

To: All students

Date: Thursday 25 March

Subject: COVID-19 update #22: Travel at Easter and further planning ahead

Dear students,

Next week will mark a positive step toward the [easing of lockdown restrictions](#) in England. From Monday 29 March you will be able to meet outside in groups of up to six people from different households (the 'rule of 6') or two households of any size, including in private gardens and on our campus.

I am sure this will be a very welcome change, but please do continue to respect the people around you – being particularly mindful of your neighbours. Remember that meeting indoors with anyone other than members of your household or support bubble is still against the law.

Travel over Easter

As we head toward the Easter break, the government is strongly encouraging students to stay at their current term-time address over the vacation.

The government regulations include exceptions for you to leave your term-time address to travel home for some or all of the Easter vacation, and then return to Reading for the summer term. However, this only applies on one occasion between 8 March and 29 April (once to travel to a vacation address and once to return) and you should not travel back and forth between addresses during this period.

If you plan to travel you should take a lateral flow test:

- before you leave Reading, as close to your departure date as possible - at our [test centre at the SportsPark](#);
and
- before you travel back to Reading, if you have [access to community testing](#);
and
- when you arrive back in Reading - at our [test centre at the SportsPark](#).

International travel

If you need to travel home overseas, please make sure you are aware of the latest [government rules about international travel](#) and the declaration form you need to complete first. Further advice is [published on Essentials](#).

Lateral flow testing in the summer term

We are still awaiting guidance from the government about arrangements for lateral flow testing after Easter. Until then, we are continuing to offer regular lateral flow tests until at least 29 March. For those on campus, please do continue to take [two tests a week](#) at the SportsPark. [Community testing](#) is also available in the area. We will let you know about plans for the summer term once we hear from the government.

Halls licence fee waiver

Many of you have understandably asked whether the halls licence fee waiver will be extended after 16 April to apply for the summer term. We are still waiting to hear from the government about whether we will be permitted to allow more students back to campus for face-to-face activities after the Easter break. We are not expecting to receive this information until after mid-April, following which we will be able to make a decision on the application of the halls licence fee waiver.

We will, of course, update all students as soon as possible after the government makes its announcements. In the meantime, we are sorry for the uncertainty this causes you.

Planning for autumn 2021 and the next academic year

Some students have been asking about our plans for the next academic year. We are hopeful that the government's roadmap out of lockdown will be a success and we are very much looking forward to welcoming all our students back to campus when we can. However, the roadmap steps are dependent on many factors and it is important that we plan for a range of scenarios. We recognise that some international travel may be restricted in the autumn and we also need to be prepared in case the situation in the UK worsens with the onset of winter.

Our plans for 2021/22 will reflect the anticipated national and local changes, such as lower COVID-19 case numbers and much of the adult population being vaccinated, while also allowing flexibility for the reasons outlined above. We hope to be able to provide more information about our approach at the start of the summer term.

In the meantime, we can confirm that the autumn term will start as planned on Monday 27 September, except for those programmes that usually start teaching earlier.

As many of you will be preparing for exams and assessments in the coming weeks and months, please take some time to read [our guidance on Essentials](#), including how you should prepare and what to expect from your exams.

I hope you enjoy the Easter break and can take some time to unwind. Please do remember that we all need to [play our part](#) to adhere to the current restrictions so we can safely continue to move through the government's roadmap. If you are staying in Reading, check out the online events taking place on our [Get Together, Apart](#) diary.

Best wishes,
Paddy

Dr Patricia 'Paddy' Woodman
Director of Student Services