



18 March 2020

Dear Students

On Monday 16th March 2020 you received a letter in which we told you about the decision taken by the STADIO School of Education to suspend all lectures for On Campus/Contact Learning (CL) students until Monday 13th April and to continue teaching, learning and assessment online. We also informed our Off Campus/Distance Learning (DL) students that this will also affect them.

I am sure you have many questions and we will continue to answer them over the next few weeks.

PART A: What does this mean for you if you are an On-Campus/Contact Learning student?

For the rest of this week and for the first two weeks of next term (31st March to 9th April 2020) your lecture room will be your module ECI site.

Your lecturer will continue to communicate with you via email and/or the ECI site. He/she will adapt the face-to-face lectures that would have been presented to you in the lecture venue into online format. This could include recorded lectures, voice-over PowerPoint presentations, notes, readings and activities such as quizzes or online forums to get you actively engaged with the material and interacting with one another. You will be able to do this from any place where you have wifi and data OR you can come onto a campus to work on your device. We have implemented a number of Health and Safety procedures on campus which you will have to follow; this includes social distancing and hygiene practices.

So why did we say this alternative online delivery will only commence on Tuesday 31 March 2020?

Preparing online learning takes time and expertise and your lecturers need both to ensure that they can teach effectively in the online space. They will be spending the rest of this week and the next working with the Module Coordinators and staff from DELTA getting ready to make your online learning experience exciting and valuable. They will make sure that lectures missed this week 17th to 19th March and those timetabled for the first two weeks of next term (31st March to 9th April 2020) are delivered online. The academic team is committed to ensuring you meet your academic requirements and that you are well prepared for your assessment tasks.

What should you do this week?

You must continue to revise work covered to date, read your prescribed and recommended material, complete online activities and work on assessment tasks. Your lecturers will communicate with you on ECI and/or email when they have updates and additional material.

What about your assessment tasks, tests (written and online) and due dates?

Your lecturers are busy reviewing the tests that were scheduled to be written on 2nd, 3rd and 6th April 2020. They are considering alternative assessments for these modules in the form of online tests or assignments. You will be advised by Friday 20th March 2020 on the nature of the revised assessments and the due date. This information will be provided on ECI and email. You will also receive an addendum to your Assessment Guide which will provide you with all the information required to complete the assessment tasks.

The current written test timetable will be implemented from 17th April 2020.

All other assessment tasks (assignments and online tests and activities) will continue as normal and the dates remain unchanged unless advised on ECI by your lecturer. You must continue to work on the assessment tasks as due dates and normal procedures for submission will apply.

What about Teaching Practice?

You may be concerned that you will not be able to complete the required teaching practice time in schools or you may be unsure where you will be completing your teaching practice. The dates for teaching practice will be revised on confirmation of schools opening after the Easter holidays on 14 April 2020. Your lecturers will keep you informed on your module site on ECI.

Where can you get help if you are unsure how to learn online?

Working on ECI in your online classroom will be a challenge for many of you, particularly for first year students. We will endeavour to provide you with the support you need. This is an opportunity to develop initiative and resilience. Don't give up if you have a problem.

A *How to get started with ECI* micro-course (ECI101) has been created to assist all new and returning students with getting up to speed with accessing and working online within ECI. This micro-course is available both on [YouTube](#) and as a reference site on both [CL](#) and [DL](#) ECI sites.

Your lecturer remains your primary point of contact for all queries and issues relating to their respective module. Use the right channels to solve problems or get information. Contact the right person.

PART B: What does this mean for you if you are an Off-Campus/Distance Learning student?

The delivery of the Off-Campus/Distance Learning programmes will continue as normal. You should be working through your study guides (where applicable), reading prescribed and recommended readings, completing online tests and activities on ECI and preparing your assessment tasks. Your assessment due dates remain unchanged unless you are a late registration student who qualifies for a revised submission date. Your lecturers will keep you informed on your module sites on ECI. The Face-to-Face Learning Events which have been taking place on one of the campuses and at our Learning Centres will continue to be presented by your lecturers (but without students present). You will be able to watch these from any place where you have wifi access or data to do so. If you want to come onto campus to watch these live-streamed or any pre-recorded Learning Events you will be able to do so. You will have to watch them on your own device. We have implemented a number of Health and Safety procedures on our campuses and learning centres which you will have to follow; this includes social distancing and hygiene practices.

Your lecturer remains your primary point of contact for all queries and issues relating to their respective module. Use the right channels to solve problems or get information. Contact the right person.

KEEPING INFORMED

So how do you make sure you are informed of any new development?

You will be receiving regular updates from a number of different people involved in ensuring that you remain informed and actively involved in your studies. This will include myself as Deputy Dean, the different Heads of Academics, your Programme Coordinator and the Head of Department and Module Coordinators responsible for modules that you are studying. It is therefore very important that you regularly (at least once daily) check your official “@embury.ac.za” email and more regularly visit the relevant module sites and ECI home page.

Studying via distance mode and online require careful management of your time and self-discipline. Stick to a routine. Plan daily. Set yourself deadlines. Find yourself a quiet place to work and try to limit distractions. Studying on your own can be lonely. So, get connected. Communicate with other students doing the same module. WhatsApp groups are a good way to engage and share ideas. You can even set up virtual study or reading groups to work through online material together.

For On-Campus/Contact Learning students who are going to be studying online for the next few weeks you need to work at your studies as if you were attending lectures and working in the Resource Centre. The learning hours allocated to each module (indicated in your study letter) remain unchanged. Once you return to campus there will be little time to catch up.

Please be patient and understanding with yourself and your lecturers. The COVID-19 virus has brought many challenges to our country and the world and we need to work together to minimise its impact on all aspects of our lives. Your lecturers have been asked to make their teaching online to you with very little time to prepare. Things may not always go right the first time, but you can be reassured that we will keep on trying until we get it right. Online learning will become more common in the future for you and the learners you will teach one day, so see this as a chance to develop some skills to help you succeed.

Yours sincerely



Leanne Browning