

**Subject:** Essentials information on exams now live for undergraduate and taught postgraduate students

Dear students,

Following the email sent by Professors Julian Park and Elizabeth McCrum on Monday about take home exams and alternate assessments, I am writing to confirm that additional details and FAQs are now available on the [Essentials coronavirus pages](#). These provide more information about take home exams and how they are undertaken, as well as the new safety net, Circumstances Impact Process and complaints arrangements.

In particular, the information published today will clarify many of the questions that we have received following Friday's email:

- **Deadline for the safety net:** we can confirm that the safety net will take account of all coursework and other assessment **with an original submission date by 27 March**, the end of the Spring term, assuming the extension allows for marking to take place in time for the Summer Exam Boards. If you need a coursework or dissertation extension, please submit a request using our new [Circumstances Impact Process \(CIP\)](#).
- **Practice exam to test internet and other home arrangements:** If you are concerned about internet connectivity or other possible issues around sitting your take home exams in your current environment, you will have the opportunity to practice a [‘take home’ exam](#) during the week commencing 14 April. This will allow you to get used to the system, test your internet connection and work out the best arrangements for taking the exam. To help ensure you are as prepared as possible, please make every effort to participate in this practice.
- **Length of take home exams:** The majority of ‘take home’ exams will be open for 23 hours to allow for things like time differences, caring arrangements, special timing arrangements, interruptions or technical difficulties. Please rest assured that you are not expected to spend 23 hours doing the exam and suggested timings for completion will be provided, which are in line with normal exam expectations, along with a maximum word count.
- **Arrangements for re-taking examinations:** We remain optimistic that by the August/September resit period we will be able to run in-person exams. However, this will be dependent on the UK government position at the time and we may need to continue with ‘take home’ exams or other forms of assessment. After you receive your results, if you think you may want to re-take one or more of your exams or assessments, please speak to your Academic Tutor or School/Department Examinations Officer for personalised advice and guidance.

I hope this additional information will cover many of your queries. However, if you do have any outstanding questions about your individual circumstances, please direct them by email [take-home-exam@reading.ac.uk](mailto:take-home-exam@reading.ac.uk). This will be the quickest and most efficient way to get a response to your questions.

I would respectfully ask you only use this email channel to ask specific questions related to your situation. If you wish to lodge a complaint about the arrangements more generally, please use the [online form](#) we have set up for this. Using the email address to do so will slow our ability to answer others questions, which will ultimately disadvantage other students who are waiting for a response before their exams start.

### **New buddy scheme**

We know that some people are starting to feel the impact of the isolation arrangements and may just want someone to engage with. Our new **Support our Students** scheme gives all students the opportunity to be matched with a fellow student or a member of University staff for online support. It may be a chat over email, a cup of tea over video chat or help finding the answers to some of your queries or worries.

For students who have been deemed specifically vulnerable to infection and are therefore shielding, who may have possible coronavirus infection or who are self-isolating because a flat mate has symptoms, we are also offering the option to be matched with a staff member who can help pick up essential food or medicine within the local area.

You can find out more and sign up [online](#).

### **Changes to accessing systems online**

Given that our IT systems have become even more critical than usual at this time of the year our Digital Technology Services (DTS) are putting in place additional two-step authentication protections that you will need to complete to log in to some systems including Me@Reading and Office 365. This is being done to add an extra layer of security of your personal and academic information and our University systems, Find out more about how to set up two-factor authentication on the [DTS website](#).

DTS advise that you will need to use your University username plus '@student.reading.ac.uk' (example: [ab123456@student.reading.ac.uk](#)) to log in to University services that have a Microsoft login page, for example, Outlook, Me@Reading, Microsoft Teams, OneDrive for Business. This does not affect how you log in to Blackboard or RISIS, using your University password.

I would like wish you all the very best for the upcoming Easter break and for exam and assessment preparation.

As normal, our services will be unavailable over the Easter closure period from Wednesday 8 to Tuesday 14 April, with the exception of essential support for students continuing to live in our Halls of Residence. Outside of these dates, please remember that my colleagues in our [specialist support services](#) are here to support you, including Academic Tutors, Study Advisers, the Student Welfare Team, Student Financial Support, the Disability Advisory Service and Counselling & Wellbeing.

Kind regards,

Patricia

DR PATRICIA WOODMAN  
Director of Student Services