



An update from John Vinney



Dear colleague

Thank you for all you are doing – for your families, for students and staff, and for our wider society. I have been heartened to see so many colleagues reaching out with messages of support and encouragement, with practical advice and links to resources.

There are lots of challenges and calls on our time and energy. My thoughts are with those of you who are managing these challenges on your own and for those of you caring for family members, our key workers, and delivering home schooling. All of us are juggling new ways of working, learning new skills and trying to prioritise, and dealing with uncertainty and change.

All of this might feel overwhelming at times. It is important that you make time for your own wellbeing. I know how hard it can be to stop responding to the many calls for your time, but it is important to step outside or take that one trip out for exercise. If you can't do that, read something that isn't news or work, connect with friends and family to talk about something other than the current challenges, or do something to relax and distract yourself.

We will be sending a message today about arrangements for additional leave for all staff, to take as soon as you are able to.

There are ways that we can help each other. Please be patient and understanding with your colleagues. Over time, we will get into a more normal, though virtual, working pattern. In the meantime, some will be very busy dealing with things behind the scenes and others will be managing non-work challenges.

There is lots of good advice out there, please take time to read the e-mail update from UNISON, BU UCU and BU on 24th March, and check the links and the [information on the BU website](#), which is being updated all the time.

As well as the immediate steps that are being taken to protect the wellbeing of students and staff, and make sure that our core activities can continue as far as practicable and appropriate, across BU teams are working hard to inform our decision making on slightly longer term issues. I am keeping up with developments across the sector through Universities UK and colleagues are connecting through other networks.

Education activities have continued to be a priority with this week as we continue to support the move to online or virtual learning and work on assessment planning. You can access resources from the [Centre for Fusion Learning Innovation and Excellence here](#).

This week Amanda Solloway MP, Minister for Science, Research and Innovation, [wrote to universities](#) about the importance of research, and the implications of the current situation. Research England [has announced](#) that the submission deadline for REF2021 has been postponed from 27 November 2020 and we will receive at least 8 months' notice of the new date. To speed up the process of Parliament accessing relevant research expertise, Parliament's Knowledge Exchange Unit is creating a COVID-19 Outbreak Expert Database. You can [read more here](#).

In terms of engagement with practice, work is continuing across BU to work with industry and community partners on relevant issues. One important example is that our colleagues in the Faculty of Health and Social Sciences are working with the NHS on arrangements for students to support the health service. Professor Keith Brown [is assisting the NHS Covid-19 Emergency Response](#), helping to produce weekly videos to help NHS and community workers identify people at risk of being scammed as criminals target vulnerable people who are isolated at home.

I know many of you will also be working with other organisations, including schools and charities, in a voluntary capacity, or supporting others in your community and I thank you for that. It would be great to hear your stories – please tweet me on @VCJohnVinney. If you have any other questions please contact coo@bournemouth.ac.uk.

Best wishes

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Vice-Chancellor

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