

To: All Students

Date: Wednesday 12 May

Subject: COVID-19 update #24: Our response to government announcement on Monday

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.

Following the [government announcement on 10 May](#), we are sharing important information on how the further easing of lockdown restrictions ([Step 3 on the Roadmap](#)) will impact you and activities on campus.

To help you make plans for the coming weeks, please read this email carefully.

Changes to national restrictions in England

The Prime Minister confirmed that further lifting of national lockdown measures will commence [from Monday 17 May](#). The main changes to social restrictions are:

- groups of up to 30 people can meet outdoors;
- up to six people, or two households, can meet indoors (including in our Halls of Residence);
- overnight stays with people outside of your household or bubble are permitted (including in our Halls of Residence).

We have [published a graphic](#) which explains what you can do at each step of the roadmap in more detail.

Teaching on campus

The Prime Minister confirmed that all students are now permitted to return to university.

For many of you, formal teaching on your programme has finished for the year, with the summer term focussed on exams and assessments. Some additional sessions on campus are taking place for some programmes so **please check your academic timetable** to see if you have any scheduled face-to-face teaching. If you are unsure, please contact your Academic Tutor or Support Centre.

Any teaching on campus this term will continue to be subject to the '1m+' social distancing control measure, with [face coverings expected to be worn](#) in classrooms and lecture theatres.

Lateral flow testing

If you are planning to travel back to campus after 17 May, the government asks that you take a test before you travel (anyone in England can [order test kits online](#) for quick delivery, or pick one up from a local pharmacy). On your return, you should take three tests (3/4 days apart) at our [centre at the SportsPark](#), and then continue to get tested twice a week. If you are currently living in an area with [surge testing for new variants](#), you should ensure you get tested before you travel, and follow all guidance to self-isolate if you test positive.

We are setting up collection points on campus for you to be able to pick up a pack of test kits to use at home and we will provide further details soon.

If you take a test at home, please remember to report the result [on the government website](#) (whether it's positive or negative). As always, if you test positive (from any type of test), please [let us know](#) so we can provide you and your close contacts with support.

Travel

As outlined above, all students can now return to campus if you wish, although you are strongly recommended to take a lateral flow test before and after travelling.

Travelling to the UK from overseas: If you are travelling to the UK from overseas, you must follow the [updated government rules](#).

Travelling out of the UK: The [government has updated its guidance](#) on travelling outside the UK which you should read carefully if you are planning to travel.

Research

Research students who need access to facilities can work on campus, subject to Head of School approval. Some research activities that bring external visitors to campus can continue where the activity cannot be reasonably conducted remotely, subject to appropriate risk assessments and with Head of School approval. Please talk to your supervisor if you have questions.

Halls of Residence

Our halls continue to be open, and students have access to their rooms. From 17 May, visitors will be permitted in Halls, as long as you adhere to the 'rule of 6' (or two households) indoors.

Please remember that other students in Halls are sitting exams in their bedrooms until the end of term (11 June), even if you are not. You must still comply with the terms of your Residency Agreement, which requires you to act respectfully and to keep noise at a level that does not interfere with the study, sleep or comfort of others.

As the government has confirmed that all students can return to campus and we are providing some face-to-face teaching, our current Halls Fee Waiver will end on Monday 17 May. This means that you will be liable to pay your Halls rent, even if you choose not to return to your room. If you have any queries, or wish to terminate your contract, please contact our [Accommodation Contract Management Office](#).

Campus facilities

In line with the government's easing of lockdown restrictions, we are very pleased to announce the re-opening or extended opening of a number of our facilities from Monday 17 May.

Catering

Indoor bar and dining seating areas will re-open at Park Eat, Park House, Ice House and The Dairy. [Visit the hospitality website](#) for more information on individual catering outlets' opening times.

All visitors are required to check in with the NHS COVID-19 app, or by providing their name and contact details. Venues will refuse entry if visitors decline to do this.

The international food market will also be returning to campus on Thursday 27 May, 3 and 10 June.

RUSU

In addition to the services which have already re-opened, Café Mondial and Starbucks will open for indoor and outdoor seating. Mojo's and Monterey will re-open indoors, and Mojo's on the Meadow will increase its provision from Monday 24 May for a three-week period to include a range of events and activities. [Visit RUSU's website](#) for more information.

SportsPark

Indoor sports and group exercise classes will commence from Monday 17 May. Face coverings must be worn in communal areas of the SportsPark but can be removed when exercising in the gym. You must continue to prebook your gym session, individual workout spaces and courts via the [SportsPark website](#).

Library and study space

The [Library is open](#) for Click & Collect and bookable study space (8:30am to midnight from Sunday to Friday and 08:30 to 21:00 on Saturdays).

Students can also use non-bookable study space in Study@URS from 08:00 to 18:00 on weekdays. RUSU's The Study and our PC Labs in Palmer and Agriculture are also accessible 24/7 by Campus Card.

Student support

The Student Services Reception in the Carrington Building will continue to be available for in-person enquiries. The JJT and Earley Gate Support Centres are also open for drop-in queries and support – for all students, regardless of your programme of study.

Our full range of [specialist advice and support services](#) are available remotely, including Support Centres and the Henley Helpdesk, the ISLI Administration team and the Graduate School.

The [Careers Service](#) continues to provide a full offering of virtual events and opportunities to help build your experience and skills for employment.

Keeping us all safe

We will review our existing health and safety arrangements following the latest advice from the government and will let you know if we make any changes to current arrangements.

Please remember that getting tested regularly, as well as taking the recommended precautions (hand washing, wearing face coverings, and maintaining a distance from others) will help continue to protect us all.

Vaccination programme in the UK

In line with advice from the [National Health Service](#) and the [World Health Organisation](#), we recommend that colleagues and students who can be vaccinated should do so when offered a vaccine.

If you feel you should have been offered a vaccination based on the current eligible groups but you haven't been contacted yet, please speak to your GP for further advice. You can also enter your NHS number on the [NHS website](#), now and in the coming months, to check when you become eligible to book a vaccine.

International students who live in the UK and are registered with a General Practitioner (GP) will be able to access COVID-19 vaccinations when they are contacted to do so. Please read our [guidance on registering with a GP](#).

Planning for 2021/22

We understand many of you have questions about our plans for teaching next academic year, in the context of ongoing uncertainty around the pandemic. We are finalising our plans and will share more information with you in the coming weeks.

I wish you all the best for the rest of the summer term. We will continue to monitor the government advice and the national situation, and we will update our current plans if needed. Please keep an eye on your University email account and [Essentials](#), and make sure you download the [UoR Student App](#) to stay up-to-date with everything happening.

We have a [wide range of support resources](#) for you, both academically and for your wellbeing and mental health. Our [Get Together, Apart diary](#) also highlights a range of online social activities for you to get involved with. If you have any queries relating to your studies, please speak to your Support Centre (or Henley Helpdesk or ISLI Admin Office). You can also contact our COVID-19 Support & Behaviour Team at covid-support@reading.ac.uk.

Best wishes,

Paddy

Dr Patricia ('Paddy') Woodman

Director of Student Services