

5 Jan 21

Dear All

I am writing to you all following the Prime Ministers statement last night. Obviously, it is very disappointing that we have moved from a situation of optimism before Christmas to the rapid imposition of a lockdown before the term has started. It is however, critical that we continue to make the health and safety of the whole Hope community the highest priority in all that we do.

The Prime Minister has made it clear that everyone should stay at home and only essential travel is allowed. This means that you should stay where you are currently located. All Hope teaching will be online throughout the period of the lockdown, so there is no need for you to travel to Liverpool if you are currently elsewhere in the UK or are overseas.

Those of you who are resident in Hope accommodation will receive a separate note from me explaining the arrangements for halls of residence.

It is the University's intention to start to reintroduce face to face teaching when it is safe to do so. We will only do this when the infection rate and the R number indicate that this is the case. You will be given plenty of advance warning of when this will happen so that you can make appropriate arrangements. We will obviously not consider doing so until after the end of the current lockdown.

In the meantime, the University is fully operational. Your teaching will continue online and the resources of the University continue to be available to you. This includes the services of the student support teams and the resources in the library. There will also be IT provision available for those of you on campus.

Your tutors will be in contact to confirm teaching arrangements for the coming term. The Gateway team are available to help with any queries.

Please look after yourselves and those around you.

Best wishes
Penny Haughan

5 Jan 21

Message to students in accommodation

Dear

Following the Prime Ministers statement last night, the University would like to clarify the situation with regards to students who live in the halls of residence. We are aware that some of you have already arrived in halls and some of you are still at home. The Prime Minister has made it clear that it is not safe to leave wherever you are at this moment in time and that from tonight the law will prohibit you from doing so. You should therefore stay where you are.

Students who have not yet returned to halls of residence should not travel to the campus unless their personal safety or capacity to study is compromised by remaining where they are currently located. In these instances, please inform us before travelling.

With this in mind, the University has decided to give a rent holiday of 8 weeks to all resident students who spend the lockdown period away from the halls of residence. This means that if you are not in halls over the lockdown period, your overall invoice for rent for the year will be reduced by the equivalent of 8 weeks of residence costs. In the late spring after this lockdown, some students may need to stay on in their accommodation to finish research projects and other examination requirements such as design and art projects, or placement requirements. If you extend your use of your accommodation beyond the end date of your contract to finish your remaining studies, there will be no further charge.

It remains the University's intention to start to reintroduce face to face teaching when it is safe to do so. This means that those of you who are currently at home will be able to return to the halls of residence when this period of lockdown is over and teaching is able to be moved from its current format. Your accommodation will be remain reserved for you so that you can return at this time.

Students already in the halls of residence and who need to stay on campus, will be required to follow strict lockdown arrangements in line with the Government requirements for the whole population. This will include a requirement for taking part in regular testing which will be available on campus where possible. This is to protect you from infection and is required by the Government guidance during this emergency.

Students currently in a quarantine/isolation period should continue to follow guidance from the Covid/Residential Life team. When this is over you will need to follow lockdown rules.

Pastoral care services will be available to all those who remain in residence. The University continues to be fully operational, your teaching will continue in an online format and student support and library services will be available.

I would urge you all to take particular care for the health and safety of yourself and others around you.

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If you have any queries the Gateway and Residential Life teams are available to give you advice and support.

Best wishes
Penny Haughan

7 Jan 21

Dear

We are once again in very difficult times. It seems unbelievable that such a big change to our lives can happen in just a few days. Obviously, the Prime Ministers announcement of the lockdown came very unexpectedly and we have not yet received the formal government guidance so we are doing our best to put appropriate arrangements in place in the absence of this information.

I want to reassure you that we understand how challenging that being in lockdown will be for all of you. Many of you have caring responsibilities or are trying to study whilst having your children at home. Some of you are essential or frontline workers and are dealing with the pandemic at the front line. I know that others of you are anxious about your own health and the wellbeing of those around you. Some of you are away from your families and are naturally worried about them. Please rest assured that we will do anything we can to help you in coping with this situation. Your health and safety and that of the Hope staff are our highest priority. This is closely followed by our commitment to ensure that you have the support you need to succeed in your studies over the next few months. This includes both issues related to your studies and also any other matters which we might be able to help you with.

At the moment we are still in the Christmas holiday period. Once the term starts your tutors will be in contact to make sure you understand the arrangements for teaching for this term. We will be as flexible as we can to accommodate your needs, so if you need extensions for assignments or you need to access teaching materials at different times than usual, please let your tutors or the teams in your school/department office know. We are very aware how difficult it is to study when you have children at home or other responsibilities to cope with or you are struggling with your own health, if any of these apply to you please talk to us so that we can find a way to help you.

Once term starts and the Heads of School/Department are able to meet with your tutors, we will start to consider the assessment patterns for the remainder of the academic year. This will take a short period of time but be assured that we are considering it and will let you know of any changes as soon as possible.

If you are due to be on placement this term I know that your tutors are already working to try to give you an option to continue if you want to do this. Many of you have already told me how grateful you are to them for the creative way they have approached this over the last few days. If you are due on placement at the start of term and have not yet heard from your academic team then it would be a good idea to contact them.

It is still our intention to return to face to face teaching at some point this year, but at the moment we need to wait to see how the situation in relation to the virus changes in the next few weeks. We will not think about introducing face to face until after the PM declares the full lockdown is over and then only if the local infection rate decreases significantly and R number for the NW improves markedly. I will keep you informed of our thoughts over the coming weeks.

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Please remember that you can still access the resources of the University, albeit in a different format than under normal circumstances:

The library is offering a request and collect service which you can access through the website. The subject librarians and other staff are available to give you any individual support that you require. You can email askalibrarian@hope.ac.uk and they will get back to you.

If you are on any other campuses there are IT facilities which are available for you to use. These are in the Gateway Building and Eden 001 at Hope Park, the Student Success Zone at the Creative Campus and in the IT Lab at Aigburth Park. If you are using these facilities please make sure that you follow guidelines relating to cleaning of your workspace as thoroughly as possible.

Student Development and Wellbeing have a full service running online. You can make an appointment to speak to one of the counsellors, mental health advisors or a member of the learning support team. There are also daily drop in appointments online if you need to speak to someone urgently. You can contact the team through sdw@hope.ac.uk.

If you are struggling financially at present or simply need some financial advice, you can contact the Student Funds and Finance team who will be pleased to help you. You should email financequeries@hope.ac.uk for issues related to your fees or studentfunds@hope.ac.uk for more general advice on funds available to you.

If you are an international student, this is a particularly difficult time for you to be so far away from your home. The staff from the International Hub will be in contact with you to make sure you have everything you need. You can contact them at internationalhub@hope.ac.uk.

The University is committed to helping you succeed. I want to reassure you again that we will do whatever we can to get you through these difficult times. Please stay in contact with your tutors and with the support services – they are all here to help you.

Look after yourselves
Best wishes

Penny Haughan

13 Jan 21

Dear

I hope that you are all well and that you are looking after yourselves and those around you. I know that being in lockdown over such an extended period is really hard on you. It is doubly so if you are looking after others, particularly if you have children who are learning at home whilst you are trying to study or if you are part of the frontline workforce. It is really important that you try to find at least a little time for yourselves.

I am writing today, in addition to my normal Friday message, because I wanted to share an important decision that the University senior team has made this morning.

We have been considering the situation with regard to examinations this Summer and we have decided that all formal written exams, which would normally be done in the examination halls/rooms, will not go ahead.

Instead of these examinations, you will be required to complete an alternative assessment, which will be done in an online format. The nature of these alternatives to the formal examination will be decided in the near future by your subject and your tutors will provide you with the details as soon as they have been agreed. You should expect to be asked to complete this work at the time of the previously agreed exam weeks, which are available on the academic calendar [here](#).

If you are expecting to have practical/performance/viva voce examinations then these will remain as originally published by your subject at the start of the year. They will, however, be kept under constant review and the format will be changed if it becomes obvious that they can not be run safely in the published time scale/structure.

Your subject Moodle is the best place to check to make sure that you understand the full pattern of assessments that you are required to submit before the end of the academic year and what the appropriate deadlines are. As I told you last week, we will be as flexible as we can for those of you who might require extensions. You should use the normal process to request an extension if you need one. You must, however, make sure that you submit all assessments and/or meet all requirements of your course.

We have made this decision in the interests of keeping all students and staff as safe as possible, whilst retaining the level of academic quality that you have come to expect from the University. We are mindful that circumstances beyond the control of either students or the University should not end up having a negative impact on students in terms of their outcomes. We are currently considering how we will do this and I will include further detail in my notes to you over the coming weeks as it is agreed.

Please look after yourselves. I will write again as normal on Friday.

Best wishes
Penny Haughan

13 Jan 21

13 Jan 21 NOH students

Dear

I hope that you are all well and that you are looking after yourselves and those around you. I know that being in lockdown over such an extended period is really hard on you. It is doubly so if you are looking after others, particularly if you have children who are learning at home whilst you are trying to study or if you are part of the frontline workforce. It is really important that you try to find at least a little time for yourselves.

I am writing to let you know that the University has decided that all formal written exams, which would normally be done in the examination halls/rooms, will not go ahead in Summer 2021.

Instead of these examinations, you will be required to complete an alternative assessment, which will be done in an online format. The nature of these alternatives to the formal examination will be decided in the near future by your subject and your tutors will provide you with the details as soon as they have been agreed. You should expect to be asked to complete this work at the time of the previously agreed exam weeks, which are available on the academic calendar [here](#).

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Please look after yourselves.

Best wishes
Penny Haughan

15 Jan 21

Dear All

Another week passes in lockdown. I know that it seems endless, but we all need to focus our minds on the fact that there is now a way forward. As the vaccine continues to be rolled out, we can begin to see a return of some sort of normality in the not too distant future. We need to be filled with Hope. In the same way, I see the daffodils starting to raise their heads in the flowerbed outside my window. At the moment they are only small green shoots, but these little glimpses of green herald the Spring.

I am back working at home, inevitably with a cat competing for my keyboard. Many of you travelled through the last lockdown with news of my cats and have asked for it to continue through this one. I am going to do this from now on, but I will keep the cat news in the postscript to my emails so you can avoid it if you wish.

I wrote to many of you earlier in the week about the arrangements for the examination period. If you need clarification about this for your subject you should speak to your tutors or your School/Department administrators.

The Vice Chancellor and the Heads of School/Department are currently having a series of meetings to talk about other aspects related to assessments, progression and awards. Once they have made any further decisions I will let you know the outcomes as quickly as possible.

I know that some of you are unwell or have considerable responsibilities competing for your time at the moment. Given the current situation, your subjects will be as flexible as they can if you are struggling with deadlines for assignments. If you need an extension for any piece of coursework, you need to fill in the extension request form which you can find on the [Understanding your degree](#) section of the website.

The Student Union and Hope Social are currently running some refreshers activities which I would encourage you all to be part of. You can find the full programme [here](#) I would particularly draw your attention to online Big Shop Bingo at 8pm tonight!

The SU have also asked me to tell you about their free Virtual Wellness Workshop on Thursday 21st January 1-2pm. Learn to Combat Zoom exhaustion and tension at your desk with relaxing self massage to target headaches and easy to do stretch skills which will ease any stress in the upper body. The workshop will be guided by the Well School. Zoom Meeting ID: 914 3169 3672 Passcode: 638739.

Please remember that there are a wide range of sources of mental health support available to you. You can access the University Mental Health Advisors and Counsellors via sdw@hope.ac.uk. They have daily drop in appointments if you need one. Alternatively you can access online support - there are a range of options listed on the website [here](#).

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Above all, the most important thing for everyone at present is to stay safe and well. This period of lockdown is intended to keep us all from harm and I would encourage you to stay indoors as much as you can and to follow all of the guidance about social distancing, handwashing and wearing your masks if you need to go out. Once the lockdown is over we will be able to review the situation regarding access to the University campuses, but for the moment we need to stay indoors for everyone's safety.

As always, if you need any advice or any questions answered, the Gateway team are available to help. You can contact them via gateway@hope.ac.uk or 0151 291 3813.

I'm thinking of you all.

Best wishes
Penny

22 Jan 21

Dear All

Another week passes in lockdown. This week, just to add to the difficult times we find ourselves living through, we have also had to brave storm Christoph. As many of you know, I live in Warrington, so the last 24 hours have been somewhat interesting in terms of the quantity of water I have found myself surrounded by. Fortunately it never got into the house, but the garden and the road have been like a lake. The level has dropped this afternoon and my daffodils and snowdrops have reappeared unscathed. Hopefully things will continue to improve over the weekend.

I continue to worry about you all. This is such an unexpected and unwelcome situation. I need you all to know that as a University we are committed to doing what is needed to get you all through. I have included some of the things you need to be aware of in the three sections below:

Assessment Matters: We will be as flexible as possible with requests for extensions. If you can not get your assignments finished by the published date because you are unwell, have caring responsibilities or have other mitigating factors please do not hesitate to ask for an extension. We want you to have the best chance of success. As I have discussed before, we have replaced the traditional examinations with alternatives so that you can complete them remotely. I am in the final stages of agreeing these alternatives with your subjects and you should receive them soon. We are also more generally committed to ensuring that your outcomes for the year or for your degree result are not negatively affected by the situation. We will be putting in a range of mitigations to ensure that this is not the case and the Assessment Boards for your School or Department will use these as appropriate when they agree your marks.

Teaching Matters: At the moment all of our teaching is going ahead online. The only exceptions are for those of you who are currently on placement in schools or other settings. We have also limited access to the campuses to those who are in residence. Obviously we would like to get back to onsite teaching but we also need to be as cautious as possible whilst the current restrictions are in place. The Government has announced a review date of 15 February. Once we have received the information which they share on that day we will review the situation in terms of both teaching and access to the campuses and I will let you know of any proposed changes.

Support Matters: The support services continue to operate and are there for you to access. There are drop in slots with SDW every day. If you need mental health or counselling support please don't hesitate to contact the team at sdw@hope.ac.uk. You can also access our disability team through this email address if you think that your learning support plan needs updating. The library continues to offer their popular request and collect service in addition to the wide range of electronic resources. If you come across a book which we do not have electronically and you can not access request and collect, please contact the library team askalibrarian@hope.ac.uk who may be able to purchase an electronic copy to help you. I am aware that some of you are struggling financially, especially where your opportunities for employment have temporarily disappeared. If you need

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financial help contact the student funds team who will be able to advise you. studentfunds@hope.ac.uk

The University Covid test centre is open on all three campuses at various times through the week. The Department of Education has asked us to ensure that everyone who is on site is tested twice a week. If you are resident in the halls at present please ensure that you do this, it really only takes 10 minutes and it is to ensure that everyone is kept as safe as possible. If the times of opening of the Hope testing centres are not convenient you can use one of the local testing sites - our Liverpool Public Health Colleagues have confirmed that you should use them. The lists of available sites can be found [here](#). Please be aware that staff on site may ask you for evidence of the date/outcome of your most recent test.

On a completely different note, I continue to be incredibly impressed with the support that HopeSU have provided to you over these difficult months. They have asked me to include the following announcement about their new hub and about an event happening tonight (Friday):

We are proud to announce a new events partnership and hub for all our activities, check out our social media (@liverpoolhopesu) for more info and guidance on signing up - <https://hopesu.native.fm/>

As Re-freshers winds down, the SU are bringing you the biggest event of the month – REBEL BINGO. Tickets are FREE, but you need to sign up via our native events platform, a stream link will be sent to you once you have signed up. What is REBEL BINGO?

Experience bingo like never before! Rebel Bingo takes a completely unique twist on the concept of traditional bingo and throws DJs, stage performers and a brilliant array of top prizes and novelty prizes into the mix. But that's not all, don't forget the many rounds of bingo you'll play, in addition to the totally electric atmosphere that can't be found anywhere else. Streamed virtually @ 7.30-9PM.

it sounds great! Let me know how Rebel Bingo goes!

so that's about all for today. I hope that you have a good weekend. Look after yourselves and stay safe.

Best wishes
Penny

29 Jan 21

Dear All

Although the national indicators are beginning to improve, it still seems a long time since we entered this lockdown and a long time until it will end. I know this is a really difficult time; you are working on the front line, homeschooling, caring for relatives, keeping up with your studies and have many other calls on your time. Some of you are dealing with sadness and grief which must seem overwhelming at times. Please try to look after yourselves as well as those you have responsibility for.

Across the University and the country we have been talking a lot about mental health this week. One of the campaigns that has caught my attention are the 5 steps you can take to improve your mental health and wellbeing. Trying these things could help you feel more positive and able to get the most out of life. You can read more about this common framework to promote wellbeing, through the [NHS](#) and charities such as [Mind](#). I think it is really worth having a look.

My colleagues in Student Development & Wellbeing recommend this [podcast](#) as a good introduction to mindfulness and its benefits. They also tell me that a focus on **breathing** can be mindful and relaxing – this quick and simple belly breathing exercise podcast from [NHS Inform](#) is a good place to start. The University also runs meditation sessions every Friday, 1 - 1.30pm. This is online via Zoom. For more information and to be sent the link to join, please contact Marie-Therese Lacey via [laceym@hope.ac.uk](mailto:lacey@hope.ac.uk).

If you are struggling with your mental health or simply need someone to talk to you should contact [Student Development and Wellbeing](#) through sdw@hope.ac.uk or you could access some of the [online resources](#) which have been made available to students. There is loads of great information here - it's definitely worth a look.

On the academic front, just to remind you that we will reconsider the situation with respect to face to face teaching once the PM has issued his planned statement on 15 February. I will write to you with our plans for the remainder of the academic year as soon as my academic colleagues have had a chance to discuss the information. You are already aware that we have changed all formal exams into online versions of various types. Your tutors will discuss these with you. Just to be clear, you will need to complete all of the assessments that are set for your cohort. I also want to emphasise again that we have made a commitment that you will not be disadvantaged in your progression or award outcomes as a result of the pandemic.

I am aware that the circumstances some of you find yourselves in means that studying has become particularly difficult. I am thinking of those of you who are homeschooling but I am sure that there are others as well. If you need some additional support to allow you to keep studying, you need to talk to us about what can be done to help. We have already introduced flexible extensions but if there are additional arrangements that would help please talk to your tutor or Head of School so that they are aware of your difficulties and can discuss potential solutions.

Whether you are living on campus or offsite I have been asked by the police to remind you about keeping to your agreed residential bubbles. They have also asked me to remind you that you must not hold parties in halls of residence or elsewhere until the lockdown rules are eased. This is really important to prevent further spread of the virus. Please also remember to use your masks and to wash your hands as regularly as possible.

Please also remember that if you are living on any of the campuses or are visiting to use the facilities, you must get tested twice a week, either at the University test centres or at one local to the University. This is to keep everyone as safe as possible and has been requested by the Department of Education. The University expects

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you to do this. As an incentive next week the SU will be distributing goody bags to everyone who gets tested onsite.

Look after yourselves

Best wishes

Penny