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Dear Students

In these times of remote working it's especially important for us to communicate regularly, so this week I am beginning a series of regular emails updating you on the latest news from the Doctoral College.

Don't forget you can also read our weekly news in the Doctoral Digest, sent from the DoctoralCollege@Bath.ac.uk address – if you don't receive this, please check your Junk Email folder so you don't miss these important updates.

Here are some of the issues we know are relevant to doctoral students this week. We don't have answers to all your queries at this stage, but we're aware of them and are working to find answers as soon as possible.

- **The pilot scheme for reopening labs on campus**
The pilot has reopened a few carefully selected labs and this will be rolled out. We want to reopen as quickly as possible, but we have to ensure safety for all concerned. Any further information on lab reopening will be sent to you by your Head of Department. Meanwhile, the Doctoral College is working with senior management to clarify some aspects (driven in-part in response to questions from yourselves) and we hope to provide some further details as soon as possible.
- **Returning to campus**
Alongside the labs pilot, the Doctoral College is seeking clarification from Faculties/School/Departments regarding likely dates when others may be able to return. The aim is for most people to be able to return by the 30 September, but of course this will be subject to government guidance and will take into account individual students' situations.

It is important to state that we continue to recognise that not all students will be able to return due to a variety of factors including their own health situation, those that they are living with (including with caring responsibilities), and some may require additional time before they feel they are able to return. In such circumstances, students who are unable to return immediately will not be penalised.

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- **International self-funding students who were told they're not eligible for Hardship Funding**
 Hardship funds are not controlled by Research Council rules, so everyone is eligible to apply. If you have any particular questions after reading <https://www.bath.ac.uk/guides/applying-for-the-university-of-bath-hardship-fund/> please contact Student Services.
- **Furlough for Post Graduates Who Teach (PGWTs)**
 Respecting the confidentiality of the individuals concerned, the Doctoral College does not have access to information about which PGs who teach have been furloughed. You can read more about the Furlough (CJRS) scheme at <https://www.bath.ac.uk/guides/coronavirus-advice-to-doctoral-students/> under the heading 'Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (CJRS)'.
- **Work for PGWTs in the next academic year**
 You will have seen the recent email about the planned reopening of campus for the new academic year. Now that the decision to reopen has been made, discussions around teaching are underway, including the requirements for online and class-based teaching. Once these have been established, the requirements for PG work will be better understood. Where teaching work is available, training and support will be mandatory as it is now. The Centre for Learning & Teaching (CLT) – who is responsible for university training to new PGWTs – are reviewing the training on offer in light of the possibility that students could need to deliver distance-based learning or support.
- **Self-funded students**
 We haven't provided a blanket "fee holiday" for self-funded researchers, as some students have been able to continue their research. Instead we advised students who couldn't continue to consider suspending their studies, to ensure that they are not charged further tuition fees, if that's appropriate for their circumstances. Any self-funded students who have already paid their fees for this year and subsequently suspend their studies will be refunded.
- **International students**
 We are speaking to Student Immigration Services about relaxation of requirements around Tier 4 visas and will be able to update you on this in my next email.
- **Budget freeze**
 As you may know, budgets have been frozen while the University reassesses its budgets in these unprecedented times. In a difficult financial position we had to make quick decisions and we'll update you further as soon as we're able.

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- **Belongings on campus that you need to collect**

We're speaking to Directors of Administration about access to campus if you need to collect belongings, and will update you as soon as we have more information.

If you have any further questions please contact your SU representative or email doctoralcollege@bath.ac.uk so we can direct your question to the relevant person.

With best wishes.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jeremy Bradshaw" with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Professor Jeremy Bradshaw

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