

Guidance for students with permission to return to College accommodation from 4th July 2020 onwards.

Introduction

This guidance is for postgraduate research or other students who have been given permission to return to Cambridge, either under the [University's protocol for the return of postgraduate research students](#) or through other specific Departmental arrangements, and who intend to take up Girton accommodation or to use Girton facilities in coming months. **It relates to the current academic year (2019-20) only.** The government's current advice is that where you cannot work at home then you may return to the work place once 'COVID-secure' measures are implemented. As of 30/06/20 this means that those working in research labs are now able to return to Cambridge. Other groups of students are expected to return over the summer (including clinical medicine) and further updates on the re-opening of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences work spaces and [University libraries](#) are expected in coming weeks. This guidance also sits alongside advice from your Department or place of teaching or research, and you should check regularly for general updates on the [University's coronavirus webpages](#).

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 \(social distancing\)](#). Please read and align yourself with the Collegiate University's [COVID Community Statement](#) before your return. This brief statement of purpose emphasises our individual and collective responsibility in minimising risks, and maximising support, for students, staff and visitors.

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

- Stay alert to minimising the risks of virus transmission in all aspects of your life
- Work from home whenever you can
- Limit contact with other people outside of your household.
- Observe social distance when you go out
- Wash your hands regularly, and **don't** leave home if you, or anyone you live with, has symptoms (see below).

I. Important points to check before returning to Cambridge

I.1. Do you have Departmental and College approval to return?

The early return of some postgraduate research students is following 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 the [University protocol here](#)). Specific arrangements are in place for other groups, for example clinical medical students.. Your proposed return date must be notified to the Accommodation office at least 7 days in advance, together with confirmation from your department and your Tutor that you have permission to return. The Accommodation Manager will confirm room arrangements with you once this has been received. Do not travel to Cambridge without the relevant permissions. Your Tutor will also be able to offer or source advice and support if needed.

I.2. Do you have symptoms?

You can check your symptoms using the [NHS symptom checker](#). 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 susceptible (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. Furthermore, people with certain illnesses may be [at extremely high risk](#) of serious COVID-19 disease requiring them to 'shield' during times of high virus circulation. If you think you might be in one of these categories 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 and the College Nurse. From 01/08/2020 advice for clinically extremely vulnerable people will move in line with advice to those who are clinically vulnerable, because of the low level of circulation of the virus. In practice, this means staying at home as much as possible, and if you do go out, taking particular care to minimise contact with others outside their household and robustly practising good, frequent hand washing.

1.4. Have you planned your journey to Cambridge in line with PHE guidance?

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 consider all alternatives before using public transport. Note that it is a legal requirement to wear a face covering while on public transport in the UK. Finally, non-UK citizens should also check and comply with their home country's COVID-19 travel restrictions.

2. Households, isolation and quarantine

2.1. Ensure that you understand the 'household' system in your College.

If you are returning to College accommodation you will be accommodated as part of a household group. Each cluster flat sharing a kitchen at Swirles constitutes a 'household' under PHE guidance. 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. Make sure that you understand how this will be implemented (see below) and discuss this with your Tutor or the Accommodation Manager before you travel if you are unclear.

2.2. 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. A number of members of Colleges have kindly volunteered to help students who have not specified named supporters.

2.3. Have you arrived in the UK within 14 days of your planned return to Cambridge?

If so, [PHE guidance](#) requires that you self-isolate for 14 days, not leaving your accommodation except for specified reasons. The guidance allows for this self-isolation to be done in your own home (for UK citizens), by carefully segregating within a household shared with friends or family, or in other temporary accommodation. Please consider your situation carefully and discuss your planned arrangements as early as possible with your College. Many students renting private accommodation in Cambridge will be doing so with friends and so self-isolation in that household would be possible. However, College-allocated accommodation is not always with friends so

Colleges will work to offer or facilitate you finding non-shared accommodation for this 14 day period where necessary.

2.4. Arrivals from the UK or within the Common Travel Area:

Normally, you will be able to return to your Cambridge household direct from home. From 4th July 2020 it will be possible for student accommodation providers to receive arriving households and to provide shared facilities that are restricted for the exclusive use of the members of that household. This approach is based on risk assessment and is aligned with Oxford University, in liaison with PHE. However, it is essential that you 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 COVID (see above). In this case, follow the current PHE guidance: [Stay at home: guidance for households with possible coronavirus infection.](#)

Summary for postgraduates planning returning to Swirles Court July & August 2020

- 1) Read all the detailed University and government guidance above and check that you are eligible to return, having all the necessary permissions.
- 2) Contact the Accommodation Office accommodation@girton.cam.ac.uk to notify your return at least 7 days prior to your proposed arrival date, and enclosing:
 - a. Evidence of permission to return from both your department and your Tutor. No room will be allocated without evidence that you have full permission to return.
 - b. Details of where you will be travelling from, whether using public or private transport and whether you have returned to the UK within the last 14 days and the route you took.
 - c. Names of two self isolation supporters
- 3) The Accommodation Manager will let you know your room number and arrangements for segregation/self isolation if necessary
- 4) On the day: Do not travel to Girton if you are currently self isolating or isolating as a household because you, someone you live with or have had close contact with has symptoms of or has tested positive for Covid-19. In this case notify the accommodation office with a proposed revised arrival date following the isolation period.
- 5) On arrival: Observing social distancing, collect your door card from the Porter, who will check you in and issue you with current residence guidance. If being dropped off by parents/friends only one person will be permitted to help you move in and they may not enter the shared kitchen.
- 6) Email your Tutor, advising that you have returned,