

Eden Centre Note of Guidance for Staff on Support for Students

This is one of our series of guidance notes to ensure the continuity of education and the student learning experience during the current rapidly evolving Coronavirus situation. Its focus is on guidance for academic staff including academic mentors in providing support for students. This document compiles relevant guidance already issued by LSE and the UK Government.

Part 1: Advice on supporting students

- **Acknowledge students' feelings** of stress, anxiety, or uncertainty generated by the outbreak. LSE is a highly international community. Some students may be from a country where travel restrictions or quarantines have been put in place. They may be concerned for friends and family or may be worried they won't be able to travel home. Furthermore, as the media has been reporting, the COVID-19 outbreak has led to a rise in anti-Asian racism and xenophobia. These are examples of factors that may be contributing to student stress and self-isolation.
- **Establish channels of communication for students to contact you**, In the circumstances and with the volume of courses being moved online, students will have a better experience if teachers align around a common set of full-supported tools e.g. email, phone, [Moodle](#), [Zoom](#), Microsoft Teams etc. We would advise against using unsupported technologies at this time (e.g. WhatsApp, Facebook etc.) For instructions on how to use Zoom, which is accessible through Moodle, please read this [guide](#).
- **Reassure students** that the School is taking the situation seriously and is working hard to ensure continuity in students' learning experiences and general wellbeing.
- **Remind students of LSE's existing directives relating to COVID-19**, which is that LSE remains open and staff and students are encouraged to continue day-to-day activities as usual. However, as Easter break approaches, LSE strongly cautions against travelling to areas identified as high risk (including transiting through airports) by the [UK government](#).
- **Check-in with absent students** via email or other pre-established lines of communication. Many students are now choosing not to attend lectures and seminars, which they may be permitted to do for [up to four weeks](#) with approval.
- **Contact your [departmental advisers](#)** from the Eden Centre for guidance on how to develop a sense of community online, as students have reported feeling isolated since the COVID outbreak.
- **Move office hours online** by conducting them over the phone, Zoom, Microsoft Teams, etc. For international students who may have already returned home, consider modulating office hours to suit different time zones, e.g. late morning and early afternoon, rather than early morning or evening.
- **Communicate regularly and clearly** to avoid increasing panic or worry among the student body. This will also help curtail the spread of rumours. This could involve sending a weekly email or Moodle announcement to your course with updates and to dispel any rumours that may be circulating.

- **Manage expectations** of your availability to students. While it is important that students feel cared for and supported, it is also necessary to manage expectations in terms of availability to avoid increasing workloads and communication beyond regular working hours for staff.
- **Base answers to COVID-19-related queries on LSE guidance.** Should a student contact you with a question, refer them to the dedicated [LSE COVID-19 FAQ page](#). You may also direct them to the [NHS information page](#) about the outbreak. For additional information, visit the Eden Centre's [COVID-19 planning](#) page and the [Staff resources](#) page. You can also email eden.digital@lse.ac.uk for further teaching and learning advice.
- **Signpost relevant services available at the School.** Students can:
 - Use the [Academic Mentoring Portal](#) to find relevant services.
 - Contact [LSE's Student Services Advice team](#) for support.
 - Use [Report it Stop it](#) if they witness or experience any bullying or harassment.
 - Book an appointment or attend a drop-in session with [Student counselling](#).
 - Book one-on-one appointments with [LSE LIFE](#) (face-to-face or online).
 - Book an appointment with the [LSESU Advice](#) team.
 - Consult the [LSE Visa Advice](#) page.
 - Contact their [Hall Warden](#) if they live in an LSE hall of residence.

Part 2: Relevant guidance and resources for academic staff

LSE Guidance:

- [COVID-19 FAQs](#) (regularly updated)
- [COVID-19 planning](#), should the School close (regularly updated)
- COVID-19 contingency staff plan (part 1)
- [Staff resources](#) webpage

LSE Services and Contacts:

- LSE's [Eden Centre for Education Enhancement](#) is responsible for education-related COVID-19 contingency planning and supporting teaching and learning. For COVID-19 and online learning related enquiries, email: eden.digital@lse.ac.uk (regularly monitored). For further support, you may also contact your department's [academic development and learning technology advisers](#).
- [Staff counselling](#) is available to staff members.
- [Report It Stop It](#) to report any incidence of bullying or harassment. As the media has been reporting, the COVID-19 outbreak has led to a rise in anti-Asian racism and xenophobia.

External Guidance:

- NHS: [COVID-19 111 page](#), [COVID-19 advice page](#), and [common questions](#).
- UK Government [response page](#) and [travel advice](#).