



## Dear University Executive Board,

We are thrilled to hear that the University has taken the decision to offer students in halls accommodation a temporary halls fee waiver following our requests to do so at Major Recovery Team last week and the previous letter we sent to members of the executive board at the beginning of the year. However, we do not think this action alone is sufficient compensation for the student body.

We are writing to you as elected representatives of the student body to outline demands that we have wanted to implement to help mitigate the issues the COVID-19 pandemic has made to the Reading student community.

The yearlong disruption to our student community has been extraordinary in nature, such as two national lockdowns; disruption of teaching & learning; lack of face to face lectures; and a significantly impacted in-person student activities. Given the challenges of online learning, limited access to university facilities, and that students are now discouraged from returning to campus, we hope the University of Reading will acknowledge that this was not a normal year and requires an extraordinary response by both the University and RUSU.

### **Our Demands**

#### **Tuition**

Due to the fact that students signed up for a 'blended learning approach' and received very little contact time, we are asking the University to refund students on part of their tuition fees (£9,250/a year). Should the University be unable to do this, we ask that you please explain your reasoning to the student body. Furthermore, we want the University to help RUSU lobby government to adapt student loan repayment schemes for students who have been affected by the pandemic, so they are not paying the same amount as other year groups who have not experienced the same detrimental circumstances. This issue is further exacerbated amongst international students and postgraduate students who are paying a significantly higher amount.

#### **Private Accommodation**

We are asking that the University aid RUSU in lobbying private landlords and other stakeholders so that students in private housing can receive their money back on their rent. As you requested, students have only come back if it is "absolutely necessary", meaning there are still plenty of students who are at their permanent residence and have not returned to Reading, yet are still paying rent.

#### **No Detriment Policy**

We ask the University if they would consider implementing a safety net that is similar to that of last summer, with the intention it be adapted to cover more students. If this is not possible due to a range of reasons outlined by your senior colleagues, we wish to work together to implement a series of measures that students who have been affected by this most recent lockdown would be able to use in order to ensure they're not adversely affected. We ask that the student voice be recognised should these measures not be satisfactory.

#### **Student Experience**

As captured by the 'Student Covid Review', 73% of students are unhappy with the overall experience they have received from this academic year. A large part of the university experience is a chance to make friends, celebrate accomplishments and have an all round active social experience. For this reason we ask that the University make promises in writing that all planned graduations will go ahead when it is safe to do so and they will go above and beyond to deliver on the social experience for students once the pandemic is over. Additionally, we ask for a statement of recognition from the University demonstrating the negative impact the pandemic on the entire student experience.

**In Closing:** We ask the University to formally respond to these requests as soon as possible, so this may be communicated back to the students in the first possible instance. We want to keep them informed of your approach to mitigating the difficulties arisen from this pandemic in ensuring the student experience is the best it possibly can be.

Rachel Wates  
Diversity Officer  
Officer

Bandy Karki  
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Rachel Osborne  
President

George Ingram  
Education Officer

Alex Rose  
Activities

**RUSU Officer Team 20/21**