Dear Higher Education Student,

I wish you a happy new year and trust that you remain well and have had a good Christmas break.

You will be aware that the rising cases of coronavirus (COVID-19) across parts of England as well as concerning evidence on a new variant of the virus has seen the extension of Tier 4 restrictions across many areas of the country, including all NWSLC campuses.

You will also be aware that the government have been carefully considering the approach to the return of students to education for the spring term to ensure that everyone can be kept as safe as possible and to mitigate the spread of the virus.

The government have now updated the guidance for the return of Higher Education students to campuses for the spring term. Unfortunately, this requires a delay in the return of the majority of higher education students to campus for in person delivery until week commencing **25th January.**

A copy of the letter from the Minister of State for Universities to all Higher Education students is enclosed for your information.

As a college we have therefore, in line with other HE providers, had to take the decision to flip all teaching across our higher education courses to online methods from Tuesday 5th January until Friday 22nd January. Exceptions are in place for a limited number of subjects, where students may be able to return to in-person teaching on 11th January:

* Medicine & dentistry
* Subjects allied to medicine/health
* Veterinary science
* Education (initial teacher training)
* Social work
* Courses which require Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Body (PSRB) assessments and or mandatory activity which is scheduled for January and which cannot be rescheduled (your university will notify you if this applies to you).

We will contact you separately if you are studying for one of the above subjects and are required to attend for on campus teaching prior to 25th January.

This is not a decision that has been taken lightly and we recognise that this will be deeply frustrating and disappointing for you. I do however want to assure you that we will maintain the highest standards of online delivery and support in order to protect your continuation of study during this time.

I understand that this may be a difficult time for some students both academically and personally and I would like to remind you that the support services of the college remain accessible to you at all times.
If you feel that you are struggling academically or personally in any way, big or small, please do not hesitate to contact your course tutor or to email us at heenquiries@nwslc.ac.uk so that we can guide you to appropriate support.

In these exceptional circumstances we also recognise that some students may face unexpected financial hardship. Should you find yourself in financial difficulties, the College has a hardship fund that you may be able to access for support. To enquire regarding an application to the hardship fund please contact jackie.branson@nwslc.ac.uk

We anticipate a further update from the government during week commencing 18th January and we will update you accordingly regarding your return to on campus delivery.

In the meantime please engage in the online sessions available to you and should you have any feedback which will help us to ensure you have an excellent experience during these unprecedented times please do not hesitate to contact us heenquiries@nwslc.ac.uk

Kind Regards and Best Wishes

Carrie-Anne Abdulai
Director for Higher Education and Access to HE Provision