suspend.

We understand that some students may feel worried about the prospect of being on campus, and we would encourage you to contact your Support Centre (or Henley Helpdesk or ISLI Admin Office) to discuss your concerns.

## **Information for students with Tier 4 and Student Route visas**

If you started your studies with us last year and did not apply for your Student Route visa but you are now planning on travelling to the UK for the autumn term, you will need a new CAS (Certificate of Acceptance for Studies) if your previous one was not used. If you did apply for a Student Route visa last year, but could not travel to the UK to collect your Biometric Residence Permit (BRP) you may need to apply for a new travel visa. For advice on both these situations, please [contact the International Student Advisory team](#).

Students who are unable to continue their studies on campus will have their visa sponsorship withdrawn by the University as required by the Home Office. This will result in UK Visas and Immigration (UKVI) cancelling the Tier 4/Student Route visa. UKVI do not issue any refund of the visa application fee or Immigration Health Surcharge. A new CAS and student visa will be required when you resume your studies on campus next academic year.

## **Future changes**

The UK government is planning for most COVID-19 legal restrictions in England to be lifted from 19 July and we are optimistic that we will be able to resume many activities on campus in the autumn term.

We learnt this year that the situation is unpredictable. A new variant or further wave later in the year may require new social distancing measures or lockdowns being introduced with little notice. That's why our plans have been designed to offer flexibility and adaptability – to support our students and their unique circumstances, and to be prepared in case we need to change our approach if the situation worsens.

As the COVID-19 pandemic is an ever-evolving situation we cannot guarantee that changes will not be required as a result of changing national or local government guidance or direction, ministerial direction, local public health guidance or direction, required safety measures or changing local or national circumstances.

There may be circumstances outside our control that cannot currently be foreseen or prevented that require us to make further changes to your University experience next year. Examples may be local or national lockdowns, changes to the law, staffing shortages arising from the effect of the pandemic and

guidance, or instructions issued by bodies such as national or local governments, councils or public health authorities.

Our responses to these circumstances may mean that we need to make other changes to programmes, including, but not limited to, changing the mode of teaching such as moving all learning online where we are not permitted or it is not safe to teach face to face; changing field trips, study visits or placements (including making these virtual or altering their physical destination); changing assessments and/or moving the order of teaching activity to different times of the year or amending term dates. In such circumstances we will use all reasonable endeavours to minimise any disruption to students and will communicate any changes as clearly and as quickly as possible.

## Next steps

If you have any questions about continuing your studies next year, please contact your Support Centre using '[Ask A Question](#)'. Students in Henley Business School should email [henleyschooloffice@reading.ac.uk](mailto:henleyschooloffice@reading.ac.uk) students in ISLI should contact [isli-admin@reading.ac.uk](mailto:isli-admin@reading.ac.uk). Further information about how to get in touch is [published on Essentials](#).

Thank you for taking the time to read this information. We will continue to do all we can to offer our students a fulfilling university experience and we look forward to welcoming you back to campus in September.

Kind regards,  
Elizabeth & Julian

Professor Elizabeth McCrum & Professor Julian Park

Pro-Vice-Chancellors (Education & Student Experience)

## Email 3: Suspended students (all programmes)

**To:** Suspended UG and PGT students on all programmes (using new bespoke list set up in RISIS Campaign Manager)

**Date:** Thurs 15 July

**Subject line:** Update on our Teaching & Learning plans for 2021/22

**Reply-to email address:** [studentcomms@reading.ac.uk](mailto:studentcomms@reading.ac.uk)

Dear <Name>,

This email is being sent to all students who have currently suspended their studies, to provide further information about our plans for teaching in 2021/22.

## Teaching and learning in 2021/22

In the 2021/22 academic year, teaching will be through **a combination of regular face-to-face on campus sessions and online learning**. Although this will be different to how we delivered teaching and learning before the pandemic (as outlined in this letter), **we are planning to increase teaching and other activities on campus** compared to the 2020/21 academic year, when we were required to provide most of this online for the spring and summer term.

We remain committed to helping students benefit from all that university life has to offer. We are using everything we have learnt this year, together with student feedback, to deliver a high-quality learning experience, which includes the same levels of teaching as before the pandemic, although the way in which some of these things are being provided may be different.

[Take a look at our video](#) for a summary of these plans and further information on [Essentials](#).

We want to assure you that, subject to the information contained in this email and any other changes formally notified to you, we are committed to delivering your programme to you in accordance with the Terms and Conditions you have received from us.

We believe bringing together in-person and online teaching will provide the best learning experience in the anticipated circumstances arising from the COVID-19 pandemic. It means we can optimise the amount of teaching we can provide on campus and support students who need to study remotely temporarily if this is required due to the pandemic. All students will also benefit from the flexibility that blended learning brings such as having structured guided learning and pre-recorded material in advance of on-campus sessions.

The Autumn Term will start on Monday 27 September 2021, except for those programmes that usually start teaching earlier.

Teaching will be through a combination of:

### **Live interactive sessions (timetabled, in-person or online)**

**On-campus.** You will have regular, live interactive sessions on campus to provide you with opportunities to engage, discuss and interact with both academic staff and other students. Depending on the discipline, this could include tutorials, seminars, laboratory and practical work, workshops, breakout sessions, and lectures which involve a high level of interaction and discussion.

**Online (where required).** For modules with students who cannot come to campus and are therefore studying 'at a distance' (for example, international students prevented from travelling to the UK by COVID-19 related travel restrictions), a similar live interactive session will be held online to cover the same content as on-campus sessions.

- **Guided learning activities (asynchronous – to plan in your own time)**

You will have regular guided learning activities for your modules that you need to schedule around your live sessions, either individually or as part of a group. This will include two elements:

1. Core course content provided online (such as pre-recorded videos). These sessions will replicate contact hours that would normally be delivered through large lectures or similar sessions with limited interactivity.
2. Complementary materials and activities to support your learning and self-study. This could include watching additional screencasts and videos, listening to audio recordings, or taking formative tests through Blackboard.

All learning materials will be published by your Module Convenor at least 48 hours before the relevant live session.

We do not expect that the overall contact hours for your programme will change, although they will be delivered through a mix of live interactive sessions on campus and asynchronous core course content provided online, as explained above.

### **Requesting to study 'at a distance' temporarily in the autumn term**

If, due to the pandemic you will be unable to join us in-person on campus to continue your studies at the start of the Autumn term you may need to request to study 'at a distance' temporarily in the autumn term, **please [contact your Support Centre \(or Henley Helpdesk or ISLI Admin Office\)](#) for advice** as this will only be permitted in specific circumstances and for certain programmes. While we can support students on some programmes to study at a distance temporarily, subject to specific criteria, there are some programmes that contain practical, placement or studio-based elements that students need to attend in person to meet required learning outcomes. It is therefore not possible for these programmes to be studied remotely.

**You can only request to study at a distance temporarily if it is permitted for your programme and you meet one of the following permitted criteria:**

- Due to government regulations or restrictions related to COVID-19, you are not permitted to leave your home area/country
- You are not permitted to enter the UK due to UK Government COVID-19 regulations or home country regulations or restrictions
- You are not permitted to attend university in person due to restrictions imposed by your study sponsor relating to COVID-19
- You cannot book a flight to the UK due to COVID-19 restrictions or disruption (for example, there are no flights available)
- You are unable to get a Visa to travel as a result of COVID-19
- A doctor has specifically advised you not to attend university in-person at this time due to COVID-19

- You cannot attend university in person as you have primary caring responsibilities as a result of COVID-19

Studying at a distance will not be possible in other circumstances.

### **Information for students with Tier 4 and Student Route visas**

UK Visas and Immigration (UKVI) has [published updated concessions](#) for students who are unable to travel to the UK (due specifically to travel restrictions) and need to continue their studies 'at distance'. If you think that you will not be able to travel to the UK for reasons other than travel restrictions (eg due to health or caring responsibilities) please [contact our International Student Advisory Team](#) for advice.

If you are planning to continue your studies on campus you will need a new CAS (Certificate of Acceptance for Studies) to apply for a new [Student Route visa](#). To request a CAS please contact the International Student Advisory team

If a visa is issued and you cannot then travel, UK Visas and Immigration do not issue any refund of the visa application fee or Immigration Health Surcharge.

### **End-of-year exams**

We have not yet made decisions related to the format of exams for summer 2022. Depending on any government guidance or public health advice in place at the time, it may be necessary to hold exams online. We will keep you updated as soon as we can share more information about these plans.

### **Curricular placements and Study Abroad**

If you will be undertaking a curricular placement next year (or one that is credited to 2021/22), including those regulated by professional, statutory and regulated Bodies, you will soon receive further information from your School or Department.

Further information for students due to return from their Study Abroad placements in summer 2021, as well as those planning due to go abroad in 2021/22, will be sent to you directly by the Erasmus & Study Abroad Office.

### **Supporting your student journey**

We will continue to support you with your studies, through both your Academic Tutor and our wider network of professional, specialist teams. Subject to any changes in government guidance, we are planning for our campuses to be open in the autumn, with our full range of facilities and services – such as the Library, Support Centres, catering and SportsPark.

### **Access to technology and digital services**

You will need to access technology to fully engage with your programme, including using Office 365 (free for all Reading students), a computer or laptop, and a reliable Wi-Fi connection. We provide a

range of study space on campus, including PC labs with relevant software for use by students, although it is possible that availability may be limited at times.

You can find out more about the advised minimum requirements, as well as advice on purchasing a laptop (or other IT equipment or software) on our [Digital Technology Services \(DTS\) webpage](#).

## **Future changes**

As the COVID-19 pandemic remains an unpredictable and evolving situation we cannot guarantee that further changes will not be required. These could be as a result of changing national or local government guidance or direction, ministerial direction, local public health guidance or direction, required safety measures, or changing local or national circumstances.

There may be circumstances outside our control that cannot currently be foreseen or prevented that require us to make further changes to your University experience next academic year. Examples may be local or national lockdowns, changes to the law, staffing shortages arising from the effect of the pandemic, and guidance or instructions issued by bodies such as national or local governments, councils or public health authorities. Our responses to these circumstances may mean that we need to make other changes to programmes. This may include, but is not limited to, changing the mode of teaching (such as moving some or all learning online where we are not permitted or it is not safe or it is contrary to guidance to teach face to face); changing field trips, study visits or placements (including making these virtual or altering their physical destination); changing assessments and/or moving the order of teaching activity to different times of the year or amending term dates; and making changes to the number or type of contact hours you receive. If any of these situations arise, we will use all reasonable endeavours to minimise any disruption to students and will communicate any changes as clearly and as quickly as possible.

**Thank you for taking the time to read this information and we hope it has been helpful as you start to look ahead to the next academic year.**

If you have any queries about continuing your studies at Reading please do not hesitate to contact your Support [Centre using 'As A Question'](#). Students in Henley Business School should email [henleyschooloffice@reading.ac.uk](mailto:henleyschooloffice@reading.ac.uk) and students in ISLI should contact [isli-admin@reading.ac.uk](mailto:isli-admin@reading.ac.uk). Further information about how to get in touch is [published on Essentials](#).

We very much hope to welcome you back to campus for the autumn term.

With best wishes,

Julian & Elizabeth

Professors Julian Park and Elizabeth McCrum

Pro-Vice-Chancellors (Education & Student Experience)

