

Dear Student

I am writing to explain how the University is intending to manage the scheduled assessments over the coming months, as we face the coronavirus pandemic together.

As you know, we have had to deal with a very complicated, unprecedented and rapidly changing situation over the past week. We have been closely following government and Public Health England guidance throughout.

We have also been moving staff and students from face to face to remote teaching, ensuring that we can continue in the current situation to deliver the teaching that you need to complete your course. We have been addressing issues with student placements, particularly for health and education students in the NHS and schools. The situation has been changing daily. We are also conscious that external events impact differently on different courses, and have been working to try to manage that.

In addition, we have been ensuring that the University's core services in terms of cleaning, catering, IT, the Hive have been continuing for as long as possible. With 1,600 staff and around 10,000 students, studying a variety of courses, which are taught and assessed in different ways, this has been a significant undertaking.

Our staff are facing the same challenges as any other person in the UK and indeed across the world. Some of them are having to self-isolate, some are social distancing due to ill health, some are caring for loved ones, and some of them are unwell. It is an extraordinary time for all of us, and we are grateful that you understand and respect the enormity of the task that the University community is facing.

Some of you have written to express concern over the forthcoming assessments. We understand this concern and have been working hard over the past week to identify a solution which would work both for students who have asked if assessments can be delayed, and students who have asked that they are not delayed. We are also working with around 50 separate Professional Statutory and Regulatory bodies governing many of our courses, to ensure that we comply with their guidance.

Some assessments, particularly those which require a practical element, have had to be amended: we are unable to continue with assessments which require face to face group work, or face to face teaching. We are also unable to continue with in person lab work. Over the past week, colleagues have been carefully working through every single planned

assessment, to ensure that it can be appropriately amended to ensure that it assesses whether you meet the learning outcomes of your course.

In order to reflect this, we are doing two things.

1. We are proposing that we run the assessments scheduled over the next six or so weeks, ending on 15th May 2020, as planned. Submission will be online: this is something that we do for the majority of our assessments already.
2. However, we will offer every student the opportunity to defer their assessment until early July 2020, week beginning 6th July.

You will be able to choose to complete the assessments as planned in April/May, or, if you wish, to defer your first attempt until July 2020. Once you have made this choice, you cannot change your mind.

The only exception, of course, is if you opt to complete your assessments in April/May and then become unwell or are unable to submit for other reasons. In these circumstances, you would complete a mitigating circumstances form.

Dissertations, independent study or independent projects for level 6 students would work slightly differently. For these, you have three options:

- Submit on time on 30th April 2020.
- Ask to defer submission until 6th July 2020
- Ask for a two week extension under the usual procedures, which would mean submission on 13th May 2020.

Students in the Three Counties School of Nursing and Midwifery will have slightly different arrangements, to reflect the specific nature of your courses. An email will be sent to you by your Head of School tomorrow.

I realise that you will have many individual questions on how these arrangements will work, including detailed arrangements for exams. I would ask that you hold those questions until after Wednesday 25th March, when I will send you more detail of how this will work in practice, and what you need to do.

We understand that this has been an anxious time for you. Thank you to the Students' Union for working with us. Thank you too for the individual messages of support that we have received. We are grateful for your patience and understanding and it underlines just how exceptional and community spirited our students are.

Best wishes

Sarah

Professor Sarah Greer

Deputy Vice Chancellor and Provost