



## COMMUNIQUE 7: STAFF AND STUDENTS

1 May 2020

Dear Students and Staff

We trust that you are all in good spirit and healthy. We are experiencing the COVID-19 pandemic as an evolving situation but want to assure you that our priority is the successful completion of the 2020 academic year in a manner that also ensures that protection and preservation of life.

From today, the National Lockdown has been changed to Level Four and some of the restrictions have been lowered. As expected, the Minister of Higher Education announced yesterday that **campus-based** teaching, learning and assessment activities will not resume for all Universities, both public and private, during the Level Four Lockdown period. Many of the public universities will use the month of May to prepare remote learning systems and start the online delivery not later than 1 June.

At STADIO School of Education (SSoE) we are proud to declare that we are ready to recommence with Semester 1 on the 4<sup>th</sup> May as planned. All dates as announced in Communique 6: dated 14 April (see below) remain the same. Our state of readiness is a result of a preparation programme over the past five weeks. During this time our academics, the academic leaders, our DELTA team <sup>1</sup> and our professional and administrative staff have worked hard to prepare effective online delivery systems Assessment Guides which detail the assessment tasks and the due dates for each module will be available on the modules' ECI sites.

We acknowledge that, whilst under Level 4 Lockdown regulations, there may be students who will not have access to sufficient data and/or effective enough connectivity to perform all the planned online teaching, learning and assessment activities within our envisaged time-frames. To assist our students, who are experiencing issues related to limited data and connectivity, we present the following two solutions:

- a) to subsidise students' data costs whilst the lockdown is at Level Four; and
- b) to allow unsuccessful students a 2<sup>nd</sup> opportunity to complete critical Semester 1 assessment tasks during the three-week recess period after the end of Semester 1.

More information regarding the above:

a) STADIO has secured deals with some of the major cell phone companies in South Africa to provide our students with very affordable data, and in some cases will even be further subsidised by STADIO. More information on how the data can be accessed will be made available on our website and the learning management system (ECI) not later than 16:00 on Tuesday, 5 May. **PLEASE ensure that we have your correct cell number on myEmbury!**

b) A student who fails to meet a critical assessment deadline can apply to be given a 2<sup>nd</sup> opportunity to do an equivalent assessment during the July recess period (1 – 26 July), and still successfully complete the module. We are also aware that medical or other extraordinary circumstances may result in students missing a critical

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<sup>1</sup> Digitally Enhanced Teaching, Learning and Assessment Team

assessment deadline. Procedures will be put in place to also allow these students to apply for the 2<sup>nd</sup> assessment opportunity to do an equivalent assessment during the July recess period to successfully complete the module.

Other important announcements and reminders:

1. Students are encouraged to regularly check their SSoE “Embury” emails and visit their ECI module sites to read the information provided and engage in the required teaching, learning and assessment activities. Please ensure you have updated your contact details no later than 05 May 2020. Up-to-date contact details will ensure that all our communications reach students and parents/sponsors.
2. SSoE acknowledges that the current uncertainties, constant change and related anxieties impact negatively on the wellness of our students and staff. For this reason, we entered into a partnership with SADAG, the South African Depression and Anxiety Group. Our students can communicate directly with a counsellor at the SADAG call centre between 8:00 am and 8:00 pm Mondays to Sundays on their toll-free number **0800 41 42 43**. This will allow our students and staff to talk to trained professional in absolute confidence regarding any areas of stress and anxiety in their lives. Please visit their website: [www.sadag.org](http://www.sadag.org) for more information.
3. Our service provider Wizebooks, who delivers all our study material to students, will resume their services on **Monday, 4 May**. Any undelivered learning material will be delivered as soon as possible. Students can also purchase other books, stationery and teaching aids directly from Wizebooks and these will be delivered to an address of your choice. Their contact details: 012-362-5885.
4. The STADIO School of Education will continue to honour our commitment to student support and open communication with students via the email addresses below. Students can get fast and accurate support on ALL aspects of their studies via these Help Desks:
  - **Contact Learning:** Please send an email to your campus support team:
    - Durban Musgrave Campus: [support4mus@embury.ac.za](mailto:support4mus@embury.ac.za)
    - Pretoria Montana: [support4mon@embury.ac.za](mailto:support4mon@embury.ac.za)
    - Midrand Waterfall: [support4wat@embury.ac.za](mailto:support4wat@embury.ac.za)
  - **Distance Learning:** Please send an email to your distance learning support team
    - [dlsupport@embury.ac.za](mailto:dlsupport@embury.ac.za)
  - **PGCE Students:**
    - [support4pgce@embury.ac.za](mailto:support4pgce@embury.ac.za)
  - **ICT Support:** Should you experience any computer-related and/or login-related issues – you can log a call at the following email. One of our IT technicians will be in contact as soon as possible to assist you. Please note that we can only provide support on our students’ own devices, and not those of friends/family.
    - [ithelpdesk@embury.ac.za](mailto:ithelpdesk@embury.ac.za)
5. Our campus receptionists will be back on duty from Tuesday, 5 May and your issue will be forwarded to an administrator who works from home. You will then receive a response to your query via email, and in urgent cases, via a telephone call.

The working hours are 08:00 – 16:00 and the telephone numbers for each campus are:

- Montana Pretoria: 012 523 0600
- Musgrave Durban: 031 303 7390
- Waterfall Midrand: 087 288 4765/6
- Distance Learning: 087 287 5310

6. Reminder:

- There will be no sit-down tests or examinations for Semester 1 modules (or sit-down tests for Year modules during Semester 1);
- There will be no Teaching Practice during the remainder of Semester 1; The TP department is reviewing TP requirements and will ensure that students meet what is needed to be promoted. Please note for any Teaching Practice questions, please contact your campus HelpDesk (see email addresses below).

7. Reminder:

DATES (As per Communique 6)

- All ECI sites were formally open for students to work in from **20 April**;
- All online assessment dates will only be scheduled from **7 May** onwards; A revised Assessment Schedule with due dates was available by **24 April** – see ECI sites;
- The delivery of the Semester 1 curriculum will continue till Tuesday, **30 June**;
- Recess for students will start on Wednesday, **1 July** and recess for staff will start on Friday, **10 July**;
- Semester 1 results will be released on **15 July**; and
- Semester 2 will resume on Monday, **27 July**.
- A new revised 2020 CALENDAR (accommodating **the dates** above) will be published on ECI as soon as possible.

STADIO School of Education, again, wants to assure all students, parents and sponsors that we are 100% committed to complete the 2020 Academic Year by the end of December 2020. Accordingly, STADIO School of Education will ensure its continued availability to support all its students in ensuring their continued academic success. We thank all our students for their cooperation at this time. The importance of teaching and teachers has only been highlighted during this crisis. Our students have an invaluable future contribution to the success of South Africa and we at the STADIO School of Education remain committed to their future careers. We are all in this together, and we shall emerge from this experience better than before.

Your sincerely



Prof Patrick Bean

Executive Dean