Dear Students,

On behalf of the COVID-19 Faculty Education Group we are writing to provide an update on our work to date. As before, some of this content will be an important reiteration of information you may have already received via other sources. Please do however ensure that you read the content of this email carefully as where applicable Faculty specific updates have been added to previously issued University messages.

ACCESS TO QUEEN’S & MERCHANT VENTURER’S BUILDINGS

Following further assessment of the national COVID-19 situation and the government announcement yesterday evening please be advised that the University is advancing its transition to online provision. As such please note that all non-essential University facilities and buildings, which includes administration buildings and all research laboratories will now be closed from 5.00 pm on Tuesday 24 March 2020. This includes both Queen’s Building and Merchant Venturers Building – and all their laboratories, workshops and student spaces. A core group of staff will be preparing the buildings ready for this closure and as such staff and students are asked to avoid accessing the buildings where possible.

We recognise that this decision will affect ongoing work of staff and students, particularly those undertaking experimental projects or work with a practical component. We are however conscious of our obligation to adhere to Public Health England’s and the Government’s recommendations regarding social distancing, and of our health and safety responsibilities. If you have any questions or concerns about building access please email: engf-safety@bristol.ac.uk

Further guidance on the Project Mitigation Plan to be used in undergraduate projects referenced in the 18 March 2020 communication has been issued to Project Unit Directors who will be contextualising this for their local purpose and issuing via the relevant Blackboard courses. A reminder that this has been designed to differentiate between the existing extenuating circumstances processes and capture specific and significant impact on Projects as a direct result of recent events enabling markers to have immediate sight of both impact and mitigation.

Remember if you are staying in halls or in off-campus accommodation in Bristol, please tell the University via the online form so you can be given advice and information.

YOUR WELLBEING

We have entered unprecedented times and we acknowledge that that the uncertainty and change is unsettling for many of us. During this time please do familiarise with the University Student Health and Wellbeing support. In addition, you may find the following external resources and support useful:

- Mind, the mental health charity, provide helpful advice on their webpages information and support – coronavirus and your wellbeing, including dealing with the effects of isolation.
- The BBC article Coronavirus: How to protect your mental health, which includes some helpful practical advice.
- The World Health Organisation (WHO) provide information targeted at different groups in their Mental Health and Psychosocial Considerations During COVID-19 Outbreak document. have detailed some mental health considerations as support for mental and psychological well-being during the COVID-19 outbreak.

Some top tips:
- Stay connected to friends, family, team and colleagues - WhatsApp, Skype for Business, phone.
• Build resilience – use mindfulness techniques and manage your intake of news and social media, especially when it’s getting too much.
• Do an act of kindness – focusing on others helps alleviate your own fears and anxieties.
• Turn up the volume on things that make you happy and feel positive i.e. music, positive thinking, chatting to family and friends.
• Do nurturing things in your spare time - exercise (walk, run or online workout at home), read, gardening, podcasts, meditate, art, films.

SPRING TERM: ASSESSMENTS WITH DEADLINES BEFORE 27TH MARCH 2020
As per the guidance in the email on 18 March 2020 wherever possible we have retained Spring term deadlines as per previously publicised dates. School Education Directors have reviewed all assessments due in this period and where applicable have agreed any updates to the arrangements for these i.e. change in submission format, date etc will be communicated to you via the relevant Unit Director through the Blackboard course. Please note that there will now be a small delay between these changes being communicated to you and you seeing the updated information in central systems (Blackboard etc). We appreciate your patience during this time.

If you have any concerns about an assessment due before 27th March 2020 please contact engf-fem@bristol.ac.uk

SUMMER TERM: CONFIRMATION ON ASSESSMENTS
With the move to online assessments in the revised Summer term we recognise the urgency and anxiety that many of you are feeling about the absence of clarity on your assessments. The COVID-19 Faculty Education Group are working hard analysing assessments across all units and programmes with a pragmatic and flexible approach to reduce assessment loads where practically possible whilst ensuring that we remain in a position to award accredited degrees. We are obviously in close contact with the Engineering Council and the other accreditation partners to ensure that any decisions we make about assessment align with accreditation requirements.

Just to reiterate you can be assured that the Faculty remains committed to an assessment regime which will enable yourselves and external stakeholders to have confidence in academic outcomes, marks and awards. In exceptional circumstances, the University may vary the methods and the timescales, but not the standards, by which these outcomes are achieved. The COVID-19 Faculty Education Group are in close consultation with your Programme Directors, Unit Directors and Lecturers. Whilst the immediate priority is on our assessment, all Unit Directors are busy designing online digital provision in the remainder of the term.

We are working towards finalising the Faculty assessment strategy this week to enable students to be sent the plans for their assessments by 30 March 2020. We appreciate your desire to have details before then but hope you will appreciate that this is an important and complex plan of work that requires careful considerations that we are working through as quickly as possible.

FURTHER ADVICE, SUPPORT & QUESTIONS
In this rapidly changing situation, we ask you to keep updated on the latest developments including a list of frequently asked questions through the University’s Coronavirus advice webpage and by checking your emails. In the meantime, if you have any Faculty specific questions or concerns you can email engf-fem@bristol.ac.uk. Please be advised that during this period of remote working email remains one of the Faculty Office core methods of communication.

If you have any concerns about access to IT resources in this distance-based delivery method, please reply to this email outlining any specific concerns or constraints.

Colin Dalton (Undergraduate Faculty Education Director) and Nicholas Howden (Graduate Education Director) on behalf of the COVID-19 Faculty Education Group