

Dear Students,

It is both an honour and a privilege to welcome you to the Jagiellonian University. For 1<sup>st</sup> year students, this marks the beginning of a new life with new routines. For 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> year students, today brings not only continuation but also new academic adventures and new opportunities. My experience over the last couple of years is that the IRAS community is genuinely warm and welcoming. Therefore, I hope and confidently believe that all our students will find it so as well.

Unfortunately for all of us, the 2020/2021 academic year is also challenging due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the effects of which have been greater than many expected. I know that you are feeling a million different emotions and have a million important questions regarding your studies. We will do our best to make this academic year run smoothly with the highest academic standards. The University authorities are actively monitoring the coronavirus situation and will provide updates on a regular basis. Please remember that protecting our health will be possible only thanks to the constant exchange of information and taking care of not only one's own safety, but also that of other students and employees.

Due to COVID-19 related restrictions at the University, for the first time since the beginning of the IRAS Programme, the ceremonial opening of the academic year exclusively for IRAS 1<sup>st</sup> year students will not take place. The traditional opening ceremony of the academic year for all University students will be humble and smaller than usually. It will be preceded by a Holy Mass in St. Anne's Collegiate Church. After the service, the customary procession of professors in gowns will leave Collegium Maius and march to Collegium Novum. This is the only occasion during the entire year when JU authorities and professors can be seen in their traditional academic attire. The main part of the celebrations starts at 11:00 a.m. in Collegium Novum. The live stream of the event will be available on the Jagiellonian University website. The ceremonial opening of the academic year will also be organized by the Faculty of International and Political Studies. The live stream of the event will take place on the Faculty YouTube channel. I cordially encourage you to take part in the celebrations online.

I admire you all for practicing patience at this time when we are facing various obstacles and impediments. Please remember that I, as well as vice-director dr Michał Rzepecki, and all the IRAS office employees are here to support you in every difficult situation.



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I wish everyone a successful academic year 2020/2021 and that everyone stays well.  
We are looking forward to everyone having a great and healthy year!

With all good wishes,

dr Dominika Dziwisz

Director of the BA International Relations and Area Studies



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