

Dear student,

First and foremost, we hope that that wherever you are when you receive this email, it finds you safe and well. (If you are an international student who has left the UK, we hope that you had an uneventful journey and reached your destination without incident.) The health and welfare of all students at Queen Mary remains our absolute top priority.

RE-ENGAGING THROUGH REMOTE STUDY

We appreciate completely that for the last week or so, your top priority will have been to stay safe and well. Over the past 10 days, study may have had to take a back seat. If this is the case, as we all settle into a new and unfamiliar way of working, we would like to encourage you to re-connect by engaging with the educational content and learning exercises that have been migrated onto QMPlus. Staff in your School / Institute are working very hard to upload relevant slide presentations, new or historic recordings, and brand new online exercises to continue to support your learning at this difficult time. From next Monday (23 March), the vast majority of content will be available to you via your module pages on QMPlus. Any content not yet online will appear over the remainder of this semester. (We are aware that some staff are deliberately uploading or revealing content sequentially as soon as students have at least tried an exercise precisely to assist, rather than impede, remote learning).

As we all get used to a new 'normal' for the coming weeks and months, please do ensure you access and engage with your programme content on QMPlus. Try to keep up with the module schedule and interact with the online content as best as you can under these very challenging circumstances. We advise you to set up student self-help groups to support you to keep both motivated and engaged. Many students are already using WhatsApp groups to keep the momentum going.

Student engagement and feedback continue to be important during this period – if not even more so than usual. We are working to adapt our mechanisms for student voice to suit the remote context. Guidance is being provided to Schools and Institutes on how regular Staff-Student Liaison Committees can continue to be held in order for students to voice their opinions and help shape what their education experience now looks like.

ASSESSMENT / EXAMINATIONS

We know that you will appreciate that, following the necessary decision to cancel face-to-face examinations this summer, staff at Queen Mary have been working very hard (with input from the QMSU executive officers) to ensure that they can assess student attainment of learning outcomes for each module of your degree course. In some rare cases (where it is an absolute requirement of a professional, statutory and regulatory board [PSRB] that might accredit a degree programme), we may still be required to hold invigilated examinations for some elements or skills. In such cases, the University may need to organise either deferred exams or online exams with remote invigilation.

Online assessments might include the setting of additional summative coursework exercises or open book 'exams'. In some cases, you may have already demonstrated that you have met all learning outcomes such that no further assessment will be necessary (your School or Institute may already have all of the marks that they need to evaluate whether you have passed the module and grade your performance as appropriate).

As we find our way working in these difficult circumstances, and being as accommodating as we can be, we are being mindful of the quality and rigour of our approach, combined with the aim to ensure each of you can demonstrate your achievement of programme level learning outcomes. Such an approach, we believe, will ensure that you have achieved the necessary knowledge, understanding,

and skills to succeed in the next phase of your study, or, for finalists, when you graduate and progress successfully into your chosen career or further study.

NEXT STEPS

Underpinning our approach has been a set of agreed core principles (determined by senior staff drawn from across Queen Mary with input from the QMSU executive officers). Schools and Institutes are currently establishing how these principles can most appropriately underpin and support your programme delivery and assessment. **Your School / Institute will write to you within the next two weeks (i.e. before the end of Week 11 on Friday 3 April)** to explain what form of on-line assessment you will be expected to undertake. Staff are working hard to consider how best to evaluate (using online approaches) your achievement of modules' learning outcomes, to the level required for your continued success at and beyond Queen Mary. The exact details are likely to vary between degree programmes / Schools / Institutes reflecting different disciplines, and some decisions will be available before others.

SUMMARY

We are sending this email to reassure you that assessments are being worked on now as an absolute priority. More details will be communicated to you as soon as they are available, but not later than Friday 3 April. Please also be assured that appropriate changes will be made to the University's Academic Regulations to ensure that no student, given the unprecedented circumstances, is disadvantaged, or fails to progress or graduate with the award that they have been working to achieve because of our need to change the way in which you are both learning or being assessed.

We hope that this email inspires you to re-engage with your studies online, and please look out for further details from your School / Institute regarding assessment.

Please stay safe and well over the coming weeks.

Best wishes,

Colin Bailey
President and Principal, Queen Mary University of London

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Students' Union President 2019-20