

Dear colleague,

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| I do hope that you and families and loved ones are staying well and safe.  I think that we are all now starting to adapt to the new ‘normal’. I am, although probably like many of you I miss my family and am really looking forward to a time when we can all meet up again. I am acutely aware of the strain on people of adapting, and do want to encourage all of you to look after your physical and mental health. The university [mental health and wellbeing information](https://www.gre.ac.uk/wellbeinghub) includes some great tips for anyone who is struggling and the [Employee Assistance Programme](https://www.gre.ac.uk/hr/occupational-health-and-wellbeing) is available for everyone to use. I think it is tempting at the moment to consider cancelling annual leave, but I would really encourage you all to take some leave, as it is part of the way in which we can look after ourselves.  Over the last week many of you have been working hard to draft the operational guide for students explaining the ‘no detriment’ approach that we are taking, which we will publish in the next few days. It really has been a team effort. I have been particularly impressed by the hard work that has gone into this and by the genuine concern everyone has had to ensure that we do the best we possibly can for our students this year. |
| I am proud of the work our university is doing to tackle this virus head on. Staff and students alike have been using their immense wealth of skills, experience and determination to provide much-needed assistance to our wonderful health service. For example, Professor Dennis Douroumis in the School of Science was approached by Ashford and St Peter's Hospital Trust in Surrey to see if we could produce face masks and visors using our 3D printers. Having developed a basic prototype design, Bruce Hassan, a senior technician in Engineering and Atabak Ghanizadeh Tabriz and Uttom Nandy, two of Dennis’ PhD students in Science, are busy producing masks and visors for the Trust. A huge thank you to Dennis and the team. |
| I am particularly keen to start sharing more of these fabulous examples of the university supporting our local communities and helping tackle the crisis. Over the next few weeks, our Communications team will start sharing them online. If you would like us to share the things that you are doing, please get in touch with Javier Bonet and Gedminte Mikulenaite, if you haven’t already. However, if you are isolating at home or feeling overwhelmed with the amount of juggling you are having to do, please do not attempt to do anything else – staying well and safe is more important than anything. |
| From this week a lot of the senior team’s energy will be going towards scenario planning for our return to ‘normal’ and continuing to assess the various impacts of coronavirus on the university. We will be focussing on what a lifting of the lockdown this term could mean for us, and then working through the variety of scenarios for the next academic year. We will be as prepared as we can be for what is coming next and identify all risks that need to be mitigated in order to cause the least possible disruption. I am confident that we have the best team in place for this and have been astounded by the level of hard work, passion and willingness from everyone associated with this university. |
| Finally, I want to say a personal thank you to our staff that remain as key workers and continue to come into work regularly. Thank you, I know that the students and staff who benefit from this are extremely grateful to you all and appreciate how much you go above and beyond what we could possibly expect of you every single day. |
| Thank you all so much.    Jane  Professor Jane Harrington Vice-Chancellor |