



Student Support at the start of Spring Term

Welcome back! It has not been the start of year many of us wanted, but we hope you were still able to enjoy some aspects of the recent Christmas and New Year break.

This email provides an up to date round-up of some of the different help and support available to you at the University of Reading as we head into the spring term 2021.

Remember, for all the latest Covid-related information and updates from the University, check your university email account where you receive regular emails as soon as decisions are made.

The latest information is also available via the [Essentials website](#), [Instagram](#), [Twitter](#), and [Me@Reading](#). All email communications are also [hosted on this helpful page](#).



The Student Financial Support Team is here for you

We appreciate that you may have concerns about your finances in the current circumstances. Thanks to our Alumni & Supporter Engagement Office and the government, additional funding has been made available to support you if you are facing unexpected financial hardship because of the pandemic.

If you are struggling to pay for essential living costs (such as rent or food) please visit the [Money Matters](#) webpages on Essentials, where you can find advice and signposting to external services, as well as how to apply to our [Student Support Fund](#) (hardship fund) and [Digital Support Fund](#).

Applying for financial support is easy

- You can apply for the [Student Support Fund](#) by logging into your [RISIS Web Portal](#). Go to the “Actions” menu and then click on “Financial Support”. From this page, you will be able to read the guidance notes and click on the link “Begin/Continue application for financial support or bursary”. When you have completed your online application you will get an acknowledgement email sent to you.
- The [Digital Support Fund](#) is available to students who have a household income of £27,000 or less and who live in an area of low participation in Higher Education.

Our Students Union

We would recommend that you also visit the RUSU advice webpages – the team have trained and experienced advisors available to help with specific topics such as housing, money and welfare. If you have concerns around your private housing during this difficult time, the housing advisors have a series of FAQ’s on this topic and more information can be found on the [RUSU website](#).



Studying remotely

There is a wide range of information available on our Student Hub [webpage](#) and our Student Essentials [webpages](#) to help you study remotely, as well as guidance for using our systems off-campus, vital security information and how to request support.

We have [a useful guide to the various systems you might need](#) and how to access these, this includes how your course leaders might communicate with you, how to find out information about your exams and modules, and where you might access online teaching.

Office365 is available on and off-campus, and you can access most the tools and services you need without using the VPN, including email, Microsoft Teams, Stream, Excel, Word, and other useful Office apps. You will need to authenticate yourself when studying remotely via nearly all of our University systems using Multi-Factor Authentication. Our [MFA](#) webpage has detailed instructions to guide you through this process, and the importance of ensuring you're securely accessing our services can be found on the University's Student [blog](#).

[AppsAnywhere](#) allows you to access University software on your devices off-campus and via a non-Eduroam network. There are a number of applications available for Windows, and we are adding more applications for Macs all the time.

Requesting Support

In the first instance, we recommend checking our DTS [Knowledgebase](#) and the webpages above, you should be able to find a wide range of information and may be able to answer your question before getting in touch.

Please note our IT Service Desk continues to operate remotely [via email, our Portal and telephone](#). We ask that support is only requested via a telephone in urgent situations as we are still receiving a high volume of requests for help. Phone and email support is available from 08:00 - 16:00 Monday to Friday.

At this time, the Library continues to remain open. If you are based on campus or in Halls, we are operating [bookable appointments](#) at the Library counter. These can only be attended with a booking confirmation, and we would request that these are only reserved where you are unable to seek support remotely. Our team are available in the Library seven days a week during term-time, from 09:00 - 17:00 on weekdays and from 11:00 - 17:00 at weekends.

As always, if you have any questions or need any help, please don't hesitate to contact the [IT Service Desk](#) who will be happy to help.

LIFE TOOLS



Life Tools: take control of your learning with our helpful webinars

The Life Tools programme is an ongoing series of talks designed by experts to enhance your student experience. The programme allows you to be proactive and take control of your learning and development.

In 2021 Life Tools will continue talks as webinars. They are about 50 minutes in duration, including time for questions about the topic. The programme is free and open to all students, with no need to book.

More information is available via the [Life Tools Essentials pages](#).

How do I access the programme?

- The programme runs on Blackboard. You will first need to enrol on the [Life Tools course](#) before accessing the webinar link.
- Once enrolled, go to the Life Tools programme on Blackboard and select the module [Life Tools webinar](#).
- Click on the module and you will see the list of webinars available. Select the one you want to attend, then click join (in black).
- The link will be available 15mins before the start time. The link will take you directly to the webinar.

If you have any problems finding the link you can email [Dr Alicia Peña Bizama](#) who runs the programme.

Life Tools Webinars this week

- **Living on a student budget and prevent debt** Wednesday 13.1.21, at 15:00-16:00
- **Stressed? Learn ways to maintain your health** Thursday 14.1.21, at 13:00-14:00
- **Ignite your motivation: keep learning** Thursday 14.1.21, at 15:00-16:00

To join, go to the [Life Tools webinar](#) module. For more details about each webinar, you can check the [Life Tools booklet here](#).

See all the webinars coming up: [Life Tools](#).



Through feedback, we have noticed that it's sometimes unclear for users where they should sit, and spaces are being booked but not occupied. To improve your experience, and for us to continue operating in a covid safe way, we're making some changes to our study space booking system - **allocating a numbered space to each booking and sending you a reminder the day before.**

When you arrived at the Welcome Desk during the Autumn term, we checked your bookings on our system. This helped us to keep study areas from becoming over-populated. It's important that we have plenty of space for each person in the building to social distance and guarantee only people who have a genuine booking gain entry.

From **4 January 2021**, all study spaces in the Library will have a number. When you book a study space, **the system will allocate a specific desk for you to sit at** – yours for your booking duration. The desk number and area will be on the booking confirmation email that you receive. Desk areas are indicated by signage in the building, and desk numbers by a label on each space.

You'll receive a reminder email the day before your booking, if you don't need the space anymore the email will contain details on how to **cancel it to make it**

available for another user. The same option is available in the original booking confirmation email too.

To book and use a study space, please follow these steps:

- [Book your space](#) online - please only book for yourself, all our study spaces are for individual study as per government guidance.
- Bring your Campus Card and booking confirmation email to the Library, and please wear a face-covering unless exempt.
- Check your study space area and seat number – ask us if you are unsure where it is.
- Sanitise your space with the supplies provided.
- Please vacate your space on time – someone else will be arriving to use it after you.

Not received your confirmation email?

Don't book again. Please contact us, and we can check your booking and re-send the confirmation email. If the space you booked is unavailable, please ask us for help either in person at the Welcome Desk on the Ground Floor or call us on 0118 378 8770.

We want the Library to remain a safe space for you to study - please continue to help us by following our [study space etiquette guidance](#). We know space is limited, but with your help, all Library members can have a fair chance to use our facilities.

RACIAL JUSTICE OPPORTUNITY



Are you interested in promoting **Racial Justice** in Teaching and Learning at the University of Reading? [Apply for our student and staff panel](#) or get involved by submitting your contributions on Racial Justice in Teaching and Learning:

Submit your contributions

The University is developing an online collection of pieces on Promoting Racial Justice in Teaching and Learning.

We want to provide a platform for sharing experiences, insights and best practice, to promote discussion and encourage action by bringing together pieces across our community on race (in)equality in teaching and learning.

We are asking students to contribute their ideas on the following themes:

- What is being done/needs to be done to promote race equality in teaching and learning?
 - What is being done/needs to be done to decolonise teaching methods/curricula?
 - How are/could/should students be involved in attempts to promote race equality in teaching and learning?
 - What impacts have initiatives to diversify/decolonise the curriculum had so far?
 - Your opinion on the importance of this or what the University of Reading should do to progress.
-

We are keen for this collection to reflect the diversity of experiences, perspectives and opinions of our teaching and learning community. We, therefore, welcome contributions from all colleagues AND students. We are not prescribing a format or style but invite contributions in a range of forms. These might range from traditional forms of writing (e.g. research reports/case studies/literature reviews) to more personal or creative pieces (opinion pieces, biographical writing, reflective pieces, creative non-fiction, poetry, photography, etc.).

This could be an individual or group submission.

Once agreed by the panel, your work will be published and used to help the university move forward.

You should include:

- **The title of the piece**
- **The name and email address of the author(s)**
- **Your school**
- **A reference list (where relevant).**

For any queries or to send your submission, please email Eileen Hyder (e.m.hyder@reading.ac.uk) by **1st March 2021**.

Apply for the panel

The University of Reading is looking to bring together a panel of students and staff to support us in creating a collection of work and insights on **Promoting Racial Justice in Teaching and Learning**. The collection aims to raise awareness of racial equality, prompt discussion, and share best practice of truly inclusive education with a focus on action.

The panel's role will be light-touch: to read submissions and advise us on their relevance to the theme. **Students will be paid an hourly rate for their work on the panel** (the number of paid hours will depend on the number of submissions. We predict a maximum of five submissions to review per student.)

We are looking for four students with an understanding of racial inequality and justice and whose values align with the project's ethos.

We are inviting contributions in a range of forms. These might range from traditional forms of writing (e.g. research reports/case studies/literature reviews) to more personal or creative pieces (opinion pieces, biographical writing, reflective pieces, creative non-fiction, poetry, photography, etc.).

We will provide training and support throughout.

If you are interested in this work, please complete [the short application form](#).

If you have any questions, please email Anne-Marie Henderson a.henderson@reading.ac.uk

Deadline: **1st February 2021**



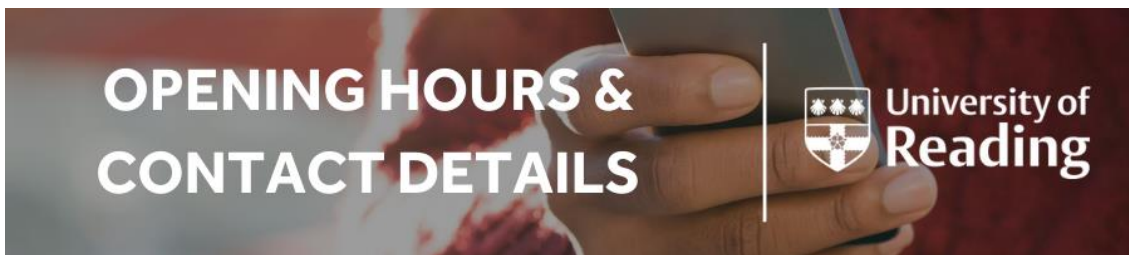
This lockdown is likely to feel tough, but please reach out if you need help. The University of Reading has a range of resources to support you and your wellbeing, including:

- University of Reading COVID hotline: 0118 214 7813
- [UoR specialist support teams](#) - Our dedicated range of specialist support teams are here for you, whether you are on campus or studying remotely.
- [Togetherall](#) - a safe and anonymous online space that you can go to if you are feeling down, struggling to cope, or just want to talk to people who understand what you're going through.
- [Supporting our Students \(SoS\)](#) - connects you to a fellow student or university staff member to help you feel more connected to our community.
- [Student Space](#) - here to make it easier for you to find the support/advice that you need during the coronavirus pandemic. However you're feeling, help and guidance is available. Explore a range of trusted information, services and tools to help you with the challenges of student life.
- [RUSU Welfare Directory](#) - provides contact details for a variety of organisations and support within, and external to the University of Reading.
- RUSU's [support services](#) are available online, and [clubs and societies](#) continue remotely.
- [NHS 'self-help' leaflets](#) - In collaboration with the NHS, we have produced a suite of self-help leaflets on a range of topics from stress, to eating disorders. These informative guides offer advice for everyone in accessible formats – you can send to a friend, get an audio guide or download as a PDF.

Helplines

- Urgent concerns about your mental health? Call the [Berkshire NHS Crisis](#) number on 0300 365 0300; they are available 24/7.
-

- If you feel suicidal or desperate to talk to someone, you can call the [Samaritans](#) for free 24 hours a day, 7 days a week on 116 123.
 - [PAPYRUS](#) is the national UK charity dedicated to preventing young suicide and offers a telephone and text service on 0800 068 4141. The service is staffed by trained mental health professionals 10:00 – 22:00 weekdays and 14:00 – 17:00 at the weekend.
 - Your doctor/GP practice. If you are registered with the University Medical practice in Northcourt Avenue, the number is:0118 987 4551. Otherwise, please contact the doctor with whom you are registered.
 - Non-urgent NHS medical help/advice: 111
 - Emergency services:999
-



Due to the current restrictions, many of our student support teams are now offering a remote service allowing you to continue to get the right support. Below you will find details of opening times and how to contact the teams. This information is regularly updated on [Essentials](#).

Contact information for support teams

- **Support Centres:** [Ask a Question](#) is the main method for contacting support centres with non-urgent queries.
 - **Student Services Reception:** Open for in-person enquiries from 11:00 to 13:00 and 14:00 to 16:00. Telephone 0118 378 5555 (Mondays to Thursdays 09:00 to 17:00 and on Friday 09:00 to 16:30).
-

- **Student Welfare Team:** In the first instance, email the team at studentwelfare@reading.ac.uk and ask to speak to one of the team.
- **The Counselling and Wellbeing Team:** Offering a remote service. Get in contact via email counselling@reading.ac.uk, or phone 0118 378 4216 (9:00-17:00 Monday - Friday)
- **The Disability Advisory Service (DAS):** To contact the team, please contact us by emailing disability@reading.ac.uk or calling 0118 378 4202 (9:00-17:00 Monday - Friday). Appointments can be booked to take place via Teams (video or audio calls).
- **Campus Jobs:** Offering a remote service. Get in contact by phone 0118 378 4499, or email campusjobs@reading.ac.uk (08:00-17:00 Monday To Thursday, 08:00-16:30 Friday), or [book a virtual appointment](#).
- **Library:** [Opening hours can be found online](#). General phone enquiries to 0118 378 8770 and general email enquiries to library@reading.ac.uk.
- **The International Student Advisory Team:** Please [book an appointment](#) or contact the team via email (int.adv@reading.ac.uk) or phone (+44(0)118 378 8038) 09:00 to 17:00.
- **Careers and Placements Team:** Careers offer support remotely 09:00 - 17:00, Monday to Thursday, 09:00 - 16:30 Friday. You can reach the team by emailing careers@reading.ac.uk or calling 0118 378 8359.
- **The Student Financial Support Team:** Virtual appointments are available Monday, Wednesday and Friday between 09:30 to 12:00. [Book an appointment](#). Call the team on 0118 378 5555.

As restrictions change, we will update these contact details. Keep an eye on [Essentials](#) and our [Twitter](#) for any changes.
