

Dear student

University of Worcester Accommodation and Car Parking Charges from March 20, 2020.

We know that the current situation raises many questions for students who have been renting University accommodation. These questions arise wherever you are now living.

As you know, throughout every stage of the international pandemic, the University of Worcester has been committed to ensuring that the interests of our students are at the heart of every decision that we have taken as we have sought to systematically follow Public Health England and UK Government advice. We have sought to be as open as possible with you about the challenges the University faces and the actions being taken. This University is very grateful to the Students' Union for their excellent representation of students' interests and concerns.

We have put in place arrangements to support students through online learning and have advised students about arrangements for online assessments. Unlike many universities, we have not fully closed our campus and have instead kept key facilities open for our students who need them urgently, including accommodation, the Peirson Study and Guidance Centre and the St. John's campus shop.

Since online learning began on 20 March, the majority of students have returned to family homes and vacated their term time residences. Approximately one quarter of our students have chosen to stay in Worcester in a combination of halls of residence and University managed accommodation.

In this context, we are aware that some students are concerned about being charged fees for their accommodation and car parking.

Consistent with our commitment to putting the interests of our students first, we have decided to **waive the payment due for accommodation provided by the University from March 20 for all University of Worcester students who have already left their University/University managed accommodation by April 3 and do not return this academic year.**

We know that some students pay by direct debit while others were due to make a final payment in April. Please be assured that for all those students who have left their accommodation by April 3, we will refund accommodation rental costs from the March 20 onwards. This may take a little time as it is a big administrative task, but don't worry we will be fair to every student. Of course, the rent must be paid up to March 20.

Students who remain in their University/University managed accommodation will, of course, simply pay their rental as due in the normal way.

You may also like to know that all student car parking permits which run beyond March 20 will be refunded. Again this is a substantial administrative task and will take a little while.

Over the past 10 days, we have been contacting all of our students living in University/University managed accommodation. If you have already told us that you have returned home through contacting a staff member in the accommodation team, you don't need to take any further action to receive your refund and cancel any further payments. We will process this for you. If you have not heard from us by May 1 please do not hesitate to contact the accommodation team.

Many students have left belongings in Worcester, unsure about whether they were returning this academic year. Under the latest Government social distancing restrictions, travelling to Worcester or the University to collect your belongings is not advisable. This could put yourself and others at risk. Please contact the accommodation team if there is an essential reason you need to travel to collect your belongings.

You can leave your belongings in your accommodation and collect them once the current restrictions have been lifted and you will not be charged to do this. Deposit returns will be processed when your keys are been returned and your room has been checked as part of the normal deposit return process in July/August.

If you are unable to return to collect your belongings, for example you are located abroad, then please email accommodation@worc.ac.uk and we can discuss with you how we might be able to help.

Supporting the NHS

We are also committed to supporting the NHS. There has been a national call to help source additional beds for key workers, such as doctors and nurses. Universities across the country, including Worcester, are standing ready to assist.

If your room is required for this purpose, we will contact you. If you are in residence and your flat is needed, you will be given help to relocate to another flat. If you are no longer living in Worcester and your room is needed we will inform you and then move your belongings to safe storage. There will be no charge for this and our team will handle your belongings carefully and sensitively.

Student Finance England Questions

We are aware that some students will have questions about Student Finance England maintenance payments and tuition fee loans.

Michelle Donelan MP, Minister of State for Universities, stated the following in her recent letter to students:

“I would like to assure you that the Student Loans Company (SLC) is planning to make Term 3 tuition fee payments as scheduled and that you will continue to receive maintenance payments on the scheduled dates, whether or not campuses are closed or learning has moved online.”

Thank you for your patience and understanding over the past few days. We do appreciate this is a difficult time for all and we hope providing you with some certainty about your accommodation will be helpful. If you have any further questions, you can contact us at accommodation@worc.ac.uk

Best wishes

Ross Renton
Pro Vice Chancellor Students