

15 June 2021

Dear Applicant

We hope this letter finds you well. We are getting in touch to share information about how COVID-19 might impact upon the 2021/22 academic year at Yeovil College University Centre (YCUC).

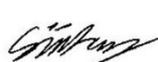
Over the last fifteen months, Yeovil College University Centre staff have worked incredibly hard to ensure that students are able to enjoy a high-quality learning experience and complete their qualifications in line with their expected timeframes. We also have very robust processes in place to ensure that students are able to access a range of support, including wellbeing support, whilst studying remotely. The College Management Team have continued to meet regularly to ensure we are able to keep our staff, students and wider community safe, whilst allowing learning to continue.

We very much hope that the national picture will continue to improve and it will be possible to teach our courses on-site in 2021/22. However, as we are sure you will understand and appreciate, this is not fully within our control. In the interests of transparency and supporting students to make well-informed decisions, we want to share the information we currently have. We also wanted to explain the situations in which we might have to alter our approach, and the sorts of measures we might take in order to comply with government public health advice and to protect the health and safety of our staff, students and wider community.

We do sincerely hope that we will be able to welcome all new and returning students on-site in September. We will keep in touch with you over the summer months, and if there are changes to national or local guidance which cause us to change our plans we will get in touch with you to communicate this at the earliest opportunity. As such, your ongoing flexibility and understanding are greatly appreciated.

We hope that you find the rest of the information included in this letter useful, and would appreciate you taking the time to read through each of the sections carefully. We warmly encourage anyone with concerns or queries to contact us via [university\\_centre@yeovil.ac.uk](mailto:university_centre@yeovil.ac.uk) or 01935 845454. If you have a disability, learning difficulty or long-term health condition and have any questions about next academic year or how this might affect you then please do get in touch and we will be very happy to discuss this.

Kindest Regards



**Sian Deasy**  
HE Manager



and **Lynne Stocker**  
HE Administrator

**Mark Bolton, CEO & Principal**

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## **Course Content**

We do not foresee that the modules studied in the upcoming year will change as a result of COVID-19 for any of our courses. We do sometimes use optional field trips and visits to enrich the learning experience of our students. As we are sure you will understand, decisions as to whether or not to run trips or visits will be made in line with both local and national guidance, and trips and visits will only go ahead if it is safe and sensible to do so.

For those students on BSc (Hons) Social Work and HND Sport courses whose programmes include a placement or work experience element, we are intending that these work-based learning activities still go ahead. Programme staff will support learners to ensure everyone is able to access an appropriate placement, including in cases where it may be appropriate for a student to undertake their placement with an organisation or team who are still working from home or working remotely.

## **Course Length & Award**

It is our intention that all students will be able to complete their qualifications in line with their expected timescales.

## **Start of Term and Enrolment**

We are intending that term will begin:

W/C 6<sup>th</sup> September – Yr 2 BSc (Hons) Social Work students

W/C 13<sup>th</sup> September – All new students apart from BSc (Hons) Social Work, plus Yr 2 HNC Engineering.

W/C 20<sup>th</sup> September – Yr 1 BSc (Hons) Social Work students, plus all other returning students.

A final plan for enrolment and the start of term is always provided to students in their 'Welcome Letter'. Welcome Letters are typically sent out towards the end of August. As part of the enrolment process during the weeks listed above it is likely that physical document checks will need to take place on-site.

## **How Will Teaching & Learning Be Delivered?**

It is our hope that the national picture will continue to improve, and we will be able to deliver fully on-site by September. In this case, teaching and learning will take place in classrooms on the College campus, as they would have done in any 'typical' year. Whilst this is our hope, we appreciate that if we see a tightening of restrictions, or changes in the local or national picture, we may need to adjust our normal arrangements for teaching, learning and assessment in order to comply with public health advice and to protect the health and safety of our staff, students and wider community. In order to achieve this, we may use a combination of on-site delivery, remote delivery, or 'blended delivery' where there is a combination of both on-site and remote delivery.

At Yeovil College University Centre, we have access to Microsoft Teams. This means that if learning does have to move online for any reason, students can still access live teaching from their lecturer – it is just that the lesson is delivered through Microsoft Teams, rather than in a classroom. Over the 2020-21 academic year, we have had to use remote or blended learning for a number of our courses. In these cases, students have still had access to exactly the same timetable as they would have done for ‘normal’ on-site learning, it is just that lessons have been delivered remotely via Teams. This means that students have not lost out on teaching hours or the chance for live engagement with their teachers – we have neither reduced timetables, nor substituted live teaching for pre-recorded sessions.

To reiterate, our hope is that we will be able to deliver on-site. However, if it is not safe and sensible to have students on-site then we may use remote or blended learning in order to comply with local or national public health advice, and to keep our staff, students and wider community safe. If we were to have to adapt learning, the exact format would likely vary between cohorts dependent upon factors including the practical requirements of each course and the number of staff and students we can safely accommodate in each classroom or workshop. In all areas, we would maintain focus upon maximising the impact of any time spent on-site.

Whether learning is taking place on-site or remotely, we remain committed to ensuring all students have a high-quality experience at YCUC and are well supported to maximise their potential. Over the last year we have made a number of changes to our online delivery model in response to student feedback, and we are sure that online learning will continue to evolve as learners and staff work in partnership to identify the most effective ways for teaching and learning to take place digitally.

## **Assessment**

The majority of our qualifications are coursework or assignment based, and students submit their work via our online portal. These assessment methods are therefore unlikely to be affected by COVID-19. For courses with formal exams, we will consider closer to the time whether it is safe and reasonable for formal examinations to go ahead. If it is not possible, then formal exams may go ahead in a different format, for example an online exam which students can undertake from home. For courses with practical assessments, including presentations, we will evaluate closer to the time whether we will need to amend the assessment in any way due to COVID-19. Any amendments to assessments will take place in line with regulations from the appropriate awarding body or Partner University.

## **Locations**

Any on-site learning will take place at the College campus on Mudford Road, Yeovil, BA21 4DR. Over the past year we have implemented a range of measures to ensure that our campus is set up in a way that encourages social distancing and allows people to work and learn in a safe environment. These include, but are not limited to, ‘keep left’ rules, regular sanitisation stations, and the closure of some social spaces where social distancing is not possible. Dependent upon how the national and local picture progresses, it may be that some of these systems remain in place for all or some of the 2021/22 academic year.

## **Changes in response to changing public health advice**

The ways in which teaching, learning and assessment take place will remain under review as new guidance and information become available. For example, if there is a spike in cases and the government re-introduce stricter lockdown measures, we will of course move learning online until we are able to safely return to site. Equally, if sector guidance recommends that it is safe and reasonable to increase the proportion of learning that takes place on-site, then we will make plans for this.

## **How long will this last for?**

At this stage, we obviously cannot guarantee how long we will need to continue to alter our approach for in order to comply with public health guidance and keep our staff, students and wider community safe. We are aware that depending upon how the national and local situation progresses, it may be that these measures continue to affect us as we move into the 2021/22 academic year and beyond. We will keep in touch with students about arrangements moving forwards via email and the [Coronavirus Hub](#) on our website.

## **Student Support**

We are aware that COVID-19 has presented a unique set of challenges for students and we have worked hard during this time to support all learners to achieve their potential. We have been particularly mindful of the challenges faced by those students who are balancing their studies alongside work and caring responsibilities. Support measures introduced so far include developing alternative assessment formats, granting extensions to assignment deadlines where appropriate, delivering wellbeing support over the phone, and creating a socially-distanced library collection service. These support processes will remain in place whilst COVID-19 continues to impact upon YCUC, and we will continually review whether there are further measures we can introduce to better support our learners during this time.

## **Deferral & Suspension**

Applicants who wish to defer their place until September 2022, or current students who wish to suspend their studies, should contact Lynne Stocker, University Centre Assistant, via [Lynne.Stocker@yeovil.ac.uk](mailto:Lynne.Stocker@yeovil.ac.uk).

## **Future Communications**

We will write again at the start of July to provide any further information. We hope that at this stage we will also be able to provide provisional information about timetables. We will get in touch again at the start of August to provide any further information about the upcoming academic year. Then, over the last week of August and first week of September we will send out 'Welcome Letters' to all of our new and returning students. These letters will contain information about a range of topics, including enrolment. In the meantime, please don't hesitate to contact [university.centre@yeovil.ac.uk](mailto:university.centre@yeovil.ac.uk) or ring 01935 845454 if you have any questions or queries.