Supporting the fight against Covid-19

RUSSELL GROUP

Russell Group universities are playing their part in the United Kingdom's fightback against Covid-19. Members are carrying out life-saving research and giving practical support to NHS staff and local communities. At Birmingham, Cambridge, Cardiff, Edinburgh, Exeter, Glasgow, Liverpool, UCL, Imperial, Nottingham, Oxford and Sheffield, our members are part of the £20m Covid-19 Genomics UK Consortium analysing the virus. Glasgow is leading one of three new national testing centres to deliver thousands of tests a day.

Fighting the virus

- Researchers at Oxford, Imperial, Bristol and Southampton are already carrying out vaccine trials.
- Laboratories at several universities have been allocated to Covid-19 research: Manchester's virology and Leeds's data science labs, Edinburgh's Centre for Virus Research and STOPCOVID drug trial programme which uses fibre optics to test lung tissue, and Liverpool's Outbreak Lab.
- Engineers from UCL have worked with the NHS and Mercedes-AMG High Performance Power-trains to develop a breathing aid that can help keep Covid-19 patients out of intensive care.
- King's College London's Covid-19 Symptom Tracker App has been used by 2.3 million people.
- Experts from Queen Mary University of London are central to the leadership and development of London's new Nightingale Hospital.
- Durham researchers are working with dogs that can accurately detect people carrying the virus.

Practical support

- Medical students are bolstering hardworking NHS staff by volunteering and extending medical and nursing placements, and final year students are graduating early to join the NHS workforce.
- Several universities including Birmingham, Newcastle, Nottingham, Queen's University Belfast, York and Warwick have brought forward qualifications and trained new staff in their buildings for the NHS frontline.
- Universities are providing hand-sanitiser, PPE, ventilators, and testing kits. University of Nottingham has donated equipment to boost the UK's testing capacity by around 20,000 tests per day.
- University of Sheffield's Advanced Manufacturing Research Centre is part of a national effort to produce 10,000 ventilators, by retraining its aerospace production staff using augmented reality.
- University of Southampton's personal respirators - developed in a week - are already being deployed to hospital staff, keeping them safe from viral infection.

Helping our communities

- Final year medical students at Imperial have provided hundreds of meals to staff at four hospitals.
- Universities are offering their halls of residence to NHS, police and other key workers.
- Students at LSE have sent care packages with things like tea, soap and chocolate to the elderly and those who are self-isolating because of medical risks.
- Imperial is offering free, online, curriculum-based STEMM material for 5-11 year olds.
- A student at the University of Exeter created a free e-book to explain Covid-19 to children: 'Piperpotamus learns about coronavirus'.
- Newcastle students are helping with childcare and shopping for health workers who need free, flexible assistance. The University is running free online courses (MOOCs) for carers of people with dementia to help reduce isolation.

Our members are rising to the challenges created by this crisis – building new skills, expertise and technology - and their support touches communities across the country.
Working together with Government and the NHS, the UK's leading universities can be the foundation on which our recovery from this crisis is built.