

Cambridge SU launch [#DemandSafeCambridge](#) campaign calling for further action to keep students and staff safe next term

Cambridge SU are demanding clear and consistent health and safety measures for the Collegiate University and greater transparency from decision-makers

Cambridge SU have today (04/09) launched the [#DemandSafeCambridge](#) campaign which calls for the Collegiate University to develop more rigorous health and safety measures in consultation with students and staff, and in accordance with Public Health England (PHE) guidelines.

According to the SU, the demands were formulated after weeks of consultations with student groups and societies, as well as with trade unions. The SU told *Varsity*, the demands “reflect a collective desire to return to a campus where all students and staff can study, work, and live safely”.

In their [launch statement](#), the SU claimed they were “seriously concerned by the lack of clear and consistent communication from the Colleges to their students and staff”. They argued that “the University has shown an unwillingness to make demands on Colleges at a time where consistency and unity is of utmost importance”.

Currently, the University’s guidelines on returning students is through its [#StaySafeCambridgeUni campaign](#). This focuses on minimising the health risks of COVID-19 and its disruption to University life through an emphasis on personal hygiene practices and individual lifestyle changes such as handwashing, testing, social distancing, mask wearing, and remote working.

However, the SU argues that its “limited scope shows the University has been unwilling to draw colleges into their messaging - forcing staff and students to decipher confusing and sometimes conflicting messages from the University, Colleges, and Departments”. The [#StaySafeCambridgeUni](#) campaign has previously been [criticised](#) for lacking clarity across the University.

The campaign launch comes in the wake of numerous [academics](#), [public health experts](#), [university vice-chancellors](#), and both the [NUS](#) and [UCU](#) warning that universities are currently not equipped to safely manage students’ return to campuses.

In the past week, Oxford has been placed on ‘[amber alert](#)’ following a surge of COVID-19 cases in the 18-29 age group, and the [University of St Andrew’s](#) postponed the resumption of in-person teaching less than two weeks before the start of term.

The [#DemandSafeCambridge](#) demands are divided into three sections: living safely, studying safely, and working safely.

The demands include calls for fair and adequate pay for staff, support for vulnerable and disabled students, provision of safe social spaces and guaranteed accommodation for all students out of term time and in the event of a future lockdown.

In a statement, the SU detailed that “the message throughout is calling on the colleges to work together at a time where consistency and unity is of utmost importance, and for the Collegiate University to provide basic assurances for all returning to study or work”.

Along with the statement, the SU has launched an [open letter](#) for students, societies and J/MCRs to sign in support of the #DemandSafeCambridge.

The SU told *Varsity* that “in order for students and staff to feel safe returning to Cambridge they must be provided with these essential guarantees, across all colleges. We urge the colleges to collaborate on a consistent approach during this difficult time. This will not only ease the burden on student and staff representatives, but allow the university to operate in both a manner that is cohesive and that puts the welfare and safety of our community first.”

A University of Cambridge spokesperson told *Varsity* “”.

The #DemandSafeCambridge demands in brief

Living

1. Fair rent with no costs passed on to students for changes out of their control
2. Guaranteed accommodation with a transparent appeals process
3. Guaranteed provision of accessible communal space for safe socialising
4. A compassionate approach to student discipline
5. Signposted financial support for any student or staff member in need
6. Targeted support for private renters

Every living space risk assessed in consultation with students and staff.

Studying

1. Flexible and transparent policies on deferral, intermission, ‘work away,’ and ‘double time’
2. Opt-in systems for face-to-face contact hours for students
3. Expanded teaching capacity to reflect increased student numbers
4. Extended funding for PhD students
5. Continued suspension of attendance monitoring

Every study space risk assessed in consultation with students and staff

Working

1. No job cuts
2. Reversal of hiring and promotions freezes
3. Adjusted pay for staff to reflect additional COVID-19 workloads
4. Centralised, risk-assessed procedures on room availabilities for teaching
5. Recognition of trade unions in colleges
6. Opt-in systems for face-to-face contact hours
7. Extended voluntary contributions from the salaries of highest-earning staff
8. Frozen rents for local businesses using University- and College-owned properties
9. Regular COVID-19 testing for all staff, students and the local community, and provision of PPE

Every work space risk assessed in consultation with students and staff