

Maynooth University Email to All Students – 18 March, 2020

SUBJECT: COVID-19: closure for teaching

Dear Student

As you know the University is closed for face to face teaching. Many of you are wondering what this means for your studies.

There are still a number of uncertainties. We know that we will be closed for face to face teaching until the 29th March, but we will probably be closed for longer, and possibly until after the examination period. This email will explain what we plan to do, but of course this plan could change if the situation changes.

Teaching:

We are asking our staff to provide support online so that you can continue to study the relevant modules. This support will be provided through Moodle. At a minimum it will be a word document or a PowerPoint file for each lecture. Some lecturers will also add a voice commentary in the PowerPoint files, or provide a screencast. Some may also provide live broadcast lectures, although we know this may be difficult for those with poor internet connectivity.

Tutorials:

In most cases your tutorials will continue as online tutorials. Your tutor will decide on which technology to use, and these may take the form of a Moodle forum, or a Moodle chat, or a conference call through MS Teams.

Laboratories and practical work:

There is no doubt that laboratories and practical work will be disrupted. We are working to provide the nearest viable alternative, to ensure that you achieve the learning objectives of the module. In some cases, this may mean a significant change in the content of the module and updates to the course outlines you have received before.

International students in Maynooth:

If you are an international student in Maynooth, and you go home, we will facilitate you completing your modules and your assessment remotely.

Assessment:

If the exams are disrupted, we plan to use assessments that can be conducted remotely wherever possible. This will mean use of written assignments in place of the written exams. Practical

assessments will either be held by videoconference (using Teams), or replaced by alternative assessments.

We may have to defer some examinations until later in the summer, but we will not know this for a few weeks.

Placements:

If you are on a placement and your host organisation/employer is able to allow you to continue, it is reasonable to continue. It is invaluable experience to work in an organisation in a time of crisis, and your input could be valuable. However if the placement cannot continue, or it is not safe for you to continue, then you may suspend the placement. We will then provide the opportunity to do a substantial written assignment, to make up the missing credits and allow you to progress with your degree.

For those on teaching placements, of course the schools are closed and the relevant departments have already made arrangements to ensure that your programmes can continue. We will liaise with the relevant professional bodies to ensure that they understand the measures we are taking, and to ensure that you are not disadvantaged by the disruption to placement.

Maynooth students studying abroad:

If you are a Maynooth University student currently studying for a year abroad, your host university may have closed for teaching. If this arises you should see if there is an option to continue your studies remotely. If that option is not available, we will arrange an alternative task and assessment which you can do to make up the missing credits and complete your degree, assuming that you passed at least 25 credits in your first semester abroad.

What to do:

The most important thing to do now is to look after your own health and the health of those around you, by taking care with handwashing, and social distancing.

Once you have done that, you should make arrangements to study online. You will need access to a computer and good internet connectivity, and a quiet place to study. You may also want to download MS Teams, and possibly get a headset so you can hear more clearly in conference calls.

You should check the Moodle space for each of your modules for instructions. You should also check your MU email account regularly.

If you have questions, please contact:

Student Services for questions related to health and welfare student.services@mu.ie

International Office for questions from international students or MU students studying abroad international.office@mu.ie

If you have questions about your specific modules or subjects, please contact the relevant academic department. Please look in the Moodle space first, to avoid repeating questions that have already been answered.

Finally, I know this is a worrying and unsettling time for many of you. Please prioritise your health and the health of those around you. Once you have done that, try to concentrate on your studies, despite all the distractions. I am confident that we will be able to help most people to complete their programmes as scheduled, and we will be working hard to provide whatever support we can.

Yours sincerely,

Aidan Mulkeen

For updates: www.maynoothuniversity.ie/coronavirus