

Subject: Teaching Staff Announcement
Date: Wednesday, 18 March 2020 at 14:19:04 Greenwich Mean Time
From: Vicky Maloney
To: Mailing List - Everybody
Attachments: image001.jpg

Sent on behalf of Stephen Davis

Good Afternoon Colleagues

You will all have noted that the Government's advice on the Covid-19 epidemic changed recently, with new advice and measures on self-isolation and social distancing. In response, there are some key changes for the College as of today.

The important points are listed below, but in advance I would like to thank everyone for their dedication to supporting our learners so far during this outbreak, as well as all of the team-spirited covering for colleagues and the adaptable, professional response you have all shown.

1. From next week, Monday 23rd March, the College will be suspending face to face classroom activity, and switching to making learning available online for learners rather than physically attending classes. This will become a study week for students
2. Given current advice, from the 23rd staff will use this time preparing for home working and associated relevant skills based CPD for teaching staff moving to remote working and those support staff who have the opportunity for remote working.
3. For the remainder of this week, all teaching colleagues should use the time with their learners to prepare for the switch to remote classroom learning for next week. Guidance and advice on systems is contained below.

Our preferred method of communication with students is through pro-monitor and by using this we protect both our students and staff from potential GDPR and safeguarding issues, however, we accept that sending files may be difficult but one drive may be the best way for file swapping.

I realise these are uncertain times but United Colleges Group is committed to our duty of care to our learners and mission to provide exceptional learning, even in the very difficult circumstances we are about to find ourselves.

Best wishes



Group Principal

A number of FAQs are set out below. Teaching colleagues should consult with curriculum leaders and Heads of Faculties for priorities are addressed. The information here seeks to provide some answers to some common questions and are meant to be used for general guidance purposes.

1. What is the overriding key takeaway from these notes?

As a response, from Wednesday 18th March, the SLT has asked that all teachers use their working days to prepare for a sustained period of distance delivery, learning and assessment. Students will remain in college and in directed learning until Friday 20th March..

2. What will I be expected to do if working from home?

Assuming you and your immediate dependents are fit and well, there is still much that could be done at home. You will be expected to deliver and assess as much learning as possible using a distance learning approach. If you are working from home, the expectation is that you will conscientiously deliver as near to your normal hours as possible. Obviously, a high degree of flexibility will be provided as you may be a parent or carer with family/dependents also home from work/school/college/university. For example many staff are parents of young children, or elderly parents, that will need to be cared for – good judgments and common sense should prevail at all times.

3. What is a 'gold standard' delivery experience under the circumstances?

Some schools and universities have simply prepared to flip to delivery via interactive VLE – for example a lesson delivered via video using MS Teams, or equivalent. They will follow the same timetable and the teacher or lecturer will effectively 'broadcast' to learners from home. As far as UCG is concerned, this is the 'gold standard' and we encourage our teachers to do the same where practically possible.

4. What is a 'silver standard' delivery experience under the circumstances?

In many cases, this may not be possible for a variety of reasons, hence the silver expectation is that teachers and educators communicate through the VLE, One Drive or even a closed Facebook group to set up resources, deliver new content and deliver/grade assessments.

5. What is the 'bronze standard' delivery experience under the circumstances?

The bronze expectation is that work is delivered via email and teachers and educators are diligent to ensure that learners are regularly contacted using college emails/closed social media accounts etc. Obviously staff will not be judged on which methods they use as technology, experience, ability to deliver practical tasks will all vary from subject to subject. Teachers and educators should note that the best teachers and educators in the best schools, colleges and universities will persevere and make this work.

6. How will I prioritise my students?

Simply follow a weekly timetable commitment where possible and support learners in the same time usually allocated in your timetable. Use the directed time for planning and preparation of sessions and assessment grading/learner feedback. Prioritise ad-hoc requests from students as best you can in line with your normal practice. Managers of teachers should seek to support colleagues as much as possible. For example, a faculty manager or leader with limited contact time may take on responsibility for an additional component of the timetable, or support with internal/external quality assurance (IV/EV). Good teamwork here will have a direct impact on positive cultures in your team(s). We are also hoping to use our all student facing teams for support for faculties.

7. What if I don't have access to the internet at home?

You should contact your line manager immediately, whilst this is unlikely these days, senior leaders will need to be notified so that we can look at alternatives. This may include providing dongles etc.

8. What are the expectations for delivering new content?

You should review your scheme of learning and take a view on the sequencing as to what is likely to be most accessible for learners undertaking independent/distance study and what delivery methods would be most suitable. Practical skills delivery is obviously going to be problematic, but teachers can focus on underpinning knowledge and skills techniques using digital resources.

9. How should I communicate with my students?

You should only communicate with students through college-approved platforms most notably **Promonitor** and your college email account, you should **not use** a personal email, social media or personal phone. You should immediately check that all of your learners have access to:

- our college One Drive, VLE (Moodle), or Teams – whichever is the preferred platform
- their college email accounts
- access to closed and approved social media pages (if applicable)

Any of the above are acceptable and offer great opportunities to continue communication, learning and assessment. You can communicate with student personal emails as a last resort, but only using your college email account. You must use the bcc function on the email to 'blind copy' groups of learners and thereby hide their email from their peers however once again Pro Monitor is the preferred tool.

10. What if students are not active/responding to communication?

You should contact their personal tutor or curriculum leader – whichever is the usual channel for escalating non-attendance. We need to maintain contact with our learners for safeguarding purposes if nothing else.

11. What if I have a safeguarding concern about one of my learners?

Relay through to the college safeguarding lead as usual.

12. What if I don't have many electronic resources for teaching?

You should take immediate steps to communicate with colleagues to ensure you have the resources to cover the associated knowledge training in your scheme of learning. In this digital age there are a plethora of internet resources, journals, e-books available. If you are unsure how to access them please let your manager know who will provide a CPD option

13. What should I do if I had a scheduled assessment planned?

For any formal examinations including controlled assessments, you will need to follow JCQ and exams board regulations. Our College exams lead should be consulted in the first instance.

Assessments can be distributed and delivered via VLE/Teams - formative phase tests, quiz, assessments can go ahead. Consider varying the assessment brief where possible to differentiate the task(s) where practically possible. Practical assessments may have to be deferred, however technology could be used to test underpinning knowledge if teachers are competent users.

14. How do I mark my registers?

At this stage, please make a manual note of those students who you believe have accessed

your learning that day or session (evident by their activity). Keep your records safe as we will provide advice shortly.

15. What should I do if I was expecting an external quality assurance / external verifier visit planned?

Where possible try and cover as much of the quality assurance visit via email submission, for staff and learners using e-portfolios, the EQA may be able to access remotely anyway. Physical visits will need to be deferred and awarding organisations will have much of this in hand – follow their guidance.

16. Can I still visit an apprentice in the workplace?

UCG do not want to put staff, apprentices, employer partners at any risk. Please follow any specific guidance from the employer. If the employer is open for business and you feel it is safe to visit, then you may proceed, but you should contact your line manager to discuss. If in doubt conduct a telephone meeting (assuming you have a work phone or have approval to use a personal device). Other opportunities include correspondence via email, VLE and e-portfolio. NVQ and technical certificates can still be assessed as usual and apprentices can complete assessment and portfolio evidence. Practical observations may simply need to be deferred. For learners on standards then again, knowledge preparation for EPA can be delivered via distance.

17. I have apprentices booked for EPA – what do I do?

These will have to be deferred.

18. What should I do if I was expected to submit a sample for remote quality assurance?

You should simply carry on. Most submissions are electronic these days.

19. Will I be monitored?

There will be no 'big brother' monitoring you, we expect you to be both professional and supportive to your learners and colleagues. Line managers will be in regular contact and we will gather specific feedback on how well we handled this highly unusual situation via the exit learner survey. We will be looking at learner participation to ensure as many of our learners are engaged as possible.