

Dear Med 19 students

I hope you and your families are well wherever you have been spending the lockdown.

Firstly, I would like to thank you all for your engagement and involvement with the Phase I online teaching we have delivered so far. Your comments and feedback have been highly constructive, we hope you that your input will continue as we develop our teaching provisions.

I am writing to update you on the current plans for your return to studies.

Like many other Universities, the Medical School has decided that students will resume university-based lessons at the start of the new academic year. **This means that Term 6 will continue online with your year group returning to campus in January 2021.** In the meantime, we will continue to fully support your learning with the delivery of online lectures and interactive groupwork sessions.

This decision was not taken without due consideration. The safety of our students is paramount to us and the current social distancing requirements guides how much teaching we can deliver in person at any given time. Additionally, there are a number of travel restrictions still in place globally. Indeed, UK government guidelines currently advise against all but essential international travel, although this may change within the next few weeks. Nevertheless, those of you located in international locations may be subject to differing travel restrictions affecting your ability to return to studies on campus before the end of the year.

Return to Studies

Curriculum

Term 6 will continue to be delivered online. I can confirm that there will be no change to the scheduled term dates, **21st September 2020** till the **11th December 2020**.

As with Term 5, there will be no Student Selected Components within Term 6; instead these sessions will provide students with time for self-directed learning and revision.

Since the University will open in September, you will still be able to access the Chandos Road Building and all University buildings. If you live nearby you will be able to attend the University for self-study or to meet other students in small groups or to meet with your tutor. Staff will be on site and working in a manner that follows the social distancing guidelines in place at that time.

Many of you have expressed concerns about the difficulties in developing and honing practical skills through online teaching. With this in mind the Medical School has designed a special additional "Clinical Preparation Unit" for your year group. This compulsory four-week course will run from **11th January 2021 till 5th February 2021** and will include examinations, practical procedures and professionalism with a focus on patient safety. The course will allow students to develop the experiential learning that is so important in clinical practice and give you confidence for the start of your clinical placements.

The predominantly practical unit has been designed to follow the principles of small group working. Through simulation and interactive sessions, you will have the opportunity to undergo supervised instruction and practice examinations and practical procedures.

The Unit will enable you to develop the required theoretical and practical skills to gain competence, under supervision, in clinical skills and patient safety, ensuring you are prepared and ready for the challenges of Phase 2. More details about this Unit will follow.

Year 2 Assessments

I know many of you are concerned about assessment and how this will be affected by COVID-19 and I want to address content, dates and the means of assessment delivery. Further detail on assessment will be provided separately by the Assessment Team.

- **Content: There will be no summative OSCE 2 as part of ETA 6.** We hope to assess some practical skills such as history taking formatively during Term 6 and after the clinical preparation course by a formative OSCE.
- **Dates:** Unfortunately, we have had to make some date changes to the assessment dates currently on Moodle. **ETA 4/5 will be held on 3/9/20 and ETA 6 on 14/12/20 and 15/12/20.**
- **Assessment delivery: ETA 4/5 and ETA 6 written papers will be online exams with remote proctoring that you can sit on your own devices, in your homes.**

Our priority is holding robust and fair assessments that will allow you to progress appropriately. We have held several successful remote assessments and we are confident that they are reliable, valid and fit for purpose.

I hope this letter has answered some of your questions and provided you with additional clarity for the remainder of the year. Nevertheless, we are aware that many of you will have additional questions and concerns about returning to the teaching environment. I would like to remind you that pastoral support is still available to you through your personal tutor and the UBMS Student support.

Jessica Willmore: - Staff and Student Support Manager Jessica.willmore@buckingham.ac.uk

Dr Emma Spikings: - Pastoral Support Lead Emma.spikings@buckingham.ac.uk

Dr Claire Stocker: - Student support Lead Claire.stocker@buckingham.ac.uk

I hope you and your families remain safe, and we are looking forward to welcoming you back to campus in January.

Best wishes

Jo

Professor Joanne Harris MRCP MRCGP MA (Med Ed) PFHEA
Dean and Director of Medical Education