

## **Welcome email to University July 2020**

Hello,

I hope you're well. I'm emailing with an update on Greenwich Students' Union's (GSU) Welcome plans for September 2020. We are still working on plans so there are more details to come; our programme will start to be released from Thursday 13<sup>th</sup> August on our website at [greenwichsu.co.uk/welcome](https://greenwichsu.co.uk/welcome). Here's some of what can be expected, and how as University staff you can get involved and support us to ensure students have a great start to their year.

### **Dates and activity**

GSU Welcome will start from Monday 14<sup>th</sup> September, and activities will run into mid/late October. Whilst we'll be covering the Greenwich and Avery Hill campuses, Greenwich and Kent Students' Unions (GKSU), formerly GK Unions, will be running activity at the Medway campus.

We will have a blended programme of activity with some in-person events (such as open air cinemas and dance workshops), as well as some online including mindfulness meditation sessions and E-sports competitions. As in previous years, we are involving our Clubs and Societies to get their ideas and integrate their events into our programme.

In regard to Welcome Fairs, we are replacing the events at Greenwich and Avery Hill with smaller scale events over the first few weeks of term; current proposed dates are 18<sup>th</sup>, 22<sup>nd</sup>, 23<sup>rd</sup> September and 2<sup>nd</sup> October at Greenwich, and 25<sup>th</sup>, 28<sup>th</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup> September at Avery Hill (alongside other activity taking place). They will be themed to particular student groups on particular days and take place in the exterior grounds of Dreadnought and the exterior spaces in the Student Village on Southwood site. We're investing in extra equipment to ensure our student groups can attend under cover (in case of adverse weather) and safely distanced.

These events - and others in our programme - will be supplemented with a digital offer. For example, our Activities and Marketing and Communications team (Marcomms) are working on updating student group profiles to make them more informative and interactive, in case in-person events need to stop for safety. We're also creating contingency plans for our other in person events to move online effectively if need be, so students don't miss out on a full Welcome programme.

At Medway, GKSU will be running a Virtual Welcome Fair on 23<sup>rd</sup> September. They are using an online platform to create a digital campus that students can visit through their computer or device, walk around, and find out about all the services and student groups at Medway. There will be more details about this and the rest of their Welcome programme on their new website soon ([gksu.co.uk](https://gksu.co.uk)).

Finally, we and GKSU working with Student Academic Services (SAS) to support new Welcome Zones on each campus (in Dreadnought in Greenwich, The Dome in Avery Hill, and the Student Hub in Medway). These will be points on campus where

new and current students can meet a University Welcome Ambassador, ask them any queries about their start at Greenwich, even get a short tour of campus if they need. These will run in the first few weeks of term also alongside our Welcome activities.

### **Induction talks**

We are still offering induction talks for when term restarts, however this will now be offered digitally with a renewed offer from GSU.

To ensure early, consistent and high-quality information for new starters, GSU will be offering a pre-recorded induction talk from GSU Officers which will be distributed to Programme Leaders and uploaded onto Moodle for easy access. Staff scheduling weeks 1 and 2 of induction should allow 15 minutes time for this provision. Videos will be available from early September, and it will be the responsibility of the Programme Leaders to ensure the pre-recorded talks are run at the beginning of welcome period, from 14th September-25th September

To offer students an interpersonal connection with GSU, provide students with tailored information to their course, and support an enhanced and extended induction, GSU will be offering live Q&A sessions for new starters across a School/Department. The live Q&A sessions will be hosted online via Teams by a member of GSU staff and a GSU Officer. A GSU staff member will also facilitate the set-up of the session and communicate the Teams link in advance. There will be two sessions offered:

- Session 1: Student Voice & Wellbeing. This session should take place in weeks 3-4 (28<sup>th</sup> September – 9<sup>th</sup> of October) and will cover student voice, course feedback, wellbeing and GSU Advice and support services. Information provided will be tailored to the course and location of study.
- Session 2: Academic Communities & Opportunities: This session should take place in weeks 6-7 (October 19<sup>th</sup> – October 30<sup>th</sup>) and will provide an opportunity for Students to digitally 'meet' Academic Societies aligned to their studies, as well as learn about wider community and development opportunities at GSU.

It is the responsibility of the Head of School/Department to book in sessions on behalf of all their Programmes and ensure that Q&A's are timetabled across all programmes within the School/Department for all new starters. Sessions should be scheduled for 1 hour.

Booking is now open, and Heads of School/Department (or those responsible for induction scheduling across these cohorts) can book tailored slots [HERE](#).

Any queries about this process or Induction talks, please e-mail [reps@gre.ac.uk](mailto:reps@gre.ac.uk) for support.

### **Sport and Societies**

As mentioned earlier, our Student Groups will be an integral part of our Welcome programme. Outside of this, they are still planning activity for the year for their new and current members.

GSU will be providing all student groups guidance and support to effectively adapt their in person activity to be Covid-safe so students will still be able to join groups and meet new people or engage with their friends. In addition to this, GSU will provide a hub of online activity for all our members, with our groups playing an integral part in content creation, further engaging with their members and producing more student-led content through our channels.

With Sport in particular, the governing body for University sport has confirmed that all competitive sporting leagues will begin in January 2021. During the first term, in line with government guidance in relation to grassroots sporting and leisure activity, GSU will offer a range of opportunities to our members who are interested in physical activity including intramural sporting activities with other Unions, and technical skills development through our adapted club training schedule.

### **Our outlets**

We have three outlets across Greenwich and Avery Hill - the Lower Deck, Change, and the Village Shop. The Lower Deck and Change closed at the start of lockdown in March, and the Village Shop stayed open until the end of June to serve the student community still in halls. Whilst the outlets have been closed, our Commercial team have been keeping up with government advice and working on plans to reopen them.

The Lower Deck will reopen formally from the start of term with measures in place to serve you safely. There will be a one-way system into and out of the venue, and you'll be able to order food and drinks online from your table. We've signed up to Wi5, an order service used nationwide by outlets such as Pizza Pilgrims and Nando's. We're looking to extend our garden and utilise the exterior space around it to increase seating ([click here to see current plans](#)). Our Commercial team is working with the University Estates team to implement this, so thanks to them for their help so far.

As part of the reopening, Change will be moved into the Lower Deck, so you'll still be able to access its great coffee, salads, sandwiches and pastries. We've made the decision to move Change to make reopening as sustainable as possible.

The Village Shop will be reopening from the start of term, and we're working with the Accommodation team there on offers and services that can be available for students once they start to arrive in halls. Covid-safe practices have already been in place in the Village Shop since March, and these continue when they reopen. There will also be an online order service for the shop - again, through Wi5 - so anyone can make an order in advance for collection.

At Medway, GKSU will be reopening The Deep End from the start of term also - the team there are working on their timings and updating their menus/offers.

### **Booking our spaces**

If you want to book a space and/or catering with us - from a table in the Lower Deck to a space in the Atrium - you can. At the moment, please email [gsuroombookings@gre.ac.uk](mailto:gsuroombookings@gre.ac.uk) for Ground Floor spaces, and [lowerdeck@gre.ac.uk](mailto:lowerdeck@gre.ac.uk) for spaces in the Lower Deck and catering. Our teams will get back to you as soon as possible. We are working on a new online room booking system which will be in place mid-August.

### **GKSU**

In case you didn't know, GKSU were formerly GK Unions. They have recently rebranded and created a new strategy for their work to support students at Medway. To find out more about their changes and plans ahead, please visit <https://gksu.co.uk/your-voice/gksu-plan>. We have been working closely with them throughout lockdown and look forward to that continuing over the coming year.

### **Health and Safety**

This of course plays an important part in our planning and implementation of all the above. Our staff team are in touch with relevant staff and teams at the University about how to reopen our spaces safely, and relevant paperwork/documentation will be published on our website within the next couple of weeks to give yourselves and all students full transparency to all our plans and measures.

### **Important contacts**

I hope that information is helpful. If you have any questions, please use the following contact details to reach the right person in our team:

- General Welcome operations: Onyinye Nkemdirim ([o.d.nkemdirim@gre.ac.uk](mailto:o.d.nkemdirim@gre.ac.uk))
- Commercial opportunities and catering requests: Matthew Rothwell ([M.J.Rothwell@gre.ac.uk](mailto:M.J.Rothwell@gre.ac.uk))
- Marketing/communications: James Dix ([J.L.Dix@gre.ac.uk](mailto:J.L.Dix@gre.ac.uk))
- Student induction talks: Sam Mujunga ([S.Mujunga@gre.ac.uk](mailto:S.Mujunga@gre.ac.uk))
- GKSU/Medway operations: Mark Heffernan ([m.heffernan@kent.ac.uk](mailto:m.heffernan@kent.ac.uk))

In the meantime, please keep an eye out online for our programme on Results Day in a couple of weeks!