

17 March 2020

Dear All

I promised to send you a daily update of the situation relating to coronavirus arrangements. My priority continues to be your health and that of the staff of the University. This is a difficult time for everyone and there is much to do to ensure that we provide the best possible support for all of you. I know that you all still have lots of questions, some of which we can answer now and some that we will be able to follow up on the next few days. We have set up an extensive set of FAQs on the website at <https://www.hope.ac.uk/coronavirus/> which hopefully will answer most of your queries. If you have already looked at this page please make sure that you refresh your browser as we are adding new sections on a regular basis. If you have a general query you can email sdw@hope.ac.uk; if it is specifically about academic matters you should email your tutor or other subject contact.

Teaching and Learning: As you know, yesterday we moved to an online teaching pattern for the remainder of the academic year for the majority of students. Dependent on the subject you are studying, you will be able to see teaching resources through Moodle or other platforms as usual and you will be able to contact tutors and each other including for things like project and dissertation supervision via a range of channels including email, skype or telephone. Your Head of School/Department will be emailing you today or tomorrow to give you the details of how your studies will be delivered over the next few weeks.

Exams and assessments : Your Head of School/Department will be providing you with details related to your assessments. In most cases the assessments which you have already been set should be submitted as normal whether you are on campus or at home. If you are a Level H or masters student who is due to submit a dissertation you should check the guidance from your subject to see how this should now be submitted. In terms of exams we are not going to ask you to physically sit your papers in the examination halls on campus. You should however, prepare for assessment to take place in the examination weeks, albeit in a modified format. Your Schools will be in direct contact regarding these assessment and other issues such as placements. You should follow your School/Department's normal processes and deadlines for requesting extensions.

Schools are putting in place specific plans for your course, including meeting the requirements of relevant professional bodies. Clearly there will be some modifications to the assessment formats, but we will send you detailed information on this as soon as it is ready and we will ensure you are not disadvantaged. We will need you to cooperate with us through the exam period if we are to achieve our aim of getting as many of you as possible to the next level of your course or into your career. As I said when I wrote to you yesterday, we will endeavour to get all assessment completed during the published examination weeks but if this is not possible we may call an early start to term in the Autumn to allow us to complete assessment properly. I will let you know of any revised term dates as soon as possible. At the present time I am committed to getting the degree results out along the published timelines.

Home study preparedness: One thing you can do now is to check your own "home study preparedness" to ensure you are able to access teaching and assessment materials remotely. This includes doing everything possible to secure access to a device and WiFi in your home environment. Of course, we recognise that in some cases this will prove challenging and we will take this into consideration on an individual basis.

Campus restrictions: In terms of the University more generally, we will inevitably be moving to a more restricted campus operation very soon. This means that the majority of University staff will be working remotely and only essential staff will be on campus. It also means that only essential buildings will be open. I will let you know what this means as soon as possible. We will ensure that at least one catering outlet, the library and some study spaces are kept open for you. Other services

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will start to provide online support. The halls of residence will remain open with appropriate pastoral support available and 24/7 campus security and support as usual. We are aware that many students have already chosen to return home and we understand that other students will also be returning home before the end of term. We also recognise that some students won't be able to go home due to travel restrictions or other personal circumstances.

If you need to self-isolate and have to remain in University halls then you should let us know by emailing sdw@hope.ac.uk. We are well-prepared to support students who may need to be in isolation.

Student development and wellbeing services: As we move forward we will not be able to provide face to face services, but will be able to respond to general e-mail and telephone queries and where necessary make referrals to other services. Our **webpages** will be updated with advice and information for available services and details of support and crisis services that are available outside the University.

These are extraordinary times, and there will inevitably be some disruption in the weeks and months ahead, not least because it is impossible for us to predict when staff, students or their dependants may be unwell. We are doing everything we can to try to help you study and to ensure your wellbeing. I am really grateful for all the supportive comments you have sent and also for your cooperation in the weeks ahead. As always, the Hope community will come together in a supportive way to help everyone through this difficult time. I encourage you to look after yourselves and each other.

With best wishes
Penny Haughan

18 March 2020

Dear All

Following my email to you yesterday I think that it might be useful to share our thoughts on the examination period in more detail.

This information is relevant to all Liverpool Hope students, including those studying at our partner colleges Holy Cross, Carmel College, and St Mary's College. It is applicable to students in Foundation Year, Level C, I and H and students at Masters Level (both Integrated Masters and Postgraduate Taught).

We have decided that examinations scheduled for May/ June 2020 will not run in the usual way. Your scheduled examination will be replaced with an assessment task that you will complete and submit in a way more similar to that used with coursework. I cannot be absolutely specific about the format of every examination in this email, since subjects will be using a range of innovative ways to ensure that your alternative assessment is fair and has parity with the planned examination.

Some of you will have further questions when you read this email, for example:

- How will the alternative assessment be made available, and when?
- How long will I have to complete the assessment?
- What will happen if I have a learning support plan?
- What if I am ill at the time of the alternative task?

At this point I do not have all of the information needed to answer your questions. Therefore, I will ask your subject tutors and learning support to contact you with the specific details you need in the near future.

I wanted to send this email at an early stage of planning so that any concerns you have about the forthcoming examinations will be alleviated. Unless your Subject or Learning Support tutors advise you otherwise I do not envisage you being required to come to campus to complete your examinations. Learning has been moved on line, and your examinations have now followed to ensure your safety and that of your family and friends. Of course, please remember that the University campuses remains open at this time and you can access learning spaces and other services both remotely and here at Hope. Students based at our partner Colleges will have been contacted about the range of services available at the present time.

I hope this email offers the clarity that I know is important to you. We will continue to keep in regular touch with you all and will provide further details as soon as it is available.

Look after yourselves

Best wishes

Penny Haughan

19 March 2020

Dear All

Another day has passed and the situation in the country is giving everyone more challenges. I know that many of you are concerned about your studies and also about your families. I am not writing you a lengthy message about University matters today. I simply want to say to all of you that you are in my thoughts and that we will find a way through this. Please be reassured that I want you all to succeed.

I will write again tomorrow but in the meantime, don't forget about the FAQs on the website and the sdw team, who are there to help and support you.

Please look after yourselves

Best wishes
Penny Haughan

20 March 2020

Dear All

I thought it would be good to catch up with you before the weekend. Things are quiet at the University without you being around as much as usual. I am particularly missing those of you who wave as you pass my window. on a normal day.

The University Senate has met this afternoon and has made the sad decision that we will need to delay this Summer's graduation ceremonies until early December. I know that some of you will be disappointed by this, but what we are hoping is that it will give as many people as possible the chance to finish their studies and be at the ceremony. This is particularly in the light of the many of you who have written to me with concerns about being unwell or having children at home making studying difficult. In these cases there may be opportunities for extension of deadlines.

Notwithstanding the date of the ceremony, we will endeavour to publish degree results in the early Summer for anyone who has completed their studies. We will also publish a second tranche of degree results for the cohort who have been unwell etc and have needed to submit their work later. Obviously, there is a lot of detail to clarify on this matter, so I would be grateful if you would have patience whilst the Registrar gets some clarity on the relevant dates. I will fill you in further next week.

A similar situation will apply to students in other levels. Where results are complete we will publish progression outcomes in the early Summer. Where assessment outcomes are delayed we will aim to publish in September and you will be able to move onto the next stage of your studies.

I hope that these decisions will provide a little bit of breathing space for those of you who are concerned about illness and caring responsibilities. As I said, I would be really grateful if you would wait until the detail is fully formed and I share it with you before sending in queries. I will also ask that the website FAQs are updated asap.

Please try to get some well earned rest this weekend and get out into the sunshine if you can. I will be back to you on Monday.

Look after yourselves

Best wishes
Penny

23 March 2020

Dear All

I hope that you managed to take some time to get out in the sunshine over the weekend.

I know that some of you are unwell and I wish you a speedy recovery.

I also know that some of you have children or other relatives that you are caring for at home. This will make studying more of a challenge. Please don't get overwhelmed - you should contact your subject for advice on deadlines or other support if you need to do so.

The Counselling and Mental Health and Well-being teams remain in operation providing help and support to all students during normal business hours, Monday to Friday during term-time. The Learning Support Team are also still operating, providing help and advice to students during normal business hours, Monday to Friday. Although face-to-face support is not available at present, each well-being service is able to provide advice and support appointments via telephone or video chat. To access counselling or mental health support, simply email sdw@hope.ac.uk. To access help from a Learning Support Adviser, simply email learningsupport@hope.ac.uk. Once they receive your email, one of the team will get back to you as quickly as possible. If your preference is to have a video-chat call rather than a telephone appointment, you will need to download and sign-up with the free Zoom app (<https://zoom.us/signup>). Please let the team know the best telephone number to contact you on as some of the telephone numbers listed within your university record may have changed since you registered.

We have made the decision to close the University library from 12pm tomorrow (Tuesday). The online services both in terms of resources and advice from staff will remain open as normal. You can contact the team in a wide variety of ways which are listed on the website. For email and chat you can use AskALibrarian@hope.ac.uk.

The Careers and Employability service is also operating online to give you advice and support. You can access all their services through the details on the Student Gateway <https://www.hope.ac.uk/gateway/students/careersandemployability/>.

When I wrote to you on Friday I explained that Graduation has been moved towards the end of the Advent term. We are currently in discussion with the Cathedral about the most appropriate dates to use and I will get the information to you as soon as I have it.

Please look after yourselves.

Best wishes

Penny Haughan

24 March 2020

Dear All

This is a very difficult day for the whole country. I would urge you all to heed the Prime Ministers request to stay at home. This is for the good of the health of every one of us.

I know that many of you are concerned about what this means for your studies. Please do not worry about this - we will do everything we can to help you obtain the results you deserve. I want you to be able to cross the platform in the cathedral in December 2020 or in subsequent years as a proud Hope graduate and we will find a way to make sure that you do so.

This is going to involve much flexibility on all of our parts, patterns of submission of work will have to change as will deadlines for marking and publication of results. I have been in discussion with the Vice Chancellor and the Registrar today to see what we might do generally about assessment deadlines to ease the pressure on all of you. I hope that I will be able to get a more detailed message about this to all of you tomorrow.

It is a sad day here on campus. Everywhere is deserted and quiet. We are working really hard to get everything made secure and residential students made comfortable, so that the majority of us can go home and leave the campus and the residential students in the safe hands of the security and residential life teams.

My thoughts are with each and every one of you. Look after ourselves. I will write again tomorrow.

With best wishes
Penny Haughan

25 March 20

Dear All

It is a beautiful sunny day. I hope that you have taken the opportunity to at least glance out of the window, or to take a walk in the fresh air.

This is my first day working at home. It has been rather odd and my cat tried to sit on my keyboard whilst I was talking to the Vice Chancellor, but I'm sure I will get used to it.

I know that you are all facing challenges. Many of you are caring for others who are ill or children who are at home. I know that this is very difficult particularly if you are trying to study at the same time.

I told you yesterday that I was meeting the VC and the Heads of School today about assessments. They agreed with a proposal that I put to them. This is intended to make the assessment requirements and deadlines flexible if you need them to be, but to retain some structure for those of you who find that more reassuring. This is quite a difficult task but I think we have come up with a solution which will give you all some options.

This means that there will be a change in the regulations for both those intending to graduate this Summer and also those of you who will need to progress between levels. I am working with the Registrar to get the details to you tomorrow. The delay is simply that I want to make sure that what we send out is as easily interpreted as possible (the detail of the University regulations is not for the faint hearted). There will also be a change in how you request extensions which I think will also help.

We closed the campuses down as much as we could yesterday. There are still around 120 students in the halls of residence - please think of them - they are all away from their families at this time and some are unwell. The SRT team are staying to look after them and I am very grateful to them for this.

You are all in my thoughts. Stay safe.

Best wishes
Penny Haughan

26 March 20

Dear

Another sunny day. Let's all try to enjoy the feel of warm sunshine on our faces.

There's lots going on at the University today. I have two very important pieces of information that I would like to share with you. These relate to assessment/progression/degree results and to residential life. These decisions are freshly made this morning so they are hot off the press. You may need to bear with us whilst our systems catch up with them.

1. Assessment /progression/degree results

Level H and Integrated Level M students:

A degree result will be calculated for any student who has successfully completed 90 credits of assessment (rather than the normal 120) which must include the dissertation or equivalent. For those who choose to complete 120 credits of assessment (which includes the alternative assessment in place of the examination) the best 90 credits (but always including the dissertation or equivalent) will be used to calculate the degree result.

Current Level F, C and I students:

Students currently in Level F, C and I will be permitted to progress to the next academic Level in September provided their overall profile shows that they have satisfactorily engaged in their studies. Students will be required to submit all of their coursework but will not be required to complete any alternative assessment in place of the examination.

These are very significant changes to what you were expecting to happen in the Summer. I know that you will have lots of questions and in both of these cases there are very much more detailed documents which you can find here for [Levels H and M](#) and here for [Levels F, C and I](#)

.These explain how these changed processes will work in practice. I do think, however, that these changed arrangements should give you all the opportunity to succeed in these difficult times, whilst not devaluing the quality of your degree. I want you all to be able to cross the platform in the Cathedral and be proud of what you have achieved. I know that you will have lots of questions. Please be patient whilst we get this put into place, it is a big job for the administrative teams and your academic tutors. If you are concerned that these arrangements will not be an improvement, even given the current national crisis, you should let me know.

2. Residential Life

Our prime objective throughout this time has been, and remains, to ensure the safety of our students and staff. I am really glad that the majority of you who are hall residents have now been able to return to your families. For those of you who remain on campus, we will of course continue to provide as much support as we can. The SRT, campus security and residential life staff are available to help you whenever you need it.

26 March 20

We have received a number of queries regarding the accommodation contracts and whether the University intends to release students early if they have returned home. Under the terms of the contract a student can only terminate their contract in exceptional circumstances and whilst we are not obliged to allow early termination, unless you fall within one of the exceptional circumstances, we have decided to allow you to terminate ending on 20 April 2020. This decision has been made to help alleviate any financial concerns you may be suffering from due to the current crisis we are all facing. If you wish to accept this offer and want to formally terminate your Accommodation Contract then you will not be charged for the third term which is due to start on 20/04/2020. Please note that this does not affect you if you are still living on campus, you will be charged as normal.

A separate communication will be sent to you tomorrow, outlining the practical steps you need to take to terminate your contract. As there are a range of payment plans in place, the accommodation team now face a major task in sorting out the final charges / refunds for each student. I would be grateful for your patience with this process, please be assured that the team are working as quickly as they can and will be in touch. Please try not to contact them - this will just slow the process down.

I hope these decisions have addressed some of your concerns. They are certainly the two things you have been writing to me most about.

I'm thinking of you all at this difficult time. Try to stay strong.

My new life at my kitchen table is beginning to feel slightly less weird. The cat seems to appreciate me being at home at least!

Best wishes

Penny Haughan
Pro Vice-Chancellor (Student Life and Learning)

27 March 2020

Dear All

I am grateful for the positive reaction to the announcements about Undergraduate assessment and progression we made yesterday. I think these will make a big difference to all of you. There have been a few queries. We have been answering these individually but next week we will add some FAQs on the website guided by the questions we have been asked - which I hope will be helpful.

We are now doing some work on postgraduate awards, to see how we might facilitate students on taught masters courses. This is slightly more complicated because the structures of the various awards are so different. Please be patient. I will get these arrangements to you as soon as possible.

It was with great sadness that we made the decision to postpone the Summer 2020 graduation ceremonies. I am pleased to confirm that these will now be held 1- 3 December 2020 in the Metropolitan Cathedral. You should assume that your allocation of day remains the same. If you are not yet allocated to a ceremony there is plenty of time to do this. The Graduation team will be in contact in due course. I am hopeful that these dates will allow all of you who are unwell or have caring responsibilities enough time to complete your studies and join us for Graduation.

Today is officially the last day of term. It has been a difficult few weeks and the future is still rather unclear. The University has had to make some really significant changes in a very short time and I am grateful to all of you for your support and understanding over this period.

I am also really grateful for all your personal messages to me - I am very touched by them

I will keep in touch with you over Easter - it might not be quite as often and might include more about my cat.

My thoughts are with you all.

Best wishes
Penny

30 March 2020

Dear All

Given it is now the holidays I was going to stop writing to you all, but you've been sending me such lovely messages that I have decided to keep going. I am also pleased to have helped some of you resolve some issues. There are a few to sort out still and I thank you for your patience.

It is a quiet day at the University. We had a Rectorate Meeting this morning. This is the senior team who have the responsibility of running the University. It is chaired by the Vice Chancellor. We talked about online teaching, the changes to residential contracts and what September might be like at the University amongst other things. Let's look forward to being back on campus in September and being able to spend time with tutors and friends in person. I know lots of you miss this.

I anticipate that by Wednesday I will have an answer about PGT outcomes and degree calculations, which I know some of you are waiting for. I am also aware that we still need to make decisions about PGCE celebrations - I don't think they will work in December alongside graduation because most of you will already be in school by then. We will find another time to do this - it is really important we celebrate your success.

By popular demand I am enclosing a picture of my cat. He is called Arty which is short for Artemis Fowl. My daughters named him when they were younger - after their favourite character in a book. Artemis Fowl is a teenage criminal mastermind (you should read the books if you haven't done so - I enjoyed them!). Unfortunately Arty lives up to his name in every way. If there is trouble to be had, he is in the middle of it!

Look after yourselves. Stay safe.
I am thinking of you all.

Best wishes
Penny

31 March 2020

Dear All

Thank you so much for all the great replies you sent me yesterday, it's good to stay in touch with all of you. I hope I have addressed all the issues you raised or have passed them on to people who can help you. I really enjoyed the pictures of your pets too!

Another busy day - you might be interested that I met with the recruitment team this morning about how we make open days work without applicants coming on to Campus. You'll be pleased to hear that we have a lot of new students wanting to join us in September 2020 but, believe it or not, the cycle has already started for September 2021 recruitment. I think open days are going to be a big challenge, the team have made some great progress but if you have any good ideas about how we can do Summer open days if the campuses and the colleges are still closed, I would be really glad to hear them.

Two important messages for today:

Firstly, I have had a few students in Level I write to me about the calculation of their degree result now that we are going to have a yes/no approach to progression from I to H. Understandably there is concern about the status of your Level I coursework marks. So just for clarity, the situation is as follows: We have made the decision that you will not get an overall grade for your second year but will get a progress or retake status awarded, so that you have some reassurance about moving onto next year. This status will be based on a broad decision related to engagement with your studies and if you have submitted all your assessments will be an easy decision for the teams to make. The marks you achieve for your coursework will stay on the system and will not simply be discarded. They will definitely be shown on your transcript of achievement. We are working on how best to calculate degree results next year using your full profile of achievement. We haven't finished on what this will look like yet and we need to get it right so we are taking a little time to consider it. The most important thing to do is to model the solution to ensure that no student is disadvantaged. I will let you know when this has been finalised.

Secondly, we have been contacted by Merseyside police about students in private accommodation having parties. The police don't know what Universities these students are studying at and I would hope that LHU students are not among them. Please would you all ensure, for the health of the whole population, that you follow the Government guidelines on social distancing. It will not be forever but it will save lives. There will be plenty of time for parties for all of us when this is over.

I have been thinking of you all today. I bought Easter Eggs for my girls (who are older than this implies) and then realised I wouldn't be able to give them to them, as they have had to stay at University because of what they are studying. They are lucky to be with friends. If you have friends or colleagues who are separated from their families please make that extra effort to be in touch with them - we all need to look after each other in this strange time.

Arty on the other hand has had a normal sort of morning. He chewed my computer cable and then appeared with a fish (don't ask where it came from!). He is now sleeping the sleep of the not so innocent beside me.

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With best wishes, stay safe
Penny Haughan