

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 (except those assisting students by agreement with the Senrio Tutor or Mistress's Office). Access to the Girton site is now through the Porters' Lodge; please park in Cloister Court.

Catering. There is a pre-ordered take-away service until Friday, and thereafter we will move to self-catering. The Lodges will have a stock of 'emergency' items for self-isolation. There will be more information soon on catering's new online advice forum.

If food is consumed in College, it is essential to observe distancing protocols, even if you eat in the gardens.

The Social Hub and Bar are closed; there are no Served Nights / Formals during vacations. Gyms and the pool are closed.

The MCR/study room at Swirles Court is closed.

Laundry facilities are open: do not congregate in them!

Study rooms are open as long as social distancing protocols are followed.

The 'F' corridor computer room is closed; computer and printing facilities on 'B' corridor may still be used, taking care over social distancing protocols.

Please note the recent communication regarding 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: keep them clean and tidy, eat meals in your room, thoroughly wash crockery and cutlery.

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.

5. Is there help in identifying 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 (see below, under 'for students' but 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=IwAR3h2LMvFvaWc03sugof4gsvDgDj-1ZU81X7gFikGcQUkPhyuw0P-ITmQ1U>

B. For Students

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

The University has moved to 'Red' in its Coronavirus planning and has advised all students to leave if they can. The College strongly encourages all students - both Undergraduates and Postgraduates – who can go home to do so, for the following reasons.

- Now the University is in the 'Red' phase of its contingency planning for Coronavirus it will affect the work you can do while in Cambridge. All buildings are closed; most staff are working from home. There will be no face-to-face teaching in the Easter term (it will all move online), and there will be no examinations in Cambridge
- A significant number of College staff need to self-isolate, some may fall ill, or have to stay at home to look after children if schools close. The College will not have the resources to provide the facilities and support offered in normal times.

- Foreign governments are closing their borders to non-nationals; international students may therefore find it increasingly difficult and costly to travel home if they do not go soon.
- As the Government introduces more stringent self-isolation measures, you may prefer to be with your family.

You should not, however, feel forced to leave College.

- If you are an international student for whom travel home is impossible, we expect you to stay at Girton.
- If you are self-isolating you may have to stay (see below).
- If going home would put you into direct contact with individuals who are vulnerable in any way (elderly relatives for example) or if family members are themselves self-isolating - you may choose to stay.
- If the College is your primary residence, you should stay.
- This is not an exhaustive list; we know there are other reasons why you may need to stay in College, and encourage you to discuss these with your tutor.

Those who stay in College should be aware that staffing levels will be hard to maintain, and that some students may be required to move rooms to enable self-isolation.

2. Should I stay in Cambridge if I am due to have exams in April?

No. The Vice-Chancellor has announced that there will be no examinations in Cambridge next term. Faculties and Departments will be working on the detail of their contingency plans for teaching and examination within common principles over the coming week. Your Faculty or Department will inform you of these details by 31 March 2020.

3. If I leave will it affect my residence requirements?

No. The Vice-Principal for Education has said that 'no student should be deterred from leaving because of concerns about residency requirements'. More details will follow soon, but there is no need to stay for this reason.

4. 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.

5. What effect will leaving have on my visa?

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

6. Can I leave my belongings in my room?

Yes, as long as they are packed neatly and labelled such that, in the event of a sudden alteration of circumstances due to Government or University requirements, they can be removed quickly and easily. Please send an inventory to your Tutor so we have a record of what has been left.

Given the University's announcements regarding teaching and examinations for Easter Term, it may be prudent to take your belongings with you if you can.

If you have already left and your belongings are still in your room, please be assured that they can stay there until you can safely retrieve them. 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, if the university stays on "red" we will make arrangements to move belongings to secure storage until such time as you can collect them.

7. 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 leave now and your belongings are packed and labelled and an inventory is sent to your tutor.

8. I am an international student who lives out and cannot take my belongings home at this time. Can I store them in College?

Yes, providing you arrange this with the College's Accommodation Manager. You will need to pack your belongings neatly into parcels that could be shipped if necessary, label them properly (name and home address), provide an inventory that confirms that there are no foods, liquids, or flammable items included, and deliver them at the agreed time. The College cannot take responsibility for any of the items you leave under this arrangement.

9. If I leave now, can I return to collect my belongings from my room later?

In principle, yes, by arrangement with the Accommodation Manager, though it will depend on travel restrictions imposed by the Government, and also on whether the College is open. At the moment ***we do not feel that coming to Girton to pick up your belongings is constitutes 'an essential reason for travel'*** and we ask you to delay until the current restrictions have been lifted.

When you or your parents/supporters do wish to retrieve your belongings, and as long as the party as a whole conforms to the College's Visitor policy, please notify accommodation@girton.cam.ac.uk so that we can make arrangements with the porters for access. Be assured that we will not give access to your room to anyone without prior notification from you

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 you 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?

We are awaiting a University statement on the conduct of exams next term. Whatever is decided, 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.

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).

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.

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.

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

All social space in College is 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?

We are carefully monitoring Government and University advice. Students who can travel have been encouraged to go home where possible. Some will need to stay, however, and we will support them to do that while we can. It is possible that some parts of the College will have to close at some point, and more details will be provided in that case.

2. Am I expected to come to work?

The Government now requires everyone who can to work from home, unless they providing essential services (in which case, the Junior Bursar or your Head of Department will let you know). Even then, you can only come to work if you are symptom free, are not part of a self-isolating households and agree to maintain social distancing at all times.

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 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.

If your line manager agrees that it is not practicable for you to carry out your normal duties from home, and you are fit to come to work, you may be asked to undertake alternative duties wherever reasonable, practicable and within your capabilities, in which case you will receive normal pay. In the exceptional circumstances that this is not possible, then your absence will be treated as paid leave by reason of self-isolation for coronavirus.

9. Should I prepare to work remotely?

Yes. Everyone who can should aim to work from home unless otherwise notified.

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.