

## **UCO Coronavirus update – 26<sup>th</sup> March 2021.**

Dear student,

As we approach the Easter break, there is a definite feeling of optimism and hope that we can begin to see a light at the end of the tunnel in relation to a gradual return to a more normal life. Before you finish for Easter, I wanted to update you on plans for on-campus activity after the holiday period and also to remind you of all the existing support available both on-campus and remotely.

### **Support over the Easter period.**

Whilst most teaching will finish by Friday 26<sup>th</sup> March, and resume in the week commencing Monday 12<sup>th</sup> April, UCO will remain open throughout most of the Easter period, to ensure you still have access to facilities such as the library, to tutor support and to services like academic skills, disability, health & well-being and careers. Of course, staff are likely to be taking leave during the break, but will set an out-of-office reply to direct you to other colleagues should you need help.

The library will be open throughout the Easter period, with the exception of weekends and the bank holidays (Friday 2<sup>nd</sup> April and Monday 5<sup>th</sup> April). The library opening hours will be as follows:

- Monday 29<sup>th</sup> March – Thursday 1<sup>st</sup> April    9am – 4pm
- Tuesday 6<sup>th</sup> April – Friday 9<sup>th</sup> April        9am – 4pm

During the Easter break, it will remain necessary to book a slot in the library, which you can do by emailing [ucolrc@oldham.ac.uk](mailto:ucolrc@oldham.ac.uk) or telephoning 0161 344 8888.

Throughout Easter, tutors and UCO's support teams may be running a range of on-campus and online sessions to help you with your work and assessments and to ensure you can continue to access support if you need it. Your course team will let you know exactly what will be available and when for your course. Information on the support available from academic skills can be found on Moodle. Please note the café will be closed throughout the break.

### **Lessons and on-campus support after Easter.**

Government guidance for HE providers is expected to be updated in early April and we will continue to monitor that closely and provide updates as necessary. Our firm intention however is to gradually increase the amount of on-campus delivery after the Easter break, in a Covid-secure way, to ensure that all students have the opportunity to access face-to-face teaching and/or support, should they want it. Your course team will confirm what this means for you, but it is likely to include a gradual return to some face-to-face classes on site, more face-to-face support available from services such as academic skills and increased capacity in the library.

From Monday 12<sup>th</sup> April, we intend to remove the current booking system in the library, meaning all students can access it on a drop-in basis without the need to pre-book. We will be maintaining social distancing, and will also require all users to wear a face covering at all times (unless exempt) and to make use of the hand sanitiser and anti-bacterial wipes available. Please remember that the library continues to be for

**independent study only** and that collaborative / group working is not permitted, in order to maintain social distancing.

I would like to reassure you that any gradual return to campus will be done in a safe way, ensuring all government guidance is followed and that existing safety precautions such as hand sanitiser, face coverings and social distancing will remain in place. We recognise however, that for some people, returning to campus may cause some concern, and I would encourage you to speak to your tutors, or to the UCO support teams if you have any concerns or questions at all.

**Asymptomatic testing.**

In order to facilitate a safe return to on-campus activities, we are continuing to encourage all students and staff to take a regular Lateral Flow Test to identify any cases of Coronavirus in people who are not displaying symptoms.

If you are intending to come onto campus before the Easter weekend you can arrange to take a test at the Oldham Leisure Centre. There is no need to book. When you arrive, please advise the staff that you are a UCO student. The location and details for the testing centre are:

Address:	Opening Times:
Oldham Leisure Centre Middleton Road Oldham	Monday to Friday 7.30am – 5.30pm  Saturday 10am – 4.30pm

Address:	Opening Times:
OL9 6AF  Parking is available at the leisure centre	

**\* Once you have received your test results, please text them to 07912 485439. \***

Please note that if you have any symptoms of Coronavirus, please do not go to the Leisure Centre as you will not be allowed access to the site, instead please book a test via the [GOV.UK website](#).

After the Easter weekend, arrangements for asymptomatic testing in Oldham are changing. As soon as we have more information on this from the Council, we will update you. If you have access to a Lateral Flow Test at home, or through a testing centre local to you, it is completely acceptable to use that. Please follow the instructions with the test in relation to reporting the result and also text the result to the number above.

More information on Coronavirus testing can be found at the [gov.uk website](#).

I hope you manage to find time to relax during the Easter break and return refreshed and ready to complete your studies for this academic year. Please do remember that all staff at UCO continue to be available to support you so please do not hesitate to get in touch if you need any help or have any questions at all.

Please remember to follow the national guidance. It is important that we all follow the rules in order to continue to suppress the virus.

**Wash HANDS | Cover FACE | Make SPACE**

We will continue to keep you updated.

Kind regards,

**Dave Fallon**

**Director of HE Curriculum**

**LATEST INFORMATION**

**[UK Government advice.](#)**

**[NHS advice.](#)**