Template guidance notes for research students with permission to return to College accommodation, and for those using College facilities, from June 2020 onwards.

Introduction

This guidance is for postgraduate research students who have been given permission to return to Cambridge to continue with their research from June 2020 onwards, and who intend to take up College accommodation or to use College facilities in coming months. **It relates to the current academic year (2019-20) only.** Government has been clear that research labs can return to work where ‘COVID-secure’ measures are implemented. However, PHE advice at 13/06/20 is also clear that a general return of students is not yet permitted and, in particular, movements from one shared household into a new shared household should not yet be happening.

This information will be updated on the College website as government advice changes – you will be emailed a notification of any update. It sits alongside and complements advice from your Department or place of research, and you should also follow general updates on the [University's coronavirus webpages](https://www.cam.ac.uk/coronavirus).

Cambridge currently has a low incidence of COVID-19 but the prospect of a new and rapid spike in cases remains a very real threat, particularly as people begin to return to work from away, so it is essential you read and follow Government Public Health England (PHE) advice on social distancing: [Staying alert and safe (social distancing)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/staying-alert-and-safe-covid-19). Thanks to the support of key staff in essential services, the College has been able to provide a home to a small number of remaining undergraduate and postgraduate students during the lock-down period. You are now joining this group and it is critical that your actions show the same collective commitment that has kept the community safe.

We expect you to abide by these key principles following your return to Cambridge:

- Stay at home as much as possible
- Work from home whenever you can
- Limit contact with other people.
- Keep your distance (2 metres) when you go out
- Wash your hands regularly, and **don’t** leave home if you, or anyone you live with, has symptoms (see below).

1. **Important points to check before returning to Cambridge**

   1.1. **Do you have Departmental and College approval to return?** The early return of some postgraduate research students will follow a carefully managed process led by Department and Institutional Heads, with the details of specific PhD students being confirmed to their Colleges by the relevant senior Departmental representative (see University advice here [https://www.cam.ac.uk/coronavirus/students/postgraduate-students](https://www.cam.ac.uk/coronavirus/students/postgraduate-students)). If you plan to return to College accommodation you must first check that your Department and College have officially confirmed your permission to return via this process. Your return date must be confirmed in advance and the College will confirm final arrangements with you once this has been agreed. **Do not travel to Cambridge without this confirmation.** Your Tutor will also be able to offer or source advice and support if needed.

   1.2. **Do you have symptoms?** You can check your symptoms using the [NHS symptom checker](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-symptoms). Do not travel back to Cambridge if you are currently self-isolating or isolating...
as a household because you, or someone you live with, or someone you have been in close contact with, has tested positive for COVID-19 or has shown symptoms of fever, new persistent cough, or a loss or change in sense of taste or smell. In this case, follow the current PHE guidance: Stay at home: guidance for households with possible coronavirus infection.

1.3. Are you especially vulnerable to COVID-19 illness? You should check to see if you are at higher risk of more serious COVID-19 related disease from underlying illness. This will require you to be more stringent in following social distancing measures. People with certain illnesses may be extremely vulnerable and at very high risk of serious COVID-19 disease requiring them to ‘shield’, likely away from Cambridge. If you think you might be more vulnerable then take advice from your doctor. If you are advised not to return to Cambridge please let your Tutor know; they will inform your Department/ supervisor. If you are planning to come into College accommodation you should discuss your circumstances with your Tutor or the Welfare Officer.

1.4. Have you planned your journey to Cambridge in line with PHE guidance? PHE guidance is clear that travel to work, where you cannot work from home, is permitted and that you may stay away from your usual home for work purposes. For now this applies only to research students working in laboratories. Be sure to travel in a way that presents the least risk to you, your fellow travellers, and the College and University community you are entering. Read and follow the PHE guidance on social distancing during travel in the UK, and taking particular note of additional steps where you have no choice but to use public transport.

1.5. Identify two self-isolation supporters in Cambridge, if you can: Identify in advance two people in Cambridge who could help you in the event that you develop symptoms of COVID-19 and need to self-isolate at any stage after your return to Cambridge; this may include assistance with food deliveries or other essentials. If you do not have two people who can help, the College has some volunteers on hand who can help you, so please let the Welfare Officer know.

1.6. Have you arrived in the UK within 14 days of your planned return to Cambridge? The UK government requires all people arriving in the UK from 8th June 2020 to self-isolate for 14 days (see guidance). Note that the College may not be able to provide suitable self-isolation accommodation and this may have to be arranged separately. Non-UK citizens should also check and comply with their home country’s COVID-19 travel restrictions.

1.7. Ensure that you understand the household system in your College. If you are returning to College accommodation you are likely to beaccommodated ultimately as part of a household group, even if not immediately. If you live in College accommodation that includes a shared bathroom, and/or toilet, and/or kitchen area, then this constitutes a ‘household’ under advice that Colleges have received from PHE. Close and consistent adoption of this practice has helped protect students already in Cambridge in the months since lockdown, and we need your help to maintain this for the safety of yourself and others. PHE guidance is changing each week but, as at 1/6/20 direct movement between your home and a multi-person Cambridge household is not yet permitted. As PHE advice changes, so will the College’s guidance (set out below). Make sure that you understand how this will be implemented and discuss this with your Tutor before you travel if you are unclear.

2. Your commitment to minimizing transmission of COVID-19 in Cambridge

2.1. Take immediate action if you develop symptoms of COVID-19: Ensure you are familiar with PHE advice on when to self-isolate or household isolate. Essentially, if you develop a new persistent cough and or a fever, or a change in sense of taste or smell, then you must self-isolate for 7 days if you live alone and arrange to have a
test. It is important that you email or call the Porters’ Lodge in this situation, so they can inform the Welfare Officer, but do not go to the Porters’ Lodge in person. You should do this whether or not you live in College accommodation. If you live in a household and one person develops symptoms, your entire household group will be required to self-isolate for 14 days in the existing accommodation unless everyone with symptoms has tested negative. The College, along with any nominated self-isolation supporters you already named, will support you during this time. Refer to your College website for FAQs on this and other matters.

2.2. Comply with instructions from NHS Track and Trace: If you are told that you have been in contact with a person with confirmed coronavirus infection then you must self-isolate for 14 days. If you do not have symptoms, then any other people you live with in your household do not need to isolate as a household, but you must segregate from them as much as possible. If you do have symptoms, then you and any other members of your household must self-isolate, while you obtain a test. A negative result means you will have to continue your 14 days of self-isolation, but others you live with can stop isolating. A positive result means your household must isolate for 14 days from the start of symptoms within the household.

2.3. Interim requirement for 14 days self-isolation or segregated accommodation for all students returning to College accommodation: These interim measures are in response to PHE guidance in place on 02/06/20 – some relating specifically to overseas arrivals, and others more generally advising UK residents against the mixing of households at the current time. This guidance and College actions will evolve.

2.3.1. Arriving from overseas (non-UK) in the past 14 days: PHE guidance requires that you self-isolate for 14 days, not leaving your accommodation except for specified reasons. For example, food should be delivered and left outside your door and you may not exercise or go to work during this time.

2.3.2. Arrivals from the UK: Although you will be free to go to work, and to move around freely within current PHE social distancing guidelines, you cannot currently integrate from one shared household into another shared household. Movement from a single, non-shared household into a shared household is now permitted, so your College will try to find you accommodation with facilities that you don’t have to share with anyone else, at least for 14 days after your arrival back in Cambridge. Subject to PHE guidance at the time, limited rooms capacity may lead to you being asked to move into a shared household after 14 days of segregated accommodation. Alternatively, you may be accommodated at another College for an initial period. Subject to PHE guidance at the time, where none of these options are possible and all residents agree, you may be asked to move directly into an existing household but required to practice self-segregation for the first 14 days (stay in your room as much as possible when at home, avoid others when using shared facilities, clean shared surfaces after yourself, consider using a face-covering when unavoidably in shared spaces when other householders are present).

2.4. Protect your household from infection: Follow these key points and check regularly for updates to the current PHE guidance and FAQs on Staying alert and safe (social distancing). This advice applies to all households, not just to new arrivals.

2.4.1. Minimise the likelihood of bringing infection back to your College household by going out as little necessary:

- Stay at home unless for these reasons: Only leave home for work (where this cannot be done from home), to obtain food or essential supplies, for exercise or recreation, or for medical need or to escape harm.
• **Practice frequent handwashing and good respiratory hygiene** (sneeze into a tissue and dispose of it hygienically, cover your mouth if coughing and wash your hands again). Use hand sanitizers where these are provided.

• **Exercise and recreation**: Spend time outside, as frequently as you wish, for exercise. This can be done alone or with members of your existing household (those you share kitchen, bathroom or toilet facilities with). You may also meet outside with up to 6 people from different households, but retaining 2 metre social distancing. Training and sports in groups of up to 6 is now permitted, but only where you can maintain 2 metre distance, minimise equipment sharing and exercise strict hand hygiene. Permitted sports include tennis, croquet, cricket and frisbee.

• **Visits to other households**: Don’t visit friends or relations in households other than your own. Meeting with friends from other households should follow the principles of no more than 6 people in the gathering at one time, in an outdoor location, and at least 2 metres apart. Guidance in force from 13/06/2020 on meeting people from outside your household allows, in theory, for a person living in a single person household to connect up with a second household (a ‘social bubble’) – enabling closer contact between individuals without social distancing. In the interests of safety and equity to all members of a shared College household, people living in College accommodation will not normally be allowed to operate social bubbles in this way. To do so would be unfair to other members of a shared household since a bubble is permitted to contain only 2 households in total. Further, all members of both households in the social bubble must isolate for 14 days if any member of either household becomes symptomatic.

• **Staying with friends or relations**: Don’t leave your home to visit or stay temporarily in another home before returning to your Cambridge household. This is not permitted for the reasons noted in the previous point.

2.4.2. **Take joint responsibility for keeping your room and shared facilities clean**: By taking care of cleaning your own room and by cleaning shared facilities each time you use them you reduce the frequency of visits from housekeeping staff, keeping everyone safer.

2.4.3. **Communal entrances to accommodation**: Be aware of high-contact surfaces including door handles and stair bannisters in communal entrances. Wash your hands before leaving your household and immediately after returning. Housekeeping will clean these areas more frequently.

3. **Provision of key College services**

Only those staff who have an essential role in providing core College services can come into work at the present time; all others are required to stay away or work from home. The College is maintaining a core provision as follows:

• **Porter’s Lodge**: will continue to be open as normal, although with a reduced staff. There is a one-way system in operation and a system of stable doors in order to maintain social distancing within the Porter’s Lodge at all times.

• **Tutorial Office, Finance Office and Welfare**: Staff in the Tutorial and Finance Offices and the Welfare team will generally be working from home and should be contacted by email.

• **College Secretary’s Office**: Staff will generally be working from home and should be contacted by email.
• **Catering:** The Kitchens are currently operating a very reduced service. A weekly collection service of pre-ordered food provisions is in place (please contact catering@pet.cam.ac.uk for details). Details regarding the restarting of food service will be issued in due course.

• **Housekeeping:** A heavily reduced Housekeeping service is in operation. At the moment, communal areas of occupied student accommodation are being cleaned once per week as well as some public areas that are in use.

• **Maintenance:** A reduced maintenance service is in operation with a focus on essential or urgent maintenance activities.

• **IT support:** The IT department is working from home and should be contacted by email.

4. **Community, study and social spaces around the College**

Most social and community spaces in the College have been temporarily closed to bring us in line with current Government guidance, and to minimise transmission of infection. Arrangements are reviewed and updated as government advice emerges, but it is likely that changes to normal patterns of operation and occupancy will remain in place for some months. The following areas of the College are currently affected:

• **Hall and Bar:** The Hall and bar are currently closed.

• **Computer Room:** Single occupancy only will be bookable via the Porter’s Lodge.

• **Library:** The Library is closed. Please see https://www.pet.cam.ac.uk/using-library-during-covid-19 for information. The Librarian will be contacting students about returning books in due course.

• **Mail room:** Pigeonholes can be accessed in the MCR and parcel delivery and collection is available from the Porter’s Lodge.

• **Other communal spaces remain closed at present:** These include the MCR (except for access to pigeonholes), JCR, bar and meeting rooms.

• **Sports facilities:** Facilities remain closed at present including the gym and boathouse.

• **Gardens/Deer Park:** These will remain open but please respect social distancing when using benches or picnic tables (other than for members of the same ‘household’).

5. **Visitors in College**

Only current/resident College members are permitted in College at this time – visitors are not currently permitted to enter College site or buildings – but don’t be discouraged from meeting with friends, up to 6 maximum at any one time, outside of the College. This arrangement is under frequent review.

6. **Pastoral and wellbeing matters**

Undoubtedly, COVID-19 has brought personal hardship to many if not most of us in different ways. However, the University and Colleges are committed to offering as much help as possible, and are working closely together to this end. The University’s core support services, UCS and DRC, are maintaining an on line service. Do make use of them if you need to, wherever you might be – with your Tutor’s help if needed. A vast array of online support and information can be accessed through the University’s wellbeing website.
The College is also committed to maintaining its rich resource of peer-group and pastoral support; GP/MCR welfare officers, Tutors, the Welfare Officer and the Mental Health Advisor, Leanne Freear. College counselling, Welfare support and pathways to hardship support continue to be available by remote access. We encourage you to keep in close contact with friends and family by phone and social media and call the Porters’ Lodge at any time of day or night if you need help – 01223 338200.