

Doctoral College Coronavirus update  
**Your next academic year at the  
University of Bath**  
2 June 2020

This is one of a series of occasional updates for doctoral students from the Doctoral College – [previous updates can be found here](#). It's important to also check the [University's student advice](#).

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Dear student,

We know that many of you would like to know more about the shape of the next academic year. Our teams have been working incredibly hard, planning for different scenarios, in order to be able to welcome you back to University at the start of term. Thanks to this planning, we can now tell you a little more about our preparations for next year.

Our overriding aim will be to deliver the high quality doctoral experience you deserve, whilst ensuring we are doing so safely and in line with UK Government guidelines to tackle COVID-19. We will therefore be seeking to give you the best research experience possible, either on campus or online, and to enable you to work alongside our research staff, meet other students, and benefit from the skills and experiences that come with doctoral study at the University of Bath.

Although we cannot control all the eventualities related to this pandemic, we can and will make every effort to be flexible and ensure we can deliver strong support to you in a number of ways.

We intend to be open for the next academic year with students on campus, and we therefore expect to be welcoming returning doctoral students from 30 September 2020, where that is appropriate to their programme of research. We may phase the start dates for different groups on campus, however, depending on the Government rules to combat COVID-19 in place at that time.

You will, I'm sure, be keen to have the option of as much in-person supervision and support as we can safely deliver. With your supervisor or Director of Studies, you will need to agree the extent to which this will be possible for your particular project or programme, while allowing for observance of social distancing rules. Of course, we recognise that doctoral students have very different requirements and we will be working through the detail about what this means at a programme- and discipline-level in the weeks to come.

Recognising the importance of your professional development we have shifted much of our DoctoralSkills provision online, as well as accessing other/new online resources. These have already proved to be extremely successful, and so we will continue to develop new provision into the new academic year.

For those of you with a taught element to your PhD, or who are involved in teaching, we will be focusing on personal tutoring, laboratory work, peer-to-peer learning, and smaller group learning such as seminars. Preparations will be made to deliver any large scale teaching such as lectures and large workshops online in the first semester, if needed.

The Doctoral College will continue to work with your supervisors and Directors of Study to support you through your doctoral journey. Please continue to review the DC webpages <https://www.bath.ac.uk/departments/doctoral-college/>, which includes <https://www.bath.ac.uk/guides/coronavirus-advice-to-doctoral-students/> specifically for doctoral students.

I would also like to thank you for your patience over the last few months as we've tried to address the many varied issues that have arisen due to the situation. While we have endeavoured to keep you all up to speed with developments (through my emails to you, and our webpages and the weekly Doctoral Digest), we are also aware that it has often taken time before updates can be provided due to the complex decision-making processes in the background.

I encourage you to continue to raise issues – either directly with the DC or through the SU – to ensure that we can best serve you going forward.

We will be updating you further as our plans develop. Thank you for your patience and understanding in the meantime.

With best wishes,

Professor Jeremy Bradshaw, Pro-Vice-Chancellor (International & Doctoral)

Dr Cassie Wilson, Vice-President (Student Experience)