

Girton College: Coronavirus FAQs

A. For All

1. In light of the Government's recommendations and the University's response, what facilities are now available in College?

- The College is closed to Visitors. Access to the Girton site is through the Porters' Lodge; parking in Cloister Court.
- Catering: We are now self-catering. The Lodges have a stock of 'emergency' items for self-isolation.
- The Social Hub and Bar, Gyms and the Pool are closed.
- The MCR/study room at Swirles Court is closed.
- Laundry facilities are open; you no longer need a token to operate them. Please use them one at a time.
- The 'F' corridor computer room is closed; computer and printing facilities on 'B' corridor may still be used, taking care over social distancing protocols.
- University IT support: the drop-in service is closed, and you should use email rather than phone (unless you rely on voice calling for accessibility).
- Student kitchens are open for one person at a time: please keep them clean and tidy, eat meals in your room, then thoroughly wash crockery and cutlery.
- The grounds and gardens are closed to non-members. The wind gates, however, are closed at all times.
- You must not associate in groups that are not your "household" i.e. those with whom you share either kitchen or bathroom space.

2. Is the Library open?

The College Library is closed until further notice. The librarian has circulated an email with contact details.

The University Library's guide to online resources is here:

<https://www.lib.cam.ac.uk/research/librarysearch/university-libraries-are-all-open-online>

3. Is the Chaplain available?

Yes. The Chaplain continues to be available to all members of College, even while working or studying at home. He is updating the chaplaincy [website](#) with a list of links and spiritual resources and will post brief talks and meditations, now that we are unable to hold services in Chapel.

He is, as always, available to all College members pastorally and is happy to 'meet with you' by email, phone or FaceTime should you find that helpful (contact details on request from mg320@cam.ac.uk).

The Chaplain is posting regular prayers, reflections and poems that some may find helpful on his blog (<https://malcolmguite.wordpress.com/blog/>) and through his twitter account (@malcolmguite).

4. Should I take extra precautions if I am working online?

As our lives refocus temporarily around the internet, everyone should be mindful of the threat posed by malicious or scam emails, some of which are sure to mention coronavirus (COVID-19).

If you do receive an unexpected email, even if it appears to be from someone you know, please treat it with caution, or simply delete it. University Information Services (UIS) will provide clear directions for accessing services on its webpages.

If an email asks you to provide personal or financial details, even in a roundabout manner, it is almost certainly a scam. It's fine to reject such requests; the University will not pressure you into performing these actions in haste, only criminals do that.

You may report malicious emails to spam@uis.cam.ac.uk or contact your IT Support staff for advice.

Some useful tips for working remotely may be found in this link:
https://www.cipd.co.uk/Images/working-remotely-top-tips-uk-v2_tcm18-73295.pdf

5. Is there help in identifying coronavirus symptoms?

You are recommended to watch the following helpful video:
<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/av/health-51934576/how-do-i-know-if-i-have-coronavirus>

If you have either of the symptoms identified in this video you must self-isolate immediately (self-isolation protocol as have been circulated, see also below, under 'for students' though this applies, of course, to all).

If you have been told to stay at home because of Coronavirus and need a note for your employer, please follow this link: <https://111.nhs.uk/isolation-note?fbclid=IwAR3h2LMvEvaWc03sugof4gsvDgDj-1ZU81X7gFikGcQUkPhyuw0P-ITmQ1U>

6. Wellbeing for all

There is a very helpful page on the university website
<https://www.studentwellbeing.admin.cam.ac.uk/coronavirus>

While a few links are student specific the majority of the information is applicable to us all. Please do take a look.

B. For Students

1. In light of the Government's recommendations what does this mean to me if I am still resident in College

Everyone has to remain in their household area (shared kitchen and/or bathroom group if not in college house) except as outlined below.

Exceptions:

- If not in self isolation, you may shop for food or medication - do so as infrequently as possible.
- You may go out to exercise once daily, either alone or with others in your household group.
- College staff whose role is essential to your health and security are allowed to travel to work as their role is essential – this does not apply to students.

Examples of changes you have to make - this is not an exhaustive list

Unfortunately this means:

- If you have a partner not living in the same household you will be unable to meet in person while these restrictions are in force.
- No non-essential travel allowed. Academic work is not deemed essential.
- You may not visit friends in other colleges.
- You may not travel elsewhere other than shopping, medical reasons or exercise and then return to College.
- You cannot meet with friends in a group anywhere including in College buildings or grounds.

2. Does the College require or advise me to move out of residence?

As you will be aware, the University is on 'Red' for Coronavirus planning and has previously advised students to leave if they can. However, Government guidelines issued in line with the stricter limitation on movement more broadly in the country, stated that **“students remaining at university in England should now stay where they are and not attempt to travel”**.

Therefore, for the time being, **if you are now in College accommodation you are expected to remain in residence.**

Those who are here should be aware that we are on minimum staffing levels, and that some students may be asked to move rooms to facilitate servicing and support.

3. Does where I am have any impact on my ability to sit exams in April?

No. The Vice-Chancellor has announced that there will be no examinations in Cambridge next term. Faculties and Departments are working on contingency plans for teaching and examination.

Latest information can be found here: <https://www.cam.ac.uk/coronavirus/students>. Faculties will also contact students directly with more specific information.

4. If I have left, does that affect my residence requirements?

No. When the University moved into 'red' phase, the Vice-Principal for Education said that 'No student should be deterred from leaving because of concerns about residency requirements'. More details will follow soon.

5. What is the position regarding my residence charges?

Charges to Girton students will not apply to those who are out of residence after the end of March, for as long as the University remains on 'red'. We will make the necessary adjustments to your Tenancy Agreement.

6. What effect will leaving have on my visa?

The University FAQs deal with this point [here](#). See also the Government guidance [here](#).

7. If I have already left, can I return to collect my belongings from my room later?

Following the latest Government advice, **we do not feel that coming to Girton to pick up your belongings constitutes ‘an essential reason for travel’** and we ask you to delay until the current restrictions have been lifted.

If you have left and your belongings are still in your room, we will keep them safely. In the unlikely event that we need to move anything, this will be done securely by College staff with notification to you. In the event that you are unable to retrieve your belongings before the end of the academic year, we will make arrangements to move your belongings to secure storage until such time as you can collect them.

8. Will I be charged for leaving my belongings in my room?

Not if you left before the University announced its move to the red stage of its COVID-19 planning (see above), and not if you have subsequently left and your belongings are packed and labelled and you have provided your tutor with an inventory.

9. I am an international student who lives out and cannot take my belongings home.

If you have now left and taken advantage of the offer previously issued to store your belongings in College, we will take care of them until you can arrange to collect them or have them returned.

10. If I have left items in College and am unable to collect them will the College send them to me?

If you are a final year international student who is not required to return to Cambridge to complete your degree we will do our best to return your belongings. The cost of shipping/post will normally be your responsibility.

11. Should I expect the Easter Term to begin as normal in April?

No. The University anticipates that teaching next term will all be done remotely.

12. Will there be exam preparation support?

- University details re. examinations can be found here: <https://www.cam.ac.uk/coronavirus/students>
- Your Director of Studies will be available for consultation via email.
- The Thrive Moodle site will have links to various resources to help you prepare for examinations and other Study Skills resources.
- It is expected supervisions will continue next term, albeit remotely.

13. What should I do if I am self-isolating in College?

You should self-isolate if you develop a new continuous cough and/or a fever (greater than 37.8C). If you are self isolating you must, as far as you can, stay in your room and not use shared kitchens. Everyone has been sent a self-isolation protocol. Please consult it.

In brief, if you have one of the listed symptoms you should seek medical advice via **NHS 111**, place a note on your door, saying "SELF ISOLATION DO NOT ENTER", then inform your Tutor and the Porters' Lodge (porters@girton.cam.ac.uk) who will ensure that everyone who needs to know does.

If you do not have one of the listed COVID-19 symptoms but are self-isolating for some other reason, please make sure that your Tutor is aware of this so that we do not require others to self-isolate unnecessarily.

Note that the College will not be able to provide nursing care if you do fall ill, so if it is possible to travel (not on public transport) and there are no vulnerable people in your household it is best to go home.

Public Health England guidance requires all those in a given 'household' (anyone with whom you share a kitchen and/or bathroom) to also self-isolate for a period of 14 days starting from the first onset of symptoms in the group.

If you decide to stay in residence, please be aware that, as the College has limited capacity to deliver food to self-isolators, we are asking you to identify at least two 'buddies' for support (delivering food, shopping etc). Please email accommodation@girton.cam.ac.uk with the contact details of your nominees. Due to the new self-isolation rules they will need to be people who do not share kitchen or bathroom facilities with you

As far as possible we will provide online advice, as well as tutorial and other support (though we cannot promise that it will always be your own Tutor that supplies it).

Please also check the counselling service website for online help:
<https://www.counselling.cam.ac.uk/news/coronanews>

14. I am encountering financial pressure (extra travel etc.) as a result of the Coronavirus situation. Can the College help?

Students suffering from financial hardship as a result of travel and other arrangements made in response to Coronavirus risks, please approach your Tutor and ask for support.

In addition to the College hardship fund (the Buss fund) the University is making the Special Hardship Fund available to all students who are in financial need due to Coronavirus. For Covid-19 related financial stress this is the ONLY University fund you should apply to; it now has a higher cap than before. An updated application form is available from your Tutor; please complete and return it to the Senior Tutor who will submit it on your behalf.

15. Will mental health services be available to me even when I am out of residence?

Your Tutor will be available for consultation via email and will endeavour to guide you as to what is available. The University Counselling Service is putting in place arrangements for counselling by telephone for appointments already made, and will be developing these plans. The College Counsellors are available for in person consultations as well as via Skype and Zoom.

In addition, the Thrive Moodle site has links to some helpful online resources. The University's student wellbeing pages have now been updated to include links to excellent COVID-related national guidance: <https://www.studentwellbeing.admin.cam.ac.uk/coronavirus>

16. What is the position regarding my tuition fees and funding?

For more information, please visit: <https://www.cam.ac.uk/coronavirus/students/all-students>

C. For Fellows

1. I live in College - can I stay in my accommodation?

Yes. Please inform the Porters if you go out of residence at any point

2. Can I continue to use my College Office / Teaching Room?

The government now requires everyone who can to work from home. You can of course access your office to pick up essential items.

Government protocols on travel suggest you should limit these journeys to the smallest number possible, and observe social distancing throughout

3. Will the SCR and FDR continue to be available to Fellows?

All social spaces in College are now closed.

4. What should I be planning in respect of supervisions?

It is likely that supervisions will continue but will be done remotely.

5. What is the University planning in respect of Easter Term lectures?

It is likely this will be done remotely via Moodle and Lecture Capture.

6. What is the University planning in respect of upcoming Examinations?

We have been told that this will be announced by 31 March 2020.

7. What will the arrangements be in respect of my tutorial students?

Tutors are still working and will be offering support to students as usual, although this is unlikely to be by face-to-face meetings.

8. What will the arrangements be in respect of students for whom I am the DOS?

Directors of Studies are asked to familiarise themselves with any and all adjusted examination arrangements put into place by the University to enable them to advise their students appropriately.

You are likely to have to keep in touch with students remotely, and for Easter Term, supervisions are likely also to happen remotely (see below re. Microsoft Teams).

9. Will College Committees be continuing as normal in the coming months?

All on-site events and most meetings have been cancelled or postponed.

We are preparing to enable a number of key committees, including Council, to meet remotely. Fellows are encouraged to sign up to Skype and Zoom and to familiarise themselves with Microsoft Teams to enable this.

D. For Staff

1. Will College be continuing to operate in the coming months?

There are still a number of students in residence, and the College remains open to members, albeit with reduced services and closure of public space.

2. Am I expected to come to work?

The government now requires everyone who can to work from home, unless they providing essential services (if this applies to you, the Junior Bursar or your Head of Department will let you know).

The College will be applying for support from the Government's coronavirus job retention scheme. We will be discussing the implementation of this scheme, and what this will mean for how and when you work during the shutdown period, with Heads of Department very shortly.

3. Now that schools are closed, will I be paid as usual if I have to take time off for childcare?

Please discuss with your line manager in the first instance; we aim to find creative ways to ensure that your income is protected.

4. Should we expect students to return and normal conditions to recommence at the start of the Easter Term?

No. We expect most students to be studying remotely. More information on how the College will operate in the coming months will be posted in due course.

5. What about my holiday entitlement?

Advice on this will follow.

6. What should I do if I develop symptoms of COVID-19?

As per Government guidance: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-stay-at-home-guidance/stay-at-home-guidance-for-households-with-possible-coronavirus-covid-19-infection>.

If you live alone, you should self-isolate for seven days. If you share accommodation with one or more other people, any of whom show symptoms, you must self-isolate for 14 days.

The symptoms of coronavirus include: a new continuous cough and/or a high temperature (see advice on identifying symptoms under 'For All' above).

7. How should we plan in my Department?

Please pay close attention to emails from your Head of Department and/or the Junior Bursar.

8. Sick Pay / Time off in Lieu

If you have developed symptoms of the virus, your absence will be treated as sick leave and you will receive sick pay in line with the [Sickness Absence Policy](#). For those with limited sick pay entitlement, sick pay may be extended. Please speak to your Line Manager.

If you are self-isolating but have not developed symptoms of the virus and are working from home you will receive normal pay. Please keep a note of your hours of work and activities.

9. Should I prepare to work remotely?

Yes. Everyone who can should aim to work from home unless otherwise notified as part of the job retention scheme.

10. I'm worried about coming to work and catching Coronavirus - what should I do?

Most employees are now working from home. We understand that those who are not may be feeling anxious about their health and the health of friends, family and colleagues. Our priority is to support you during this time. There are a number of things you can do:

- Follow the precautionary measures set out by the NHS and Public Health England.
- Discuss your concerns with your Line Manager to determine if it is possible to work from home, alternatively you can take Annual Leave.
- Consider seeking support through the College counselling services, if you feel that you need some additional support during this period.

11. Can a Head of Department stop someone who should be self-isolating from attending work?

In light of the employer's duty of care to other employees under UK Health and Safety Law, if an individual, who has been advised by a Medical Practitioner or under Public Health England/NHS guidance to self-isolate, comes to work, they should be instructed to stay away from the workplace.

A member of staff who refuses to comply with such an instruction is likely to be in breach of the duty of trust and confidence owed to their employer, as well as their individual duty under health and safety law to take care of themselves. If a Head of Department finds themselves in this position they should contact their HR Advisor immediately.

12. What should Departments do about recruitment plans?

You should postpone any new non-essential recruitment activity. Departments should not postpone any agreed start dates but may need to manage any induction process remotely.

13. What protocols are in place to protect staff required to work on site carrying out essential services?

We have a number of procedures in place to mitigate risks to staff and contractors required to work at Girton College/Swirles Court to provide essential services during the current health emergency. With daily updates to Government advice, we thought it would be helpful to summarise the key points in a format that staff can refer to easily, to avoid confusion.

We ask that you read this memo, retain a copy for reference and return a signed copy to the Junior Bursars pigeonhole at College. You must also make essential Sub Contractors aware of this advice as part of their RAMS.

- **Your health** is of paramount importance. You must not come to work if you, or anyone in your household have symptoms of Coronavirus. Please ring your Head of Department, or the Junior Bursar for advice in this event.
- Whilst at work, you must maintain advisory **social distancing** protocols, e.g. keep a minimum of 2 metres apart from your colleagues, and avoid being in the same room as a colleague, even at a distance, for longer than 15 minutes.
- **Wash your hands** thoroughly with soap, on arrival, frequently throughout the day and when moving between areas and wear gloves at all times, which will help you to avoid touching your face and potentially transferring the virus if present on surfaces. Sanitise your gloves regularly and especially when moving from one area to another, to avoid any potential virus transmission. Wash your hands immediately when you return home after work, and sanitise everything you touch in your car daily.

- If you share a computer or desk with other users (e.g. Lodge) ensure that you sanitise all touch points at the start of your shift.
- Best advice is to act all times as though you, and everyone you come into contact with, has the virus, and act accordingly.
- Areas where people are resident are emailed daily by the College Surveyor to relevant Departments. **You must check these lists daily**, to make sure you know if areas are occupied or unoccupied. Also, double check with the Lodge before accessing any area in case of last-minute updates.
- Areas where students and Fellows are living, are classed as households and you must not enter corridors, flats or houses where people are in residence, except to carry out essential maintenance. When carrying out essential maintenance, you must wear PPE (gloves, visor or goggles, mask, apron etc. as per your Departmental Risk Assessments for the tasks you are undertaking), maintain 2-meter distance between yourself and any resident, and if the task requires you to be there for longer than 15 minutes, ask the resident to move to another area while you work. If they do not comply, leave, and report the incident to the Lodge.
- **Do not admit anyone on to site**, however plausible, unless they are living here, or are carrying out a pre-arranged essential service. If in doubt – ask!
- Non-resident students are not permitted to access their rooms to collect their belongings.
- Fellows have permission to collect teaching materials from their offices, but only if this is absolutely essential. Please advise them to avoid touching surfaces wherever possible, and to keep their visit as brief as possible.
- The relevant, detailed Government advice at this [link](#) – if you think we can improve our compliance, please do let us know.