

All UG & PGT returning students

Subject line: Welcoming you back to campus for the autumn term

Dear student,

We hope you are well and enjoying the summer break so far. Since our last email at the end of May, we have been busy getting our Reading campuses ready for September. Here are some updates on what you can expect, which we hope will help you plan your return to Reading.

Your safe return to campus

You will see a range of measures in place to protect the health and safety of our students and staff, in line with UK government advice. Although campus will feel different at first, the arrangements mean you can safely access the facilities, services and opportunities you will need to live, study and socialise. This includes our halls, Library, Support Centres, food and drink venues, and SportsPark.

When you return, you can expect to see **marked one-way systems, designated building entry/exit points, handwashing facilities and additional hand sanitisation points**. Some rooms and facilities will have **new layouts to increase space** between people and we are also introducing **maximum capacity restrictions** in some areas.

All government requirements on face coverings will apply on campus too, for example, in shops and takeaway food outlets. In teaching spaces, and other areas where it may be difficult to maintain a 2 metre distance from others, we strongly encourage all students and staff to wear face coverings. There will be signs to remind our whole community to be considerate and to follow this advice to protect each other.

Teaching and learning

Please do make plans to be back on campus by the time teaching starts for your programme. In most cases this will be the start of the autumn term, the week commencing Monday 28 September. If there are any exceptions to this we will contact you by email. Further information about support for those unable to be on campus is provided later in this email.

Our carefully designed blended learning environment combines **face-to-face interactive sessions and online core course content**. In the autumn term, you will have:

All core course content available online

To reduce the health risks associated with larger groups of people in enclosed spaces, content that would typically be delivered through large classes will now be provided digitally, on Blackboard in most cases. This means you will benefit from being able to review the materials in your own time as often as you wish, and enables us to use lecture theatres and teaching rooms more flexibly for interactive sessions with smaller groups.

Regular interactive sessions face-to-face on campus and online

Alongside your core course content online, you will have timetabled interactive sessions, like seminars and workshops, appropriate to your course. In many cases these sessions will be face-to-face on campus, complemented by online interactive activities for those who initially need to study remotely. As normal, engaging in these interactive activities will help you to develop and apply your understanding of the topic with your lecturer and classmates.

As usual, we expect to share your academic timetable with you in the second half of September. Further information about our plans for the autumn is [published on Essentials](#).

Social opportunities

We want to make sure you get the most from your university experience, including making the most of our beautiful Whiteknights and London Road campuses to meet friends and socialise. We are working hard to adapt our campus facilities so you can still benefit from these in the autumn term.

Reading University Students' Union (RUSU) are also working to offer a range of events and activities from September, in line with social distancing requirements, and they will share more details closer to the start of term. They will continue to provide as many support services as possible on campus and online, deliver a range of virtual events, and work with student activity groups to enhance your student experience.

Support for students unable to travel to Reading in September

If you are unable to return to Reading at the start of term (for example, due to travel restrictions or continued guidance to isolate for health reasons), our flexible blended approach will, in most cases, enable you to start the new academic year remotely until you can come back to campus. When you re-enrol, we will ask if you are unable to return to campus and the likely time period you are likely to be studying at distance.

To benefit from the full university experience, we encourage you to plan to come back to Reading for the start of term, or as soon as possible after that. We believe engaging in face-to-face teaching and other activities on campus offers you the best opportunity to develop, academically and personally. Subject to government advice, we are also currently planning to increase teaching on campus from January 2021. Therefore, you should plan to return by January at the latest.

There are a small number of programmes for which it will be very difficult for students to meet their learning outcomes without being on campus or on placement at, or close to, the start of the autumn term. We will contact students on these programmes directly with further information.

Changes to programmes

All Schools are reviewing their programmes and modules to identify if any adjustments need to be made to comply with the latest UK government advice or otherwise respond to the COVID-19 pandemic. As far as possible we will avoid making significant changes. In some cases where this is unavoidable, for example for some planned field trips or practical work, we will write to students affected to let you know what alternative arrangements will be put in place to ensure you can continue to work towards your programme learning outcomes.

Exam results

Results from the April/May assessment period have now been published on your RISIS portal. We have published [further advice and frequently asked questions on Essentials](#), including information about retakes and using the Circumstances Impact Process (CIP).

We hope this information has been helpful. We will continue to keep you updated closer to the start of term in September but please do [check Essentials regularly for the latest information](#). We look forward to seeing you back!

Best wishes,
Elizabeth & Julian

Professor Elizabeth McCrum & Professor Julian Park
Pro-Vice-Chancellors (Education & Student Experience)

Email 2: Follow-up to returning international UG & PGT students

Subject line: Returning to campus in September: Advice for international students

Dear <Name>,

Further to our recent email about our plans to welcome you back to campus in September, we are writing to all international students to provide further advice and information.

Your health and safety

Many of you will be living outside of the UK at the moment and we understand you may feel anxious about what it will be like when you return. The UK government is continuing to consult with health experts to respond to the ongoing pandemic and, while some restrictions have been eased recently, other measures have been increased where necessary. This includes [extending the self-isolation period](#) for those with symptoms from 7 to 10 days and increasing the situations in which face coverings must be worn. For the latest information and advice, please visit the [Gov.uk website](#). We will write to you again closer to the start of term to provide a more comprehensive picture of the current situation, to help you prepare.

For us at the University of Reading, our first priority is to protect the health and wellbeing of our whole community, while continuing to provide you with the best possible university experience. As outlined in our recent email, we are adapting our campuses to implement one-way systems, dedicated entry/exits for building, and additional hand hygiene stations. We are changing the layout of some spaces to increase space and introducing maximum capacity restrictions where required.

In addition to government requirements for wearing face covering, we are strongly encouraging that they are worn in all areas where maintaining a 2 metre distance may be difficult, including teaching spaces. Again, we will be in touch nearer the time to share more specific details about these arrangements.

Self-isolation (quarantine) upon arrival in the UK

If you are travelling to the UK from overseas, you should read the latest UK government advice about [what to expect when you arrive](#). You must self-isolate (also known as 'quarantine') for 14 days when you arrive in the UK, unless you have travelled from [one of the countries with exemption](#). This list may be changed by the government at short notice so please regularly check these links for the latest advice.

We will support students living in Halls with practical arrangements so you can self-isolate safely without the need to visit shops (which is not permitted).

If you are living in private accommodation, you should consider bringing essential items such as soap or hand sanitiser with you and arranging an online supermarket delivery of food and cleaning materials for shortly after you arrive. If you have never used an online supermarket delivery, you may wish to download an app for one or two of the local shops (for example, Asda or Tesco) and set up an account so you can easily place an order when you are ready. You may also wish to consider pre-ordering a selection of essential items such as bedding, towels and kitchen equipment – a number of companies provide ‘starter packs’ (such as [Unikitout](#)) and Amazon also sell [kitchen starter packs](#) and bedding. Please note that we do not recommend or endorse these companies and we would recommend you conduct your own research before purchasing any items.

Support for international students

We plan to run a ‘Support our Students’ scheme, through which you can be linked with a fellow student or member of staff, to chat over email or by video call. We will provide further information closer to the start of term.

We have also been continuing to run our popular Global Buddies social events online, including a recent origami session. These are friendly, informal events and provide a great opportunity to meet new people and perhaps even try something new. Keep an eye on our International Student Advisory Team’s Facebook page to find out when future dates are announced.

If you have any queries or would like further support please contact our [International Student Advisory Team](#).

Halls of Residence

We are continuing to accept applications from returning students for our Halls of Residence and you can [make an application using RISIS](#). We have waived the security deposit requirement for new applications to Halls this year until payment of the first instalment of rent and we have also said we will consider waiving rent temporarily for those students who are delayed arriving by more than 14 days at the start of their contract due to circumstances beyond their control. For further information please visit our [Accommodation webpage on Essentials](#).

Advice for students with Tier 4 visas

We have published the latest UK government advice for students with Tier 4 visas on our [Essentials webpages](#). If you have any queries about your visa or immigration status please email immigration@reading.ac.uk.

Exam resits and retakes

Results from the April/May assessment period have now been published on your RISIS portal. We hope you are looking forward to starting the next stage of your programme, but if you have any questions about resits or retakes, we have published [specific advice for international students](#) on Essentials.

We hope this information has been helpful and you are looking forward to coming back to Reading. If you have any queries please do not hesitate to contact our [International Student Advisory Team](#).

Best wishes,

Elizabeth & Julian

Professor Elizabeth McCrum & Professor Julian Park
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