

Coronavirus (COVID-19)

Frequently Asked Questions

Last updated on 01/04/20

In line with the UK Government's latest advice about coronavirus (COVID-19) and in common with many other universities, the University suspended all physical face to face teaching (including laboratories, seminars and tutorials) and closed all non-essential sites from 5pm on Tuesday, 17 March 2020. Our libraries, Manchester Museum, Whitworth Art Gallery and Jodrell Bank, as well as most of our teaching and research buildings, are now closed for physical access. Certain essential services and facilities and halls of residence will remain open.

This decision has been taken to protect the health and wellbeing of our staff and students, which is our primary concern. Most staff will be required to work from home, if possible, until further notice. Please contact your line manager to discuss your work priorities and arrangements.

The University has [a dedicated and detailed website](#) which contains information on dealing with coronavirus (COVID-19), including links to NHS and government resources, which are guiding our approach and which colleagues should familiarise themselves with.

The most important thing that you can do is to follow [NHS advice](#) on how to avoid catching or spreading coronavirus. The University is taking coronavirus extremely seriously and we will continue to communicate with you and make every effort to ensure the safety of our staff and students during this period.

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Note about hyperlinks to the IT Support Portal/Knowledge Base: If you get an error message when selecting a link to an article or form in the list below, ensure you are signed into the IT Support Portal and then try the link again.

Training

- [I have a training course booked with Staff Learning and Development. Will this still go ahead?](#)

Travel

- [I am currently in an affected area but am unable to return to Manchester to start my classes/continue my research due to travel restrictions, what should I do?](#)
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Insurance

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- [Can I make a claim if my event or conference is cancelled?](#)
- [Can I make a claim owing to civil unrest or evacuation?](#)
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- [If I contract the coronavirus overseas, will I be covered?](#)
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Is the University campus still open?

In line with the UK Government's latest advice about coronavirus (COVID-19) and in common with many other universities, the University suspended all physical face to face teaching (including laboratories, seminars and tutorials) and closed all non-essential sites from 5pm on Tuesday, 17 March. Our libraries, Manchester Museum, Whitworth Art Gallery and Jodrell Bank, as well as most of our teaching and research buildings, are also closed for physical access. Certain essential services and facilities and halls of residence will remain open.

What do I do if I have symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19)?

If you are a member of staff or agency worker and feel unwell and you think that you may have the symptoms of coronavirus you should:

- Follow the [latest advice from the NHS](#)
- Inform your line manager so that they know you are unwell and unable to work (either from home or on campus if you are working in a part of the University campus which is deemed to be an essential service).

You do not need to report your absence to the COVI19Absence email address or telephone line as this system has now been suspended.

You should let your line manager know that you are unwell so that they can record your sickness absence in the usual way. You can find more [information about taking sickness absence](#) on StaffNet.

If you are absent due to a coronavirus you may self-certify for up to 14 calendar days for which you will receive full pay.

This is impacting on my mental health and wellbeing. What support is available?

We understand that this is a difficult time for everyone. If you feel that your wellbeing is being affected please do make use of our [support services](#), including the [Big White Wall](#), which is available to staff and students. The mental health charity, Mind has also published a [specific guide for coronavirus](#).

[Estates and facilities](#)

When will the University campus re-open?

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We will be in regular contact with you and we will let you know when buildings and other facilities will reopen and we will resume physical face to face teaching. We have already put in place arrangements to ensure that all staff and those working at the University will continue to be paid over this period.

These are challenging times and unprecedented arrangements, but we are all working very hard to protect our core activities of research and teaching.

[Can I get access to University buildings during this period?](#)

University buildings are now closed and staff cannot access them. The only exceptions are staff who have been identified by their Faculty, School or Directorate as 'essential' to maintain certain services and facilities, or who may be required to attend campus in the event of an emergency.

Faculties and Directorates have been asked to provide lists of staff who they believe are 'essential' and these fall into three categories: 1. Staff who have to come onto campus to undertake essential duties; 2. Staff who are on 'stand by' for emergencies; 3. Staff who require one-off access to a building.

If you have not been identified as falling into one of these three categories but feel you need access to a University building, you must contact your Head of School or Professional Services Director who will decide whether you can be given access or not. Access will only be permitted where your visit is deemed to be essential. Please do not attempt to access University buildings unless you have approval to do so. Your co-operation and understanding during this period is very much appreciated. If you are accessing buildings, remember to turn off lights as you leave.

[What will happen to post and deliveries during the closure of non-essential facilities on campus?](#)

The University post room closed on Friday, 20 March and mail is being collected from the sorting office on Mondays and Thursdays. For buildings which normally have mail delivered directly, e.g. Stopford Building and AMBS, special arrangements are in place. In Stopford Building, mail is being accepted by Shift Porters or Constant Security. In other buildings where there are no staff, Royal Mail are re-directing to the University post room or to Stopford Building. In cases where this doesn't happen the mail will be sent back to the sorting office and we have a new agreement with Royal Mail where they will hold mail for 66 days instead of the standard 18 days. Courier deliveries are being signed for and then sent to, and held, in the University post room. It would help if, where possible, orders and deliveries are cancelled. Arrangements are being made locally at Faculty level for business-critical deliveries.

We do not expect mail to be collected and any uncollected mail is being stored. If your role has been identified by your Faculty, School or Directorate as 'essential' and you are on campus, you can collect mail from the University post room located in the John Owens Building, Lower Ground Floor, between 10am and 10.30am on Mondays and Thursdays only.

We will review the volume of mail received each week and may reduce the collection to one per week if the volume reduces significantly.

Will car parking charges for staff be suspended during this period?

If you make a regular monthly payment to use a University car park, payments will be suspended from 1 April 2020 until further notice.

Barriers at Cecil, Dilworth and Charles Street car parks are currently in the 'up' position which means that if you're an 'essential' member of staff who needs to come on to campus to work you can use these car parks free of charge. Essential staff who usually use the NCP-owned Aquatics Centre car park (which is currently closed) can also use these University car parks during this period. Booth Street West Car Park is closed for security purposes.

Those University car parks which are open are also being offered to NHS staff to use free of charge.

Pay and expenses

Will I still receive my salary during this period of closure?

Pay for all members of staff on permanent and fixed term contracts: Pay will be processed as usual for all the above staff members aligned to the normal mid-month/end of month pay dates.

Pay for Graduate Teaching Assistants (GTAs): Pay will be processed as usual, GTAs are asked to submit their timesheets via the online timesheet system and these will be processed according to the usual timescales. Any school administrators unable to access the timesheet system, will need to send a completed [PR18 template](#) to their approver. The approver must then submit this via HRServices@manchester.ac.uk, confirming approval.

Please note: ONLY submit using the PR18 template, if you are unable to access the online timesheet system.

Pay for casual staff: Casual staff will be paid in the usual way on the hours submitted through timesheets.

Pay for agency staff: It is expected that agency staff who are able to work from home are doing so, and as such their pay through time sheet submission arrangements will not be affected. However as the University does not pay agency staff directly each staff member needs to ensure that there are no issues affecting their pay by their employment agency. To date we have not been notified of any issues affecting pay from employment agencies on our preferred suppliers list. If any agency workers are engaged in what are deemed to be essential services (e.g. security, residences, areas of catering, and some laboratory areas), then they may be asked or required to work on campus during the closure.

Will expenses claims still be processed during this period?

All expenses which were submitted to HR Services prior to Tuesday, 17 March will be processed. For expenses yet to be submitted, you can either scan or take a photograph of your expenses form and receipts and submit these, along with your electronic signature, via email to HRServices@manchester.ac.uk. For expenses to be processed and paid, authorising managers must send a separate email detailing their electronic signature for this to be validated. Authorising managers only need to do this on one occasion.

Staff with caring responsibilities

Now that nurseries and schools are closing or have closed, what is advice to staff who are juggling working from home and caring for children? What about colleagues who have other caring responsibilities?

We understand that balancing your caring responsibilities with working from home is going to be challenging. We know that you may not be able to commit to carrying out a full or 'normal' day of work in these circumstances and we thank you for everything you are doing to keep the University operating during this very difficult period.

If you are worried or feel you are going to struggle, please speak first of all to your line manager to see what options or arrangements can be put in place to help you. Please be assured that whatever arrangements you agree with your line manager, you will continue to be paid as normal during this period.

In rare circumstances where you and your line manager are not able to find a workable solution you can consider taking Special Leave – we have introduced an extended period of Special Coronavirus Leave which means you can take up to 14 days of paid leave to help in emergency situations. Please talk to your line manager and HR Partner about applying for this. If you do take Special Coronavirus Leave you will still be able to apply for up to five days of Special Leave for other reasons at other points in the year.

These arrangements may be reviewed if the campus does not fully reopen over an extended period of time.

What are the provisions where staff members have dependants who are in self-isolation and the staff member has caring responsibilities?

The member of staff should raise the matter with their line manager who should listen to any concerns/issues they have and discuss what options are available, which may include:

- Working from home for some or all of the time their dependent is in self-isolation and as agreed with line management. This should only be undertaken if it is agreed that the member of staff can reasonably care for their dependent whilst undertaking their work-related duties. We appreciate colleagues will do what they can to work at usual full capacity, but understand that this may not be possible, particularly within 'normal' working hours. Colleagues will continue to be paid as normal and if you have any issues or concerns you should discuss these with your line manager.
- Where this is not feasible, the general provisions of the [Special Leave Policy](#) will apply to cover the emergency and the member of staff will normally be given **paid 'special coronavirus leave' which has been agreed on a temporary and exceptional basis to supplement the Special Leave Policy**. This will not impact the application of the normal provisions under the Special Leave policy for other reasons throughout the year. Policies may be subject to ongoing review.

Due to coronavirus my child's nursery is closed/childminder is not working. How do I cancel or reduce my KiddiVoucher deductions from my pay?

If you don't have childcare needs at the moment, you can pause your salary sacrifice for the time being and do not have to contribute a minimum payment.

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The cut off date for the April payroll is Friday, 3 April, so you can log into your online account and reduce your order down to £0 for now. If you have any trouble, please contact the KiddiVouchers customer services team on 0800 612 9015 or email info@kiddivouchers.com. Please do not contact HR Services on this matter.

It's also worth you checking that you don't have any automatic payment instructions in place, which will automatically send vouchers to your childcare provider if you have a balance in your account.

If you choose to pause your voucher order, you will be able to re-join the scheme as long as it is within a 12 month period. For example, if you cancel April vouchers and wish to re-join the scheme in the future, you will need to do so by March 2021. Any surplus balance in your account will remain there for future childcare needs (up until your youngest child turns 15).

You can find further information [here](#).

Volunteering

I would like to volunteer either in the NHS or a charity related to the coronavirus support – am I ok to do this?

There are two ways in which staff can volunteer.

- The Government's new Emergency Volunteering Scheme places a duty upon employers to grant leave in blocks of 2/3/4 weeks for employees with specific health and social care skills, who wish to volunteer their time. Staff need to have been certified by an appropriate authority and should submit this certificate to their line manager in the first instance. You need to give at least three days' notice.
- We want to support you if you are considering other types of volunteering and have put together some guidance to help you decide the [best way to contribute](#).

Procurement

I need to purchase or pay for goods and services. What do I do?

Only essential services and supplies are to be purchased until further notice

From Friday, 20 March iProcurement will be available only for orders related to ensuring essential services remain operational. These will need to be pre-approved by a Senior Leadership Team (SLT) member or their immediate delegate or will not be converted into a Purchase Order (PO) or issued to the supplier. Please attach SLT (or immediate delegate) approval to the purchase requisition.

You must not:

- place any order directly with a supplier without a valid PO. Please do not use existing unfulfilled POs to purchase directly from suppliers. You will need to seek retrospective approval from your SLT member or their immediate delegate.
- use existing Call Off Orders to request goods from suppliers.

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If you have a call off order and prior arrangements with suppliers then as the requisitioner it is your responsibility/obligation to contact the supplier and cancel any scheduled deliveries unless you obtain pre-approval from an SLT member (as above) that the goods/services are required to ensure essential services remain operational.

For legal reasons there are almost no circumstances under which goods may be delivered to a personal address. Do not arrange this yourself and do not ask for an exception unless the member of SLT (as above) has pre-approved a case for so doing. Please forward the SLT member email approval with the request.

Teaching

What should Graduate Teaching Assistants (GTAs) do now that face-to-face teaching has been suspended?

Options for GTAs and the colleague to whom they report include agreeing that GTAs will deliver their scheduled, contracted teaching online where this is possible; however it is recognised that it will not be possible for some activities, like delivering lab-based demonstrations, to take place.

GTAs will be expected to deliver their scheduled, contracted teaching online where possible. In all circumstances, GTAs will receive payment for the work they were contracted and scheduled to undertake, whether it is possible to deliver this online or not.

In common with other staff, GTAs are entitled to sickness absence pay and Special Leave pay for their contracted periods in the same circumstances.

What is happening to exams and assessment this year?

The University issued a communication to all taught students on Friday, 20 March to update arrangements for this year. The email can be found on [My Manchester News](#). Schools are also in communication with students regarding more detailed arrangements at a local level.

I have a student on work placement, should they still be working?

Government guidance is very clear that all work should be done from home unless it is absolutely essential. As such, we expect that students on work placement should now be working from home, unless identified as an essential worker in healthcare services. If a company is not adhering to this policy, students should request that they be permitted to work from home and inform their academic School if there are any issues.

Disability Advisory Support Service

I'm a disabled member of staff – where do I get help and advice during this period?

The University's Disability Advisory Support Service (DASS) teams are currently working from home. They are continuing to carry out appointments via video link/phone, will be picking up and responding to voicemail messages and will continue to answer emails. However, they won't be able to pick up post so if

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you need to send any paperwork please send a scan or photo to dass@manchester.ac.uk If you need to book an appointment, please call 0161 275 7512 and leave a voicemail request. The team will call you back as soon as they can. If you're unable to use the phone for disability-related reasons, please send an email.

I am an international member of staff

Who do I contact with any immigration enquiries?

A helpline has been set up by the Home Office for international higher education staff and students if they have immigration queries related to coronavirus.

The helpline can only speak to the visa holder or applicant about individual cases. If a third party wishes to speak on their behalf, they must have the visa holder's permission.

Telephone: 0800 678 1767 (Monday to Friday 9am to 5pm) Calls are free of charge

Email: CIH@homeoffice.gov.uk

What about my Right to Work visa?

The Immigration Team in HR Services will continue to monitor current staff's Right to Work visas and will manage any extensions that are required. Visas will also be managed for any new staff starters that have a signed contract or have a confirmed start date. No other visa management will take place during this period. More information is available at on [the Government's website](#).

Recruitment

Can I still recruit staff?

All staff recruitment activity is now paused with the rare exception of strategic appointments which will require the approval of the Registrar, Secretary and Chief Operating Officer for Professional Services roles or Deans for Faculty roles. Any posts which are currently being advertised will continue to be advertised and will run until their closing date. A holding email will then be sent to candidates explaining that recruitment is paused. Recruiting managers are being asked not to shortlist applications or to carry out interviews during this period. No new advertisements will be posted until further notice.

Contracts

I have a new starter with an agreed start date during this period. Will their contract still be honoured?

Where new starters have been issued with a contract of employment and/or have agreed a start date, these will be honoured. Recruiting managers will be contacted regarding new starters that do not meet this criteria and therefore the processing of their employment will be paused. Recruiting managers will be asked to notify these prospective colleagues about the pausing of the recruitment process.

I have a new Graduate Teaching Assistant with an agreed start date during this period. Will their contact still be honoured?

Where a contract of employment has been signed and returned and we are awaiting start dates to be confirmed, these will be processed in the usual way. Any contracts of employment that have not been returned will be postponed until further notice.

I have a fixed term contract that is coming to an end. What will happen?

Where a fixed term contract is coming to an end then the usual process under the [Contracts of Employment Policy and Procedure](#) will apply. Where individual consultation is required this should be done virtually.

I would like to hand in my resignation. What do I do?

Resignations should continue to be sent to line managers and copied into HR Services to be processed. Staff leaving the University should return equipment at a time that is safe and appropriate for them to do so. This is likely to be when non-essential facilities have been re-opened.

Human resources

Are all HR Services available?

HR Services will scale back operations during this period. We will prioritise activities relating to processing Payroll and ensuring all current staff hold a Right to Work visa. The HR Services reception in the Simon Building will not be open but if you have enquiries please contact HRServices@manchester.ac.uk and we will respond as quickly as we can.

Is self-isolation counted as sick leave and therefore paid or will staff have to take unpaid leave?

Coronavirus (COVID-19)-related absences will not be counted for the purpose of any monitoring against trigger points under the (Management of) [Sickness Absence Policy and Procedures](#).

If you are absent due to self-isolation for suspected coronavirus you will receive full pay.

Where a member of staff **does not** meet the current criteria from Public Health England (PHE) that would justify self-isolating, then the line manager should listen to any concerns they may have and provide up to date information regarding the measures being taken by the University under the advice from PHE.

What if I'm ill but it's not coronavirus related?

You should let your line manager know that you are unwell so that they can record your sickness absence in the usual way. You can find more [information about taking sickness absence](#) on StaffNet.

If you are absent due to a non-coronavirus related illness you may self-certify for up to seven calendar days after which date you will need to obtain a fit note from your doctor and send this to your line manager.

How are we recording absence?

Normal sickness absence arrangements apply during this period and staff should report absence in accordance with normal reporting arrangements. You can find more information about sickness absence reporting during this period at our [Staff FAQs](#). There is no longer a requirement to report coronavirus related sickness separately using the COVID-19 email address or telephone line.

I need HR advice. Who do I contact?

[HR Partners](#) will be working remotely during the shutdown period and will be available for email for advice and support on all HR issues. Managers can also refer to [Managers Essentials](#) on StaffNet for information on dealing with day-to-day issues.

I have a question about my pension. Who do I contact?

The [Pensions](#) team will be operating on a reduced basis. Please contact the team via email in the first instance pensions@manchester.ac.uk.

I have a question for the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion team. Who do I contact?

The [Equality, Diversity and Inclusion](#) teams will be operating on a reduced basis. If you need to contact the team, visit the [Equality, Diversity and Inclusion StaffNet pages](#).

Do we know if any of our staff will be designated as 'key workers'?

The Government has published a list of what it considers to be [key workers](#). We are now working to identify and send letters to those members of our staff who have roles and responsibilities which comply with the Government's definition of a key worker. These colleagues may therefore be required to physically carry out their work on the University campus.

Decisions on what kind of roles these are will be based on our overall plans to ensure that our University continues to operate essential services during this period.

Having said that, the Government guidance includes, as its first principle that children should be at home: "if it is at all possible" and that parents who have been identified as key workers: "may be able to ensure their child is kept at home. And every child who can be safely cared for at home should be."

If you are identified as a key work but have concerns about how you're going to balance carrying out your role with your caring responsibilities, you should speak in the first instance with your line manager to discuss what options or arrangements can be put in place to help you.

Please be assured that whatever arrangements you agree with your line manager, you will continue to be paid as normal during this period.

I have bought a rail or bus travel season ticket – can I get a refund?

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The Government has said that commuters with rail season tickets will receive a refund if they stay at home during the coronavirus outbreak. If you have bought a travel season ticket yourself you should contact the company you bought it from directly to claim a refund.

If you have purchased your season ticket using the University's interest free season ticket loan scheme, this involves the University buying your ticket on your behalf and you paying a monthly amount from your salary to cover the cost of your season ticket.

In these cases you will need to:

- Scan or take a photograph of your ticket and send this to HRServices@manchester.ac.uk. You should then post your ticket back to the travel provider using the postal address they provide.
- If you have a smartcard ticket there is no need for you to send a scan or photograph of your smart card to HR Services, just post your smart ticket to your travel provider.
- In all cases, please email HRServices@manchester.ac.uk confirming that you have posted your ticket/smart card back to the travel provide and in this email give your name, staff ID number and ticket/smart card reference number. As soon as HR Services receives this confirmation from you they will ensure that deductions from your salary stop as of that date.

The HR Services team will then notify your travel provider that the ticket is cancelled so that the travel provider can give the University a refund. Please note that given the current circumstances it will take longer than usual for this refund process to be completed.

The sooner you are able to carry out the process outlined above, the sooner colleagues in HR will be able to progress with gaining a refund from travel companies and be able to stop deductions appearing in your salary.

Colleagues in HR Services are contacting all staff who have bought a travel ticket through the interest free loan scheme providing the above details but if you have any questions in the meantime please email HRServices@manchester.ac.uk

The rules for the Annual Season Ticket Loan Scheme state that I can only apply once a year. As I cancelled my ticket due to the current situation, will I be able to register again when things get back to normal?

Yes, due to the exceptional circumstances, you will be able to re-join the Annual Season Ticket Loan Scheme. Please make sure that you apply as soon as possible to returning to the University. It's likely that there will be a large number of requests to process at this point so your patience will be appreciated as applications will be treated on a first come first served basis. Please email HRservices@manchester.ac.uk for further information.

I work in the Professional Services (PS) and am on a fixed term contract which is due to come to an end soon – what will happen to me if I'm unable to apply for jobs as a redeployee whilst staff recruitment is suspended?

These are unique and unprecedented times which mean that we have had to pause staff recruitment with immediate effect, apart from in very rare circumstances if a strategically important appointment needs to be made. Any posts which were being advertised on or before Tuesday, 17 March will continue to be

advertised until their closing date. Anyone who has applied for these jobs will be sent a holding email to explain that recruitment is now paused and no shortlisting or interviews for these jobs will be carried out.

PS colleagues on fixed-term contracts will continue to work – the majority from home - until the end of their current contract. It is expected that most contracts will not be extended beyond this point and the existing process under the [Contracts of Employment Policy and Procedure](#) will apply. Where individual consultation is required this will be done virtually. Only in rare circumstances where a role is considered to be of strategic importance to the University will extensions to fixed term appointments be approved. This approach applies across central and Faculty PS teams until further review at the end of this academic year.

For colleagues working on externally-funded research projects, where a new award requires the appointment of a new PS staff member, recruitment should be deferred in line with the funder's position on start and finish dates for recent awards. Where funding is in place for the extension of the fixed-term contract of an existing PS staff member, and the project is (and will continue to be) minimally disrupted by the coronavirus situation, permission may be granted more frequently. Only in very exceptional circumstances will consideration be given to extending contracts for these staff members where full funding is not in place.

[I am an academic member of staff who is on probation – how is my probation period affected by the current suspension of face-to-face teaching and closure of non-essential facilities on campus?](#)

The [Probationary arrangements for newly appointed academic staff](#) remains unchanged and academic probation will remain in place. This should be managed in line with existing policies and procedures however contact between members of staff and their probation supervisor and mentor will have to take place virtually rather than face-to-face.

For those staff in their third year of probation, confirmation in post can be decided by the School Promotions Committee if the individual has met their objectives, in line with the policy. For those staff in their third year of probation who have not met all objectives and would in normal circumstances have their period of probation extended into a fourth year, this will be decided by the School Promotions Committee, in line with the policy.

For those staff in their fourth year of probation, confirmation in post can be decided by the School Promotions Committee if the individual has met their objectives, in line with the policy. For those staff in their fourth year of probation who have not met their objectives the School Promotions Committee can decide to decline confirmation in post.

Individual members of staff will continue to have the rights of appeal as set out in the procedure and appeals will be dealt with by the Faculty Promotions Committee.

In cases where individual members of staff, at any stage of probation, are unable to work on their objectives, for example if they are involved in supporting the NHS, or if they are unable to carry out work without access to University facilities, a decision can be taken by the School Promotions Committee to suspend the probation, in the same way as would be the case for maternity leave for example, in line with paragraph four of the [policy](#). Where this is the case the probation will be suspended for a defined period of time which should be confirmed in writing.

I'm a Professional Services member of staff who is currently on probation. How does the current situation affect my probation?

The probationary review processes for Professional Services staff remain unchanged and should be managed wherever possible in line with existing timetables, however, contact between members of staff and their line manager will have to take place by Zoom, Skype or similar, rather than face-to-face.

In cases where individual members of staff, at any stage of probation, are unable to work on their agreed objectives or are unable to undertake remote working on an effective basis during the period of campus closure, then the probation period will be paused until such time as it is possible for the colleague to work on objectives. Such arrangements should be confirmed in writing by the manager. The remaining period of probation will resume as soon as reasonably practicable. In some cases it may be possible to do this whilst working from home is in place, although in others it will not be feasible until there is a resumption of normal working arrangements following the full reopening of the University campus.

The Sugden Centre is closed so how do I pause deductions from my pay until it reopens?

HR Services will be automatically deferring all Sugden Centre deductions until Thursday, 30 April 2020. This will be reviewed mid-May to see if this needs to be extended.

Annual leave and special leave

Can I still take annual leave during this period?

Yes, it's important that colleagues have the opportunity to take a break from work during this period, even if you've had to cancel your holiday plans given the latest Government advice stay at home and away from others. To help you maintain a healthy work-life balance, you're strongly encouraged to take any pre-booked annual leave you already have planned and to carry on booking annual leave in the same way that you usually would.

You may have read in the media that the Government has announced that rules on carrying over annual leave are to be relaxed to [support key industries during the COVID-19](#) period. At the moment there are no plans to increase the amount of annual leave colleagues can carry over at the end of the leave year. This means that a maximum of five days of annual leave (or the pro-rata equivalent) can be carried over into next year's annual leave allowance. We expect all staff to take leave to help ensure their wellbeing during this difficult period unless there are exceptional operational reasons why they are unable to. Only staff who are unable to take annual leave because they are critical to delivering essential services during this period, or who are unwell with coronavirus for an extended period of time, will be eligible to carry over more than five days of annual leave and this would have to be following discussion and agreement with their line manager.

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If you have resigned and intend to leave the University, it's important to remember that you may be required to take any, or all, of your outstanding leave allowance during your notice period.

All colleagues are also entitled to an additional two days of paid annual leave over Easter on Thursday, 9 and Tuesday, 14 April 2020. These two extra days will be treated as two additional 'University closure days' so will be in addition to your annual leave entitlement. The small number of essential support staff who are required to work on these days will receive the same level of pay as they would for working on the Public Holidays of Good Friday, Easter Sunday and Easter Monday.

If you work part-time or are an agency worker due to be working on either or both of these dates you will receive one or two days paid holiday. If you work part-time or are an agency worker and not due to be working on either or both of these days, you won't be eligible for payment or time off in lieu.

[Can I use paid Coronavirus Special Leave in smaller chunks, such as half days, or do I have to take it all in one go over 14 consecutive days?](#)

Our Coronavirus Special Leave policy has been designed to supplement our existing Special Leave policy and means that you can apply to take up to 14 days paid leave to cover any coronavirus related emergency. Whilst Special Leave is usually taken in full days, we recognise that given the current circumstances we need to be more flexible to help support colleagues and therefore you can take half days if that is more useful to you. However you use Coronavirus Special Leave, this won't affect your ability to apply for Special Leave for other reasons throughout the year, however please bear in mind that these policies may be subject to ongoing review.

[Working from home](#)

[What options are available for connecting to University services from home?](#)

There are two options for connecting remotely:

1. Using the GlobalProtect Virtual Private Network (VPN)
2. Via Remote Desktop connection.

If you only need to access your University email or personal network storage (P: drive), you can do this via the web:

- [Outlook Web App](#)
- [P:Drives on the web](#)

[Do I need to set up working from home if I have a University managed laptop?](#)

No. If you have a University-managed laptop you are most likely already setup to work remotely using the GlobalProtect VPN an 2-factor authentication from Duo, and shouldn't need to do anything more.

[How do I set up working from home using the GlobalProtect VPN?](#)

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Most University services can be accessed via the web using the GlobalProtect VPN and 2-factor authentication from Duo. You'd need to ensure that your work is stored on a University network drive such as a 'P:Drive' to be able to access it. If you already have the Microsoft Office suite installed on your personal computer, then this may be the best option for you.

You will need to:

- [Install and connect to GlobalProtect](#)
- Ensure none of the files you require to access are saved on your computer's hard drive. Read [Locate and backup files saved locally](#)
- Ensure you know the file paths for your P: drive and shared/research drives. Read [Find the path of a shared area/drive](#). The P: drive location for all staff and students is \\nask.man.ac.uk\home\$
- Connect to ('map') [shared network drives](#).
- Access your email via the Outlook desktop application or Outlook Web App

Detailed information is available in our extensive "Working remotely at The University of Manchester" downloadable guide:

- Read: [Working remotely at The University of Manchester – A guide from IT Services](#)

How do I set up working from home via Remote Desktop connection?

Once set up you can use your personal computer to connect to your University-managed computer and have access to all of your programs, files and network resources as though you were accessing your University computer in person. We have streamlined the setup process so that in most cases you do not need to call the IT Support Centre but can instead self-serve using the Software Centre and WakeIT service on your University computer.

While on campus, you will need to:

- Go to the Software Centre and install the Remote Access Setup application. This will set up your University-managed computer so that you can access it remotely
- Register your University-managed computer on the [WakeIT service](#)
- Reboot your University-managed computer and ensure that it's kept on before you leave

Note that you do not need to contact the IT Support Centre to perform the above steps.

When working remotely, you will need to:

- [Install and connect to GlobalProtect](#) on the computer you are using remotely
- Connect to your computer via [Microsoft Windows](#), [Apple macOS and iOS](#), [Linux](#) or [Chromebook](#)

Detailed information is available in our extensive "Working remotely at The University of Manchester" downloadable guide:

- Read: [Working remotely at The University of Manchester – A guide from IT Services](#)

What tools are available for communication and collaboration?

IT Services support the use of [email](#), [Skype for Business](#) (Lync if you are on Windows 7), and [SharePoint for internal collaboration](#). BT conferencing is available for voice calls if you need to involve people external to the University. Note that there are charges to the University for using the BT conferencing service, and setup instructions are available in the [Working Remotely Guide](#). Media Services have also extended their licence for the [Zoom video](#) conferencing tool so that all staff can use it.

How do I get set up for Skype for Business?

Skype for Business is already installed and setup on most University managed computers – you can use it to make video and audio calls, and exchange chat messages with other members of staff and postgraduate research students.

Skype for Business is only available on a personal computer if you are connected to your University computer via remote desktop connection.

There's more information about Skype for Business in the [Working Remotely Guide](#), or in the [Skype for Business Knowledge Base article](#).

Can I use Zoom or PowWowNow for conference calling?

Zoom is a video conferencing tool that can be used if one of the above are not suitable. Media Services in The Directorate of Estates & Facilities have extended their existing educational license used for the central Video Conferencing service. Now every member of staff at the University has access to a professional license with Zoom. This gives the ability to host meetings of unlimited length and of up to 300 participants at a time. Visit [Media Services' Zoom information page](#).

The PowWowNow conference calling tool is not a supported or free service and we recommend you do not use it. As a premium phone service, the user is personally billed for any charges.

Can I get Microsoft Teams?

Microsoft Teams, part of [Office 365](#), is not yet a fully supported service. New users or new Teams cannot be added at this time and any requests to do so will not be progressed. If you've already got it as an Early Adopter you can continue to use it but keep in mind that only a limited number of staff have it. Teams is only used for internal collaboration within the University.

Can I get a laptop?

Due to the evolving situation, we are currently not able to process any new requests for laptops. As part of their contingency planning, Faculties and Professional Services have started a process to identify any critical roles that require a laptop device where this is not yet available and will plan to fulfil those requirements where possible.

Can I take my desktop computer home?

No. You must not take your University-owned desktop computer home. It is not supported and will not work. You can, however, take your monitor, mouse or keyboard with you, if it is safe to do so.

I need help setting up my computer at home – who can I contact?

Please refer to the [Working Remotely Guide](#) in the first instance, but if you cannot find an answer to your question there, then contact our IT Support Centre either online through the [IT Support Portal](#) or via telephone on +44 (0) 161 306 5544.

Can I buy equipment to enable me to work from home and claim for these items through expenses?

No, the University's expenses policy does not cover the purchase of items such as screens, laptops, desks and chairs. It is important to note that staff making purchases like these will not be reimbursed. If you are concerned that you don't have the appropriate equipment to enable you to work from home from either a health and safety or occupational health perspective, please contact your line manager in the first instance.

Only essential services and supplies are to be purchased until further notice. From Friday, 20 March iProcurement will be available only for orders related to ensuring essential services remain operational. These will need to be pre-approved by a Senior Leadership Team (SLT) member or their immediate delegate or will not be converted into a Purchase Order (PO) or issued to the supplier.

For legal reasons, there are almost no circumstances under which goods may be delivered to a personal address. Do not arrange this yourself and do not ask for an exception unless the relevant member of SLT has pre-approved a case for so doing. Please forward the SLT member email approval with the request.

Training

I have a training course booked with Staff Learning and Development. Will this still go ahead?

As many training courses and learning materials as possible will be made [accessible on StaffNet](#) for colleagues to be able to invest in developing their skill set during this period. All training events that require delegates to attend will be postponed.

Travel

I am currently in an affected area but am unable to return to Manchester to start my classes/continue my research due to travel restrictions, what should I do?

If you are currently in an affected area, but unable to return to Manchester for any reason, please contact your School or Faculty Support Office/Postgraduate Research Office, Academic Adviser/Supervisor (or line manager for staff) to let them know of your situation and ask for advice on best next steps.

It may be that some study/work/research can be undertaken remotely or that you can apply for mitigating circumstances, this will depend upon the programme of study/research project. We have developed [detailed guidance on mitigating circumstances and academic support](#).

I am planning a trip abroad what should I do?

All non-essential travel should cease. We recognise however that exceptionally a number of projects will need to continue (subject to appropriate risk assessment) and these must be agreed with your Head of School.

I am worried about my visa status. What should I do?

The University of Manchester

A helpline has been set up by the Home Office for international higher education staff and students if they have immigration queries related to coronavirus.

The helpline can only speak to the visa holder or applicant about individual cases. If a third party wishes to speak on their behalf, they must have the visa holder's permission.

Telephone: 0800 678 1767 (Monday to Friday 9am to 5pm)

Calls are free of charge

Email: CIH@homeoffice.gov.uk

Should I purchase refundable or non-refundable air/hotel fares?

All non-essential travel should cease. We recognise however that exceptionally a number of projects will need to continue (subject to appropriate risk assessment) and these must be agreed with your Head of School.

I would like to travel to abroad, what should I do?

All non-essential travel should cease. We recognise however that exceptionally a number of projects will need to continue (subject to appropriate risk assessment) and these must be agreed with your Head of School.

I am a member of staff and Key Travel is not letting me book travel.

All non-essential travel should cease. We recognise however that exceptionally a number of projects will need to continue (subject to appropriate risk assessment) and these must be agreed with your Head of School.

Is there a travel ban in certain areas owing to coronavirus?

Please visit the [Foreign & Commonwealth Office \(FCO\)](#) for the most up-to-date travel advice.

All non-essential travel should cease. We recognise however that exceptionally a number of projects will need to continue (subject to appropriate risk assessment) and these must be agreed with your Head of School.

I've booked a trip to an affected area, what should I do?

All non-essential travel should cease. We recognise however that exceptionally a number of projects will need to continue (subject to appropriate risk assessment) and these must be agreed with your Head of School.

How is local public transport being affected?

[Transport for Greater Manchester](#) is providing regular updates in line with the latest Government advice.

How do I make an insurance claim?

If you wish to submit a claim for University insurance, please contact the [Insurance Office](#) within 30 days of the date of the incident and ask for a claim form.

To support your claim, you must also provide evidence such as a receipt of purchase or payment, medical or police report, cancellation notice from a third party organisation and written evidence of any refund sought.

All claims are assessed by the insurers based on the evidence and supporting information provided and on a case-by-case basis. Personal data (including sensitive information) on the claim form is used by the insurance company but may also be shared with other relevant personnel in the University if required.

Can I make a claim if the FCO advises against travel?

You can make a claim for the cancellation of a trip if the FCO advises 'against all travel' or 'against all but essential travel' to your intended destination, as long as the advice wasn't in place when you booked the trip.

In the absence of FCO advice, you will not be covered if you cancel your trip. You should continue to monitor FCO advice and speak to [Key Travel](#) regarding your travel arrangements.

Can I make a claim if I'm unexpectedly ill?

If you need to cancel a trip due to illness or injury, you will be covered as long as the illness or accident wasn't from a pre-existing condition or due to reckless behaviour.

Can I make a claim if my event or conference is cancelled?

If an event is being cancelled by the organiser and the primary reason for your travel no longer applies, you will be insured as long as you have cancelled all your travel arrangements and sought refunds from all parties. You must retain all written correspondence as evidence and supporting information when submitting your claim.

Can I make a claim owing to civil unrest or evacuation?

If you are travelling to an area and there is a warning from FCO for British nationals to return to the UK, you should seek assistance from [Key Travel](#) to help you to re-arrange your travel. Insurance will cover out-of-pocket expenditure and may help you leave the area if you are unable to get assistance from Key Travel or any other source, such as the British Embassy or consulate.

Can I make a claim owing to an overseas government travel restriction?

The University of Manchester

If you cannot go ahead with your planned trip due to travel restrictions imposed by an overseas government, but there is no FCO advice against travel to that country, unfortunately, you will not be covered for the cost of cancellation.

If a lockdown is imposed by an overseas government while you are in the country/area, and you cannot return home as planned, you should contact [Key Travel](#) immediately to make alternate travel arrangement. You will be covered for additional accommodation and transport, but not food.

Can I make a claim owing to the collapse of an operator, including flights booked with Flybe?

There is a clause in the travel policy which excludes claims made as a result of the default of any provider of transport or accommodation. If your trip is affected by the collapse of an airline or accommodation provider, including the cancellation of flights, you will not be covered.

Can I make a claim if I no longer wish to travel, including trips planned for later in the year?

You can claim for the cancellation of a trip if the FCO advises 'against all travel' or 'against all but essential travel' to your intended destination, as long as the advice wasn't in place when you booked the trip. In the absence of FCO advice, you will not be covered if you cancel your trip. You should continue to monitor FCO advice and speak to [Key Travel](#) regarding your travel arrangements.

If you cannot go ahead with your planned trip due to travel restrictions imposed by an overseas government, but there is no FCO advice against travel to that country, unfortunately, you will not be covered for the cost of cancellation.

Likewise, if you wish to cancel your trip due to personal reasons such as clashing with other commitments, or at the request of your line manager, you will not be able to make an insurance claim.

If I contract the coronavirus overseas, will I be covered?

If you need to be quarantined or hospitalised overseas while on University business, emergency medical costs will be covered, and you will be able to make a claim for any further costs incurred.

I am aware that FCO has changed their advice to 'against all but essential travel' to the country that I am currently in, and my School has advised me to leave. Will I still be covered if I choose to stay?

The FCO advising against all but essential travel to a country is not the same as advising everyone to leave a country. The insurers will assess your claim and provide cover depending on which section of the policy your claim applies to. You will still be provided with medical coverage if you chose to stay.

We are holding a conference in Manchester. Is there any University insurance to cover the loss if the event has to be cancelled?

We don't have an event cancellation policy, so there is no cover for cancelling an organised event.

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