

2 April 2020

Our ref. C.14301
Enquiries: registrar@iie.ac.za

Dear Student

**TEACHING AND LEARNING UPDATE – THINGS YOU NEED TO KNOW AND DO
(FULL QUALIFICATION STUDENTS REGISTERED IN THE CONTACT MODE FOR IIE
QUALIFICATIONS)**



As South Africa closes out the first full week of the lockdown, we hope that you and your families remain safe.



As promised in our earlier communications, here is the plan for resumption of teaching and learning on the 15th of April – it is increasingly likely that we will be working online for a while so this letter is to provide you with the plans for ensuring that your academic year is not compromised. Please engage with the detail of this letter as there is quite a bit to take in.



Please pay very close attention to the communication from your campus and your lecturer – they will be developing this information to make it context-specific for you.



This letter will address some of the important aspects regarding your studies during the immediate future.

Resuming teaching so you can resume learning

Our lecturers and campuses are ready to support you online from the 15th of April on the learning management system to which you are accustomed. We have created classes on this system for the small number of modules not previously being taught using Learn.

Before that we encourage you to complete the short learning programme on learning online so that you are well prepared – you can access this from your Learn landing page (under the heading “Enrol Now” there is an invitation to click a link to find out how to optimise your online learning experience).

As you will be interacting with your peers and lecturers online rather than in person with the aim of deepening and consolidating your learning you will gain far more from these sessions if you have prepared in advance. The engagement will not be the same as your lecturer talking to you through the whole session as that will use too much data and it is hard to stay focused so expect even more activities than you have previously had.

If you have never been taught using the Learning Management System (Learn)

You will get guidance from your lecturer and campus, but you should complete the online learning short learning programme as soon as you can so that you feel more confident about using the system.

The biggest change is going to be on the submission of assignments as these will now go through Safe Assign on Learn. Safe Assign checks for plagiarism and collusion amongst students in the same way that Turn it In does. Don't stress about this please - you will receive clear guidance on this, and your lecturer will also be able to advise should you have any questions. All the normal campus resources are at your disposal if you need help.

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What if my module simply cannot be taught or assessed online?

There are very few modules across all IIE qualifications that cannot be taught online because they require access to specific software and hardware which students may not have when not on campus. There are a few more modules that cannot be effectively assessed online. If you are impacted we will contact you directly to explain how we are going to deal with these – like the public universities, we are looking at block teaching for these modules when we are back on campus and deferred assessments for the same period. Some of these details are still being worked out and we will come back to you as soon as we can.

Formative Assessments

Our academic teams are working on the detail for each module and changing the actual assessments to support our online delivery. You will get module-specific information before teaching starts. As indicated above some modules will only be assessed when we reconvene because of their requirements.

We have agreed to the following principles:

- ICE requirements are unchanged – you need to submit on Learn and if you do not know how to do so you need to ask your lecturer for assistance.
- We realise that this is all new and the loads may feel too heavy, so we have reassessed how much we expect from you – for example if there are more than 3 formal formative assessments we are (in most cases) reducing that by 1.
- Assignments
 - All assignments remain in place, but your submission dates will be extended by at least 3 weeks to accommodate the period during which we were not teaching you. We will provide you with the new dates before we begin teaching.
 - The deadline for submission is midnight on each submission day to reduce the pressure on the systems.
 - All submissions will be online on Learn or for IT students on Teams – if your assessment is not one that can simply be handed in (a document) you will get instructions about what to submit.
- Tests
 - All assessments that were meant to be written under exam conditions, such as tests, are being redeveloped to be done as take-home assessments. (A take-home assessment will replace an assessment we intended to do under examination conditions. We have changed the way the questions are set, and you can and will consult sources to complete the assessment. You will need to reference, and you will need to submit through Safe Assign).
 - You will access the assessment instructions on your student portal and be given 5 days to complete and submit these assessments online via Learn.
 - Each assessment will come with clear instructions on its cover page as well as on Learn.
 - You will get an assessment brief where appropriate to help you prepare.

Summative assessments

We do not expect to be able to complete the summative assessments normally done under examination conditions in the traditional way. We will start our summative assessment period on **22 June 2020 to 11 July** with take-home type assessments. You will still need to study the same content for the summative assessments. More information will follow. Please ensure that any personal plans are changed to accommodate this.

Tests in Test Week 1 of this semester

For modules where students wrote the first test(s) either during the week of 09 March or the first two days of the week of 16 March, the following applies:

- Any student who applied for a replacement opportunity will automatically be granted this opportunity and will be required to complete the replacement take-home assessment. The dates for these assessments will be communicated in due course.
- For students who were scheduled to write tests during the week of 16 March but couldn't as a result of the closure, will automatically now be required to complete the take-home assessment. Again, the dates will be communicated in due course.
- Any student who already wrote a test will be given the voluntary option of doing the take-home version of this assessment and then keep the best of the two marks. You would simply opt into this option by submitting the take-home assessment.

What about next semester?

The changed summative assessment period will impact on the dates for the rest of the year – the new dates will be shared with you as soon as we can finalise them. When we will be able to teach you in the contact mode remains to be seen, but we are confident about an enriching and engaging teaching experience no matter what we are required to do.

What if I am not able to get to WiFi or a device before the lockdown is over?

Please engage with your campus on this – we are planning catch up sessions for those students who cannot start on the 15th but your campus will be finding out who you are and why you are not able to start and will then provide you with the details of the appropriate alternative plan.

When the lockdown is lifted we will assess what we can do next – if we are still not able to resume contact classes but can give you access to our facilities making all the necessary arrangements for social distancing, this is an option we will exercise. However, until we know what we are allowed to do we cannot confirm what we will do.

Please also remember that Learn has good offline capabilities so you can download information and engage with it offline and then go back online. If you do not know how to do this, please consult the Quick Reference Guide on Learn or ask someone to help you.

What about unreliable WiFi or high data costs?

We are working on some solutions to help you here but most importantly we have ensured that all our development work is “data light” so your participation in our online learning is as manageable as it can be. Videos are short and real time engagements with your lecturer will not always make use of video. As the content is online and will be supplemented as we go along you will be able to catch up (and engage with your lecturer) if you miss a timetabled session.

It is worth repeating the reminder that Learn has good offline capabilities so you can download information and engage with it offline and then go back online. If you do not know how to do this, please consult the Quick Reference Guide on Learn or ask someone to help you.

How will I know what is happening when?

Your timetable will remain the same – any exceptions, such as for the small group of modules indicated above, will be communicated to you.

I did not take my study material home with me

Most of what you need is on Learn and you have access to the library resources. Once you are up and running in your virtual class, let us know what you do not have so we can work out how to help you.

How can I be sure I am ready?

Classes begin on the 15th – on the 14th each of your campuses and possibly each of your modules will have a “Get Connected” session to help you try it all out. If you are then not able to get going you can ask the campus to help you and what your options are. This with the short learning programme are great ways to get ready.

We will continue to communicate with you – both from The IIE central team and from your campus. These are uncertain times, but we are confident that you we can continue to work with you to successfully complete this academic year and we can all develop new skills of collaborating along the way. Adaptability and flexibility are the orders of the day and we will continue to be adaptable and flexible so that the quality of your education is uncompromised.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'F. Coughlan'.

Dr Felicity Coughlan
Director: The Independent Institute of Education
Group Academic Director: AdvTech