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5th January 2021

Dear Students,

I am writing again following the Prime Minister's announcement at 8pm yesterday (4th Jan). The Prime Minister confirmed that Universities, Colleges, and Schools are required to remain closed to most students until the February half term. I have therefore updated the key points below, as well as provided additional information about financial support available.

Each point has changed and been updated so please do read the details of this update carefully.

1. **Online delivery from the 5th January** - From the morning of the **5th January 2021** UCSD will be moving to online delivery, in line with the Department for Education (DfE requirements). As per the Prime Minister's announcement we currently expect this to last until the 12th February (with half term taking place the following week). This remains under review by the DfE. If this changes I will be in touch.
2. **Synchronistic delivery** – For this period your delivery will be mainly synchronistic and recorded where possible, and will follow your normal timetabled pattern. This will follow the same approach as the end of the last term.
3. **Accessing support** – We firmly believe that a unique characteristic of UCSD is the support provided by both academic staff and our University Centre team.

We actively encourage you to seek support as and when required, it is normal for most students at some point require some support.

You can continue to access any support that you might require including Disability, Wellbeing, Study Skills and Employability, remotely (via phone, email and MS Teams). You can also find information and advice on our dedicated [Student Support Hub webpage](#). I strongly encourage you to make use of these online resources and seek and support required.

4. **Accessing Facilities and Buildings** - The following South Devon College buildings will have limited opening during the period until the 12th February
 - a. 5th Jan – 15th Jan - Vantage Point building will be open (all other buildings will be closed)

- b. 18th Jan – 12th Feb – University Centre will be open (all other buildings will be closed)

During this time, we ask that you only access our physical facilities if you do not have appropriate study spaces at home. These should not be used for social purposes or meeting your peers, this can be facilitated online via MS Teams.

If you wish to access buildings and facilities, please arrange this in advance by emailing university@southdevon.ac.uk. This will enable us to ensure Covid testing (this should be undertaken 24 hours in advanced of your intended entry).

5. **Library** – the Click & Collect service will be running as usual. The collections shelf is situated outside the level 3 LRC entrance. (Or the University Centre when Vantage Point is closed). To request a book or journal, simply fill out [this form](#).
6. **Placements** - If you are a student undertaking placement, you will be given additional guidance about your placements from your programme team.
7. **Covid Testing** – We are working with local Public Health Officials and still receiving information about testing of students as part of the national rollout. We will be in touch when we have more information. Any student who wishes to study in one of the college building will require a Covid test prior to commencing their days study, hence the need to confirm your intention via email as above.
8. **Bursary and Hardship funding** - We plan to make the second bursary payment by the 22nd January. The Office for Students have also allocated some additional funding for students facing specific hardship. We will provide more details of the process for applying for hardship funding later in the week.

It is possible that a small number of programmes that have Professional Accreditation may return to classroom teaching sooner, if this is the case we will be in touch with students on those programmes separately.

Our Higher Education Student Support [Hub](#) always remains available for you during these difficult times and can provide support with areas of academic development and practice, employability and your next steps, wellbeing and counselling as well as support any students with a disability. Details are linked above.

Our [FAQs](#) provide more information for you about your experience, with specific information about Track and Trace, and guidance for those students living in Houses of Multiple Occupation.

Final remarks

Our continued focus is to ensure that you are able to engage in learning, and proceed with assessments to achieve the best possible outcomes. We will continue to do this through our committed, passionate and dedicated academic teams, as well as the wider study skills, wellbeing and disability and registry teams.

I will continue to write to all students to provide essential updates as we have been since March 2020. All these updates are also available on our dedicated Covid 19 page on our [website](#). I would also encourage you to revisit a previous email sent on the [26th November](#) where we outlined changes to our regulations for this year, which provide a [safety net for your studies](#), including changes to Extenuating Circumstances, additional Credit for referral and Extended Referral credit.

If you do not already do so, please consider following our Twitter, Instagram and Facebook pages for further updates, all our handles are on the bottom right of our UCSD webpages – under ‘stay connected’.

We continue to wish you all the best at this difficult and challenging time, and we are all thinking of you and your families.

If you have any questions or concerns please contact us on 08000 213181 or email university@southdevon.ac.uk.

Best wishes,

Alastair Wilson
Head of Higher Education and Academic Registrar

