My Placement

Dear Student,

You are receiving this message as according to our records you are currently due to go on an international placement in 2020/2021.

As you will be only too aware, a range of measures are being put in place worldwide in order to contain the spread of the Coronavirus. The situation is changing rapidly and there is considerable uncertainty given the unprecedented situation.

The Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) has issued an Exceptional Travel Advisory Notice advising against all but essential international travel ([https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice](https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice)). Whilst this advisory is in place you should NOT:

- book any travel/flights to your host location overseas as it is very unlikely that the associated costs would be covered by the University’s travel insurance in the event that you need to cancel. If you have already booked flights, and did so ahead of the latest FCO Exceptional Travel Advisory, then the claim will typically be considered by the University’s insurance provider.
- pay accommodation deposits as far as possible. If you have to pay a deposit now because housing is so competitive, please discuss with your host university/organization and/or housing provider what their cancellation/reimbursement policy is, should the placement not go ahead. Also note that if you pay a deposit whilst the current travel restrictions and FCO advisory is in place you will not normally be covered for any kind of reimbursement. [Note: unless you are reserving University managed housing at one of our partner universities we would also discourage paying deposits on private housing without having viewed the property first or, at an absolute minimum, having verified the legitimacy and reputation of the housing provider].

Regardless of the current situation, we would typically advise that you do not make any financial commitments associated with your placement until you have a formal admission letter from your host university/contract from your work placement provider and also have any relevant visa required for your host country. Occasionally the competition for housing may mean students do pay housing deposits ahead of having key documents but you do need to weigh-up the balance of risk in doing so.

Whilst we cannot at this stage be certain about the viability of placements for 2020/2021 we would encourage you to:

- continue with your applications to your respective partner universities;
follow guidance being issued by your respective partner universities with respect to any adjustments being made to application deadlines/admission requirements etc. in light of the current situation;  
speak to your country advisers in the IPO about any questions you have about the application process etc;  
make sure you sign up for the pre-departure webinars being offered over the coming weeks (http://www.goabroad.manchester.ac.uk/preparing-to-go/pre-departure-sessions/); and  
if you are interested in becoming a Global Ambassador whilst you are abroad next year, please email goabroad@manchester.ac.uk for more information.

We appreciate that you will have many more questions/concerns about your placement abroad for the next academic year. Currently, we are prioritizing the very large number of students who are already overseas on placements to ensure they are safe and well and supporting them if they choose to leave and return home. If there is a delay in response from your adviser in the IPO please bear with them, they will get back to you as soon as they can.

In line with Government advice the International Programmes Office and the Atrium will no longer be available for in-person visits. All IPO staff will, as far as possible, continue working as normal over the weeks to come. Our email availability remains unchanged, and our Administrators will also continue to be available by telephone on their usual office numbers, as listed below:

- **Denise** (USA, Canada and Israel) – 0161 275 3053;  
- **Deborah** (Australia, New Zealand, Asia and Europe) – 0161 275 4973  
- **Vicki** (Netherlands and Scandinavia) - 0161 306 8292  
- **Lisa** - International Programmes Officer (Outbound Team Lead) – 0161 275 4979

If you would prefer to speak over a web-based system rather than by phone, we will be able to set up a Zoom or Skype meeting with you. Please let your adviser know by email if you would prefer to communicate with them this way and they’ll ‘book an appointment’ for you.

Take good care,  
Caroline  

Dr Caroline Whitehand  
Manager, International Programmes Office