

Dear student,

I hope this email finds you well. Many of you will be coming to the end of your exam period. I would like to congratulate you for all the work you have put in this year and for responding so positively to the challenges of online learning and assessment brought about by the Covid-19 pandemic.

I am writing to you today to further explain our plans for teaching and learning in September and to update you on progress with the gradual reopening of our campuses.

Our educational offering for September

For those of you not graduating, I fully hope to be able to welcome you all back, in person, in September. However, with uncertainties surrounding coronavirus – including possible ongoing travel restrictions, and the ways in which the UK and other countries ease out of lockdown – we know that this may not be possible in all cases. We have therefore been finalising our plans to ensure that you can fully engage with your education, your teachers and fellow students, whether physically on campus or remotely.

The safety of our students, staff and our wider community is our top priority, and this has guided our decision-making. For those of you who will be able to join us on campus in September, we will ensure that our premises and activities follow government guidance and that we are Covid-19 Secure. For those of you who cannot be with us in person in September, we look forward to welcoming you back on campus later in the year, and as soon as it is possible for you to join us.

Our world-leading educational offering is already a mix of digital and face-to-face provision. We are building on this to ensure we can provide the flexibility and resilience in our approach so that, whatever the year brings, we will continue to provide you with the best education environment. For every student, your teaching and learning from September will be 'blended', that is, with a core proportion online and wrap-around academic advising and mentoring support embedded in an on-line learning community. We will continue to help ensure you are properly set up to learn remotely.

Where we can supplement online education with face-to-face campus-based teaching we will, and the proportion of physical provision will increase as quickly as it is safe and practical to do so. We are re-configuring our campuses, including our lecture theatres and other learning spaces, our libraries, and study and social spaces, to ensure we can all maintain social distancing, necessary hygiene standards and keep you, and everyone else on our campuses, safe and well.

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact your School/Institute.

Re-opening some campus facilities

We are taking a phased approach to re-opening facilities on our campuses; the first phase will be to open some more research laboratories, which I expect to be possible in early June. The safety of our staff and students is paramount, and we are using thorough risk assessments – at University-wide and local levels – to ensure that we can operate these facilities safely and protect the health of our students, staff and any visitors.

The next phase will be to open some specialist facilities such as computer rooms for students, and then other student facilities as government guidance permits. I will keep you updated with progress.

Please stay safe, and look after yourself and your loved ones. I will write with a further update shortly.

Best wishes,

Colin

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