



An Update from your RUSU President and Education Officer

Dear Students,

We wish a Happy New Year to the student community at Reading. We know this isn't the start to 2021 we all wanted, but we hold a lot of hope for the near future. We're back up and running to ensure that your wellbeing and student experience is the best it can possibly be during these challenging times.

Following government guidance and the new lockdown restrictions in England, RUSU will be operating with a digital-first approach. We have endeavoured to keep as many of our services functioning as possible and have provided everything that we can remotely and virtually. This includes our [Advice Service](#), [Representation](#) and [Student Activities](#).

Physical RUSU Services

Physical RUSU Services such as reception and Mondial, will be closed this week. But don't worry - you can still get your bagels; franchises within the RUSU building, with the exception of UniCuts, will be open during usual hours. Mondial will be open for takeaway only next week, 10-4 Monday-Friday, and will be reviewed on the 25th January. The Study will reopen on Monday 11th Jan, 8-6 Monday-Friday.

For up-to-date information from the University, including advice from the NHS and the Government, visit their [Essentials page](#).

Welfare

We are working hard to make your student experience the best it can be, and we must continue to come together as a community and support each other the best we can. Your RUSU Welfare Officer is also working closely with Wellbeing and Counselling services at the university, the RUSU Advice Service and Student Minds to help champion positive wellbeing and would signpost anyone struggling with their mental health at present to the [RUSU Welfare Directory](#) in the first instance.

Your Say

Since the start of term, we have posted Instagram stories asking the student body some questions such as 'Are you currently based in Reading or at home?' We want to know your concerns so we can be best placed to effect change. Please look out for more polls on our social media channels and submit ideas via our [Change It](#) platform until the 19th January, which will go to our next Student Voice meeting online on 2nd February 6-8pm.

Rent Rebate Update

We are aware that during this incredibly challenging time many of you will have taken out accommodation contracts that due to COVID you are no longer able to use. We know that this will cause a significant financial strain for many which is why we are trying our best to make sure the student body is compensated for this loss.

We have taken this issue up with the Major Incident Team at the University. As these decisions are made higher up we have also formally written to the University Executive Board, including the Vice Chancellor, to tell them students deserve compensation. We, as a Students' Union, are working collaboratively with the University to work out how we can offer compensation for those who have taken out accommodation contracts in Halls.



For those of you who have taken out private housing contracts please rest assured that we are lobbying the University and other stakeholders to try to mitigate the finances you have lost as well.

Exams and Mitigating Circumstances

We have been pushing for take home exams for students and we are awaiting a response from the university. Your Student Reps are also working locally to speak to students on courses and Senior Reps held Course Rep Consultations last term and will be scheduling more meetings this term to ensure your voice is heard on your programme. You can send feedback to your Rep wherever you are remotely via our Digital Rep tool [ROSIE](#).

All the very best and stay safe.

Rachel Osborne, RUSU President
George Ingram, RUSU Education Officer