

Email to all 2020 graduates and 2021 finalists

Subject line: University of Reading graduation ceremonies for 2020 graduates and 2021 finalists

Dear students,

I hope you and your loved ones are keeping safe and healthy. Further to previous emails from my colleagues in our Graduation Team, I am writing to share the decisions we have recently made regarding graduation ceremonies for our 2020 graduates and 2021 finalists.

Firstly, I would like to take the opportunity to thank all of you who participated in our recent survey. We received more than 4,500 responses which shows how important this milestone is to celebrate the end of your university journey. Your feedback has been enormously helpful to inform our decision-making.

The responses we received showed that you were mostly in agreement about which elements of a graduation celebration are important to you. There were two things of particular note that united most:

- the majority of respondents said that they wanted their graduation celebration to be 'as close to normal' as possible – without social distancing restrictions; and
- they were prepared to wait up to a year longer to increase the likelihood that no social distancing restrictions would be in place for their ceremony.

We have therefore taken the very difficult decision to postpone our ceremonies as follows:

- **July 2020 and July 2021 ceremonies will take place in July 2022**
- **December 2020 ceremonies will take place in December 2021, along with the cohort due to graduate at that time**

These plans are, of course, subject to any relevant legal restrictions, government guidance or public health advice which may be in place at the time. Should any further changes to our plans be necessary, we will inform you as soon as possible.

As well as being informed by the feedback from your survey responses, my colleagues and I have also carefully considered the initial information from the government as part of their review of large-scale events. At this stage, unfortunately there is no certainty that these types of events will be able to go ahead this summer without social distancing or other restrictions. International travel restrictions remain in place currently, which means many of our recent graduates and current finalists based overseas may be unable to travel to the UK in July.

These decisions have been made reluctantly, and it is with a very heavy heart that I have to share this news.

For me, personally, Graduation is a highlight of my year – it is a great reminder of what my colleagues and I are always working towards. While I cannot pretend to understand the disappointment you must be feeling, please know that I share that feeling, along with all my colleagues here.

I can confirm that **undergraduate finalists** will still receive your exam results and degree classification in a timely way, enabling you to make decisions about your future. Shortly after results are published, we will send you your degree certificate by post to provide you with formal proof of your qualification.

We are working hard now to put plans in place to ensure your Graduation ceremonies exceed your expectations and provide you with a thoroughly well-deserved opportunity to celebrate with your family and friends. We will keep you updated when we have more information to share nearer the time and, in the meantime, we have also published some [Frequently Asked Questions](#) on Essentials.

Kind regards,
Robert

Professor Robert Van de Noort
Vice-Chancellor