Hughes Hall COVID-19 FAQs for students

Updated Tuesday 26th May to include information on collecting belongings and summer accommodation

University Information on COVID-19 (Coronavirus)

Please refer to the University webpages for up to date information and UK Government links on:

- teaching and learning, assessment, and research in Easter Term 2020
- health, travel, visa and immigration matters

Hughes Hall Information

1. Academic
2. Your Location
3. College General
4. Health
5. Financial Matters

1. ACADEMIC

What arrangements are in place for examinations?

- statement made by the Pro-Vice Chancellor Graham Virgo on 21 April 2020
- communications from your Faculty or Dept
- Your Graduate Tutor or Director of Studies

If you have a disability and have not yet disclosed it to the College Equality Officer, please email equality.officer@hughes.cam.ac.uk

I can’t study effectively at home; can I return to Cambridge for Easter Term?

Undergraduates and taught masters: No. If you can’t study effectively for the exams, you will be able to apply to delay your exams until the second assessment period, when the University re-opens for students – refer to University FAQs or your Tutor. Note that we don’t yet know when this second assessment period will take place. It is most unlikely to be before September 2020, and may be later.

Research students: Some supervisors are keen for their students to return. However, PhD supervisors have been advised by Schools and Departments that there is significant work to be done by all before PhD students can return to residence safely. You cannot return until risk assessments and social distancing measures are in place. Once your lab has met the relevant requirements you should consult the Head of Domestic Operations about your plans. You will be required to provide a letter from your lab manager or supervisor supporting your return. You will only be permitted to return once your Degree Committee, College, and Student Registry have all confirmed everything is in place.

Will my decision to leave affect residence requirements?

- NO, for BA (+ 4th yr), MAST, LLM/MCL, MBA/MFin, MMus and PGCE
- Those on other courses should apply for Leave to Work Away or Intermission
- See the Senior Pro-Vice Chancellor’s message of 16th March 2020, available here
2. YOUR LOCATION

Can I still go home, despite government advice not to travel?

In general, leaving the place you now live to stay at another home is not allowed. However, if you are returning to live back at your permanent home, this is permitted.

Please email your tutor to discuss your plans. If you live in college accommodation, please also copy in accommodation.manager@hughes.cam.ac.uk

International students should seek their home government’s support for repatriation as appropriate. Any student who receives this support may contact the Senior Tutor, who can provide them with a letter to help them with their travel.

How do I update my details, wherever I’m living now?

Please email tutorial@hughes.cam.ac.uk if your address or phone number changes.

Should I let the College know that I’m remaining in Cambridge?

YES. This is really important. Please complete the census when requested. Like other colleges we are working hard to provide core services for remaining students, and this may require collaborative work between neighbouring Colleges. So it’s vital to know who’s here.

Students living in private accommodation should also keep the College updated on changes to their situation. You are still a part of our community, and we will provide help or guidance on welfare and medical issues. This is particularly important if you think you are medically vulnerable.

3. COLLEGE GENERAL

Can friends visit me in College?

No. The main site and all other College rooms are closed to non-members. Also, you must not have visitors from outside your household in your room or kitchen, not even other college students.

Remember that contact with friends online and via social media is always possible, and it works! Try Skype, Zoom, Google Meet, MS Teams and many other free apps.

You may choose to exercise one friend who is not members of your household outside, away from the College, but you should always ensure you remain a minimum of 2 metres distance from them.

What facilities are available for those still in college?

The lockdown has impacted staffing and limited our on-site services including catering, housekeeping, maintenance, portering and nursing. However, many services remain available remotely via home working, including tutorial, nursing and pastoral support. If your tutor doesn’t reply within a reasonable time, contact tutorial@hughes.cam.ac.uk.

The Library and Dining Hall are closed following government guidelines. Other rooms remain open, but must be booked through the MCR booking system: MCR Clubroom, Pfeiffer Rm, Maletin Rm, Seminar Rm B, Rm 7 (MWB 1st floor) and Gresham Court Study Room. Students must comply at all times with the conditions that no more than 2 people occupy a room at any time and keep at least 2 metres apart.

Student COVID19 FAQs 26th May 2020
How does social distancing work in College?

Please read the Government advice about staying alert and safe.

Some students live in self-contained accommodation with its own kitchen, bathroom and toilet – or currently occupy a room in an otherwise empty shared house. However, if you share any of these facilities with other people then you should consider yourself to be in a ‘household’ with them. This is an important factor when interpreting the Government advice, especially where this refers to members of the same household. The core principles of the advice on social distancing are that you should only leave your room or household for very limited reasons:

- shopping for basic necessities, for example food and medicine, which must be as infrequent as possible.
- one or more forms of exercise a day, for example a run, walk, or cycle - alone or with members of your household. If you exercise with a friend (not from your household) then you should remain at least 2 metres distant from them.
- any medical need, to donate blood, to avoid or escape risk of injury or harm, to provide care, or to help a vulnerable person.
- employees travelling for work purposes, but only where you cannot work from home.

These reasons are exceptions - even when doing these activities, you should be ensuring you are 2 metres apart from anyone outside of your household.

The College gardens should be used responsibly by households and are closed to non-College members and visitors. Students may meet a friend from Hughes – but should maintain 2 metres distance unless they share a household. In practice, this means that you can, for example, read a book as long as you are 2 meters away from others. But you would not be able to share a picnic or play most games as it is not possible to do so without being too close - either directly or through shared items such as croquet mallets etc.

The College housekeeping team is putting additional effort into more frequent cleaning of high contact surfaces and door handles.

4. HEALTH

I am remaining in Cambridge and think that I am more vulnerable to more serious COVID-19 related disease. What should I do?

Make sure you have informed us. You can do this either through the census or directly by emailing the nurse nurse@hughes.cam.ac.uk or Deputy Senior Tutor (Welfare) Equality.officer@hughes.cam.ac.uk. Let us know if your previously reported status about any vulnerability to more serious COVID-related illness changes.

If you are unsure you can check the current PHE advice on vulnerable persons. A subset of these more vulnerable people are at greater risk of very serious COVID related illness. Check here to see if this includes you. This group should have received a letter from NHS with specific advice on how to shield from infection.
If you haven’t received a letter but think you should have done then you should contact your GP or NHS consultant’s office directly straight away and discuss their advice with the College as a matter of urgency.

Vulnerable students who find themselves in a ‘household’ isolation situation should take specific advice from the College Nurse or Deputy Senior Tutor (Welfare).

**If I stay in College and fall ill what help will the College be able to provide?**

The College will not be able to provide nursing care. Students should follow advice available online from NHS111. In an emergency call 999.

If you are unwell with symptoms of covid-19 you should email porters@hughes.cam.ac.uk as soon as possible or call on 01223 330484 or 07917535806 (porters mobile).

**What should I do if I am self-isolating?**

You should self-isolate for 7 days if you develop a new continuous cough and or a fever (greater than 37.8C). Public Health England Advice is available UK Government advice 'Stay at home: guidance for households with possible Coronavirus infection'. You must email or call the Porters Lodge on 01223 330484 or 07917535806 (porters mobile) – do not go along in person. You will be provided with a specific College information sheet to help you.

**You must remain indoors in their room to minimise the risk of infection to those around you.**

Do not go to visit public areas, and do not use public transport or taxis. You may not go out to exercise.

We shall check once a day, at minimum, on those we know are self-isolating. The MCR is arranging for deliveries of essentials to those who are isolating in college-owned accommodation. We are also concerned about the loneliness some students may feel so where possible we will also provide online advice/support, again assuming the staff are well enough.

**What should I do if I am household-isolating?**

All students in a ‘household’ must also isolate for a period of 14 days, starting from the day of first onset of symptoms in the group. ‘Household’ is defined by the College as those sharing the same kitchen or bathroom or toilet. Further PHE guidance is here. You have been contacted with the names of those students who are in your ‘household’. The Porters’ Lodge, Nurse and Tutorial Office can assist in communicating with other members of your ‘household’ if this is required.

Government advice on self-isolation states that you should remain at home. Do not go to visit public areas, and do not use public transport or taxis. If you are household-isolating you can still use the household kitchen but you may not go outside for exercise.

We shall check once a day, at minimum, on those we know household isolating (HI). The MCR is arranging for deliveries of essentials to those who are isolating in college-owned accommodation. We are also concerned about the loneliness some students may feel so where possible we will also provide online advice/support, again assuming the staff are well enough.

The 14-day period of household self-isolation starts from the day the first person in your household became ill, but individual household members who develop symptoms are free to leave the house again once 7 days has elapsed from the start of their own symptoms (with suitable hand washing and hygiene practices). Please discuss this with the College nurse to confirm the length of your isolation.
Will mental health services be available to me even when I am out of residence?

Your Tutor, or a duty Tutor, will be available for consultation via email. The University Counselling Service has made arrangements for counselling by telephone for existing appointments, and will be developing these plans. Do contact the college nurse if you need to discuss your counselling needs further.

5. FINANCIAL AND ACCOMMODATION MATTERS

I am in a situation of financial hardship, can the College help?

If students are suffering from financial hardship as a result of travel and other arrangements made in response to COVID-19 issues, please approach your Tutor and also complete both a College Hardship Application and a University Special COVID19 Hardship Application (forms available on the College website). Please note that applications for the University’s Special Hardship Fund require you to have researched College or other hardship support, and you are expected to have filled in the relevant field on the application form to have confirmed this.

I'm renting privately – what should I do?

Students renting privately will have a contract or licence with their landlord. You should comply with this contract, paying rent and giving notice as required, and should contact your landlord if you need to shorten the rental period for any reason.

The College remains responsible for supporting all our students as best we can, so you must complete the census regularly if you stay anywhere in Cambridge. Anyone in difficulty should contact their Tutor. In particular, please inform us immediately if you are ill or in self/household-isolation.

College Accommodation and related charges

I left Cambridge in March on the advice of the University, will I be charged rent for Easter Term?

No. The College will apply the policy for early termination of room licences for all students compelled to stay away from Cambridge due to the Coronavirus outbreak. This means that they will have their room licences terminated from 31 March 2020 and will not be charged any rent from 1 April 2020, irrespective of whether or not they were able to clear their rooms. There will be no refunds for students leaving prior to 1 April.

Will I receive a discount on my Easter Term rent charges?

We acknowledge that there continues to be some disruption to services in College accommodation caused by the Coronavirus outbreak. The College has agreed to provide a “Residents’ facilities grant” of £9 per week to all students in college accommodation. This will appear as a credit on Easter Term invoices.
I am currently living at College but plan to return home as soon as travel restrictions are lifted. Will I be charged rent for the whole Term?

Students who are planning to leave Cambridge should liaise with their tutors about leaving accommodation. Once we have agreed a leaving date with you, you will not be charged for the remaining period and will receive a rent refund as appropriate.

I have been moved to a different room at College, will I charged a higher rent?

No student will be required to pay a higher rent as a result of being moved to a new room due to COVID19. If your new room is in a higher band you will have a rebate on your invoice refunding you the difference between the rent for your new room and the rent that you would have paid in the room that you were previously in. If you have moved to a lower rent band, you will be charged the lower rate from 1 April.

Will I be charged Kitchen Fixed Charge for Easter Term 2020?

No, the kitchen has been temporarily closed and no KFC will be charged to any student for Easter 2020, irrespective of when the kitchen reopens.

Will I receive a rebate on Kitchen Fixed Charge for Lent Term 2020?

No, the kitchen was closed after the end of Lent Term 2020.

Can I return to visit, or to collect belongings from my college room during the lockdown period?

You may not return to visit.

We will let all students know when it possible to retrieve their belongings, commencing the week beginning 18th May. However, you will be required to book a specific slot with the accommodation team to ensure that this can be done safely. Please do not arrive without permission and note that card access to the premises is only possible for those who are currently in residence. All queries should go to rooms@hughes.cam.ac.uk. In the meantime, safety and security checks will continue across all College accommodation, and will include the removal of perishable items.

What will happen to my belongings whilst I am unable to collect them?

College staff are assisting with packing belongings during the lockdown period where the vacant room is require to accommodate another student. Otherwise belongings remain in situ in the rooms. Belongings are being stored on site ready for collection once restriction are relaxed.

The College’s student possession insurance continues to provide cover to all students in College accommodation: https://www.endsleigh.co.uk/faqs/question/coronavirus-update-block-possessions-insurance/

How can I collect my belongings once restrictions are eased?

The College will work with students to ensure that they are able to collect their belongings as quickly and safely as possible. Once lockdown restrictions are eased, students will be advised be email that they can return to College to collect their belongings. Access to College premises must be agreed in advance with the Accommodation Team via rooms@hughes.cam.ac.uk. Students will be permitted to remain on-site for a reasonable period to enable them to pack up and remove their belongings. Overnight accommodation
will not be available, other than in exceptional circumstances and with the agreement of both your Tutor and the Bursar.

We are aware that it will not be possible for some students to return to Cambridge to retrieve their belongings. Where possible we will assist students with the logistics of collecting belongings including assisting other nominated persons to access the College site to clear rooms and liaising with removal and courier companies.

I was unable to clear my room before I left. Will I be charged rent for Easter Term?

Students who leave during the Easter Term must take all their belongings with them. However, students who have already left Cambridge will not be charged rent if they were unable to clear their room.

I am experiencing difficulties in paying my rent as a result of Coronavirus outbreak. What can I do?

If you are experiencing any financial difficulties, please contact your tutor to discuss the situation. Your tutor can advise on how to apply for hardship funding and can also liaise with the Finance Team around revised payment schedules such as paying in monthly instalments.

Will I be able to remain in College accommodation over the Summer vacation?

Continuing students will shortly be invited to extend their contracts over the summer vacation. We will not be requiring continuing students to move rooms other than in exceptional circumstances.

Some students whose courses finish this summer may be unable to leave Cambridge. Extensions for students who have finished will be on a case by case basis: please email tutorial@hughes.cam.ac.uk with an outline of your situation.