

“Hello <student>

We appreciate that this is a scary time for us all and I wanted to take the opportunity to assure you, personally, that our teams are all working very hard to ensure that you can complete your work and earn your degrees during this global pandemic. I would also like to clarify some important points with regard to higher education study.

There have been messages from the government regarding educational qualifications including the cancellation of GCSE and A- Level public examinations. The same approach does not, however, apply to higher education and we are not able to 'hand out' degrees.

As a Higher Education provider, we are working to the regulations set out by the Office for Students and it is this department of the government that tells us what we can and *cannot* do. They have clearly set out their expectations in response to the crisis including that they expect delivery on our programmes to continue with integrity and security during this period. This applies to all students regardless of their circumstance.

The Office for Students will be providing further information next week about how they will support Higher Education providers to maintain standards and teaching quality but they certainly expect that we should make all reasonable efforts to "enable students to complete their studies, for achievement to be reliably assessed, for qualifications to be awarded securely."

The Quality and Standards Agency (QAA) who work for the Officer for Students to ensure that standards and quality is maintained, have said to Higher Education providers, "For degree-awarding bodies, the responsibility to maintain standards remains yours. Governing bodies need to be satisfied that academic standards are being achieved no matter what adjustments you need to make to the learning and assessment strategies in light of COVID-19."

Therefore, we have the duty to ensure that all degrees are *earned fairly*. To do this, we have taken the following approach to enable your achievement:

1. Provide teaching to all students on all modules via our online learning platform, Canvas
2. Ensure there is nothing structurally within the programmes which would prevent you from achieving including for example, moving deadlines / changing assessments etc. where this is needed. (You will be informed of changes by tomorrow - Friday 27th March)
3. To use mitigation where you are unable to meet these new deadlines due to personal circumstances / illness. We will not be requiring evidence for applications for mitigation on any assignment for up to 2 weeks past the deadline.
4. To continue to provide a high level of accessible academic and pastoral support.

TEC Partnership is the corporate trading identity of the Grimsby Institute of Further and Higher Education.

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Chief Executive Officer: Gill Alton BSc ,MSc, PGCE

I am aware that to adjust to this shift in learning can take time for some of you. There will be many of you who, like many of our staff, are having to deal with being carers at the same time. However, by providing this platform we are enabling your progression on to the next level or complete your degrees *on time* with the results that you have worked hard for and *deserve*. As noted, we have also provided a network of support services, particularly for those who need a little more time to adjust or who need help in other ways.

Thank you for your overwhelming patience and resilience during this unprecedented event and I would like to send you and your families our very best wishes,

Debs Gray

Principal - Grimsby Institute of Further and Higher Education
Deputy Chief Executive - TEC Partnership

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