

## **Lockdown 2021 - Student Questions (HE) - last updated 19 January 2020**

Many of you and/or your course Student Representatives have spoken to Student Union President, Harriet Moore, in the past couple of weeks, raising concerns and asking questions on a variety of topics in relation to the recent lockdown and the effect that it has had on your studies. Harriet, Registry, the Senior Leadership Team and other staff have worked to compile the answer to all of your questions in the document below.

If there is a specific question or topic you are looking for, use Control+F or Command+F to search this document for the answer.

### **Will you implement a No Detriment Policy?**

Please click [here](#) to see the existing arrangements that we have in place at PCA, including our current “no detriment” approach for grading, which can be found under the heading ‘Degree Calculations’.

The Registry team are further enhancing our no detriment measures for degree calculations that we implemented last year in response to the first national lockdown, working on measures that we can introduce as part of a no detriment approach for all students, both at Undergraduate and Postgraduate levels. This includes consultation through the Academic Registrars Council and other sector bodies, and consideration of guidance from the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) which we are expecting this week. Our intention is to introduce measures that will enable us to compare student performance at a modular level to that of previous academic years, to mitigate the impact of COVID-19. Once drafted, these measures will be approved by our Academic Board and communicated to the student body.

### **What clarity can you give us for assessments, marking and grading?**

Students at undergraduate and postgraduate levels have been asking for clarity on how they will be assessed with work that is developed and submitted during a lockdown. When you submit work, you will also be able to submit up to 200 words of ‘**Assessment Intent**’ on an Assessment Intent form, which can be accessed via the [Registry pages](#) on the Student Portal (follow the link to make a copy). This optional statement, to be submitted along with your coursework, will support the understanding of work you have produced and be used as part of the assessment process by academic staff. Within this statement, you will have the opportunity to articulate what you had originally intended but has now been affected by lockdown. This might include an indication about the quality of outcome(s) or finish within an artefact or completion of final work that may have been achieved under normal circumstances.

We are also using an updated Covid-19 Grading Matrix (which can be found on the [Curriculum Ops pages](#)), where our approach to marking work made under lockdown conditions means that marks will not be reduced due to submitting work-in-progress.

### **Will our deadlines be extended?**

All Undergraduate modules due to be originally submitted on the **18th, 19th & 21st of January** will now be given a three week extension to the **8th, 9th & 11th** of February respectively.

All Postgraduate modules due to be originally submitted on the **2nd or 4th February** will now be given a three week extension to the **23rd or the 25th** February respectively.

We have given students an extension for Dissertation submission (304) to the 5th of March. Your supervisors will continue to give academic advice right up to submission and your submission is electronic only and there is no requirement to print your dissertation.

### **Will you implement a blanket EC, as per the previous academic year?**

We have once again worked with your Students' Union to extend deadlines for all students (as above), however should you also require additional time to complete your work, you can apply for extenuating circumstances. Each student will need to apply separately and details of how to make a claim are on the Student Portal:

<https://sites.google.com/pca.ac.uk/registry/home>.

### **Can I still submit an application for EC?**

Yes. As per our existing arrangements, we understand that there will be many students whose personal circumstances mean that they will be unable to submit to the deadline. Individual students can apply for Extenuating Circumstances and we will provide you with a revised deadline.

As of 7th January 2021 and until further notice, we will not be asking students to provide any supporting evidence for their claim, but please make sure you give a full description of the nature of your circumstances so we can make a decision quickly.

We will notify you of the outcome of your claim by email to your student account, and this will confirm your new submission date, which for Trimester One will be 22nd March.

Details of how to make a claim are on the Student Portal

<https://sites.google.com/pca.ac.uk/registry/home>.

### **Will there be any changes to Trimester 2?**

Following the extension of Trimester 1 module submission, teaching for Trimester 2 will now start on the **22nd of February** for undergraduate modules and the **15th of February** for postgraduate modules. Teaching will be online and modules have been adapted, where required, for online delivery. With Trimester 2 teaching starting slightly later, we have moved the assessment dates back accordingly.

### **Summary of dates:**

	<b>Original Date</b>	<b>New Date</b>
<b>Module hand in: 301</b>	18th of January	8th February
<b>Module hand in: LZ101/101/102</b>	19th of January	9th February
<b>Module hand in: 201/202(Film)</b>	21st of January	11th February
<b>Module hand in: Postgrad101</b>	2nd February	23rd February
<b>Module hand in: Postgrad201</b>	4th February	25th February

<b>UG Dissertation submission (304)</b>	5th February	5th March
<b>Enrichment week</b>	15th - 19th February	15th - 19th February
<b>UG T2 start of teaching</b>	8th February	22nd February
<b>PG T2 start of teaching</b>	8th February	15th February

If you have any questions related to the Q&A, such as questions about extenuating circumstances or extensions, please email [registry@pca.ac.uk](mailto:registry@pca.ac.uk).

**I have group projects that are no longer viable given the lockdown, will I be penalized for this?**

Our programme teams recognise the individuality of each student's practice and this forms an essential part of our approach to marking. We are confident that the academic judgement used in the assessment of student work, and the rigour and transparency of our academic regulations, will ensure that student attainment is appropriately supported and maintained. We have been assessing work under COVID-19 conditions since March 2020, and our teams are highly experienced in marking work impacted by changes in studio/workshop access. We want to reassure students that this will be fully considered during marking. For example, if a piece of work is submitted unfinished due to lack of access, the work to-date, and the underpinning research/thinking and development of that work will contribute a larger part of the final grade.

**If you are a Level 4 student, you will not be required to make any submission for module BAIS300 Interdisciplinary Studies (BAIS300).** You will be awarded the credit (compensated) for this module automatically. We have taken this decision in light of the government advice on social distancing and the inability to successfully run an interdisciplinary practical group project without access to our resources.

We have approved the change via our Academic Board who have taken assurance that the learning outcomes for the year are covered within existing learning. This is identical to the approach we took during the 2019-20 academic year. Your wellbeing at this time is our priority and we appreciate that individual circumstances and caring responsibilities will vary enormously between individuals. We hope that this adjustment will help you to successfully achieve the best possible outcomes in those modules that you will undertake in Trimester 2.

**Are submission guidelines going to be adapted given the fact I cannot access key equipment and resources?**

Submission deadlines have been extended (see above).

The remainder of our 2020/201 curriculum is being revised to ensure that it can all effectively be delivered, assessed and is achievable online and remotely, as a contingency measure to ensure that should lockdown or severe tier restrictions continue, all students can progress from each year to the next successfully or be able to graduate. This will NOT stop us from prioritising getting students back on campus to access our resources as quickly and as frequently as we legally can, regardless of how you'll be assessed

**Will all submissions be done online?**

All dissertation submissions will be done online. There will be no need to print your dissertation.

For practice-based modules, and as part of best practice, all students were advised to document the development of their work throughout each week of the module and staff will be able to use this ongoing documentation (such as a reflective journal/research blog/online sketchbook) as work in progress in support of your submission.

**Will there be lower grade boundaries?**

Students at undergraduate and postgraduate levels have been asking for clarity on how they will be assessed with work that is developed and submitted during a lockdown. When you submit work, you will also be able to submit up to 200 words of '**Assessment Intent**' on an Assessment Intent form, which can be accessed via the [Registry pages](#) on the Student Portal (follow the link to make a copy). This optional statement, to be submitted along with your coursework, will support the understanding of work you have produced and be used as part of the assessment process by academic staff. Within this statement, you will have the opportunity to articulate what you had originally intended but has now been affected by lockdown. This might include an indication about the quality of outcome(s) or finish within an artefact or completion of final work that may have been achieved under normal circumstances.

We are also using an updated Covid-19 Grading Matrix (which can be found on the [Curriculum Ops pages](#)), where our approach to marking work made under lockdown conditions means that marks will not be reduced due to submitting work-in-progress.

**When will we next have access to the campus?**

Throughout the Covid-19 pandemic we have prioritised the physical safety and academic welfare of all students in all decisions taken in the management of lockdown and physical distancing protocols on campus. We continue to follow government guidance to ensure the safety of all of our students and staff and are committed to keeping everyone informed at the earliest opportunity but we do not know when lockdown will end nor what new measures may be implemented for universities. We do not receive warning of national lockdowns and restrictions but it seems unlikely that full access will be possible until progress has been made with the national vaccination programme to slow the spread of the virus.

As soon as we are able to re-open the campus, even partially, we will. This will be subject to Government guidelines on what is permissible, but we will endeavour to communicate progress with this in due course. We know you also want you to build experience using industry-standard equipment and that's why we're planning as many ways as possible for you to have increased campus access once national restrictions are lifted.

We hope this will mean that you have access to additional time in the workshops and studios on Saturdays and evenings or in the days after submitting your assessed work. We're committed to finding ways for you to have valuable access to develop practical skills that will give you an advantage in the creative industries.

### **Can I come onto campus to collect work or resources that I need to complete my work?**

Please email [trm@pca.ac.uk](mailto:trm@pca.ac.uk), in case we can arrange to find and post work or possessions (if practicable and essential) in the weeks ahead for a small number of students. Please note that this will only be possible if we are legally able to access our campus to do so.

### **Can I still get work printed via the Digital Print Bureau?**

We are unable to allow students to attend campus for taught sessions or self-directed learning. The national lockdown means that students cannot attend campus until at least mid-February 2021, with further announcements suggesting that the lockdown may not end until March at the earliest.

As for future access to resources, we're already planning for the beginning of the next trimester in February, looking at academic plans and matching these against specialist resources and equipment that we intend to loan out where needed. It's too soon to share these plans, but we hope to confirm arrangements as soon as we know more.

### **Can I access the ERC or other key equipment/ resources?**

We are unable to allow students to attend campus for taught sessions or self-directed learning. The national lockdown means that students cannot attend campus until at least mid-February 2021, with further announcements suggesting that the lockdown may not end until March at the earliest.

All students at Plymouth College of Art have access to Adobe Creative Suite from home, which can be downloaded onto a personal machine (laptop/desktop or tablet), alongside a range of other learning technologies including G-Suite and LinkedIn Learning, through the Learning Lab page on the Student Portal.

However, if there are resources that you need i.e. a computer, camera kit or particular software, please speak to your Subject Leader to highlight the fact that you do not have access to them, and we will do as much as we can to help provide a solution.

As for future access to resources, we're already planning for the beginning of the next trimester in February, looking at academic plans and matching these against specialist resources and equipment that we intend to loan out where needed. It's too soon to share these plans, but we hope to confirm arrangements as soon as we know more.

### **Where do you recommend buying resources or services?**

If there is a specific resource or service you are looking for, please ask a staff member on your course or member of the Technical Resource team. You could also try asking for advice from other members of your course as they may have purchased something similar in the past. For basic resources or art and design essentials, local businesses such as The Art Side or national businesses such as Hobbycraft or Cass Art.

### **I don't have the equipment/ resources I need to complete my work at home, will I be penalised for this?**

The Assistant Heads of School, Subject Leaders and our Head of Learning Resource Environment have worked together to identify which equipment was needed by each School,

targeting resources according to need and giving us enough time to prioritise these loans and allocate equipment. We purchased a range of additional resources to help with loans for remote working, coordinating with academics to ensure fair and transparent communication about equipment and availability. We would like to reassure students that you will not be penalised for submitting work in progress, as per the marking/submission guidelines. Please let your Subject Leader know if you feel that you have been unable to access resources that are needed to complete your work.

### **I have equipment/resources I need to complete my work in Plymouth, can I return?**

Under [current national lockdown guidelines](#), you should not return to Plymouth and should remain where you are wherever possible, and start your term online, as facilitated by college until at least mid-February. Our academic and technical teams are working incredibly hard to try to provide you with enough resources to continue your learning remotely. If there is anything you need, please contact your Subject Leader in the first instance and we will do our best to provide you with resources, technical kit, or solutions for continuing your work remotely.

### **I don't have a suitable study environment at home, can I return to Plymouth?**

With the exception of students on specific courses identified by the Department of Education (relating to medicine, allied health and veterinary studies, as well as initial teacher training and social work) for the duration of lockdown, students should remain at their holiday address (if it is different from their term time address) and not return to Plymouth. However, students can travel back to their term time address to collect any items required for online learning if it is essential. Additionally, students can return to their term time address in exceptional circumstances, for example, where they are unable to study from their holiday address or need to return for health or safety reasons.

Further information can be found in this Department for Education document:

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/950583/Students\\_returning\\_to\\_and\\_starting\\_higher\\_education\\_in\\_Spring\\_Term\\_2021\\_FINAL\\_v3.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/950583/Students_returning_to_and_starting_higher_education_in_Spring_Term_2021_FINAL_v3.pdf)

### **I need to return to Plymouth as I have a job and need the money, can I still come back?**

National guidance for the current lockdown clearly states that everyone in England should only go out to work, or provide voluntary or charitable services, if you cannot reasonably do so from home. For this reason, we would expect students to already have returned to term-time addresses in Plymouth if they have chosen to return to essential employment that cannot be done from home: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/national-lockdown-stay-at-home>

If you have questions or need advice about this issue, email [health@pca.ac.uk](mailto:health@pca.ac.uk) and we will try to find the most up-to-date Government guidance related to your situation.

With the exception of students on specific courses identified by the Department of Education (relating to medicine, allied health and veterinary studies, as well as initial teacher training and social work) students should remain at their holiday address (if it is different from their term time address) and not return to Plymouth. However, students can travel back to their term time address to collect any items required for online learning if it is essential.

Additionally, students can return to their term time address in exceptional circumstances, for example, where they are unable to study from their holiday address or need to return for health or safety reasons.

Further information can be found in this Department for Education document:

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/950583/Students\\_returning\\_to\\_and\\_starting\\_higher\\_education\\_in\\_Spring\\_Term\\_2021\\_FINAL\\_v3.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/950583/Students_returning_to_and_starting_higher_education_in_Spring_Term_2021_FINAL_v3.pdf)

**There is nothing in the gov.uk guidance that explicitly states I cannot return to my accommodation, will I get into trouble if I do?**

Current lockdown restrictions have been laid into law, so you should remain where you are if you can. See guidance from the government here:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/national-lockdown-stay-at-home#universities>

With the exception of students on specific courses identified by the Department of Education (relating to medicine, allied health and veterinary studies, as well as initial teacher training and social work) students should remain at their holiday address (if it is different from their term time address) and not return to Plymouth. However, students can travel back to their term time address to collect any items required for online learning if it is essential.

Additionally, students can return to their term time address in exceptional circumstances, for example, where they are unable to study from their holiday address or need to return for health or safety reasons.

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**I am paying for student accommodation that I am being advised to not return to, what is the college's stance on this? Are you going to speak to Clever Student Lets and Host to release us from contracts?**

We maintain close contact with both Clever Student Lets and Host Student Housing, the two student accommodation providers that PCA works with. CSL have advised that they are working on a case by case basis in response to concerns raised by students and encourage landlords to offer some level of refund to students who are not able to be resident in their rented accommodation. We await Host's response, expected later this week.

**Will my attendance affect my Registry Bursary?**

No, we are here to support students at this difficult time and don't want your attendance nor your eligibility for the student bursary to be impacted. We will not, therefore, be applying attendance criteria for the payment of any bursaries for this academic year. However, it remains vital that you stay in contact with your Subject Leader if you are experiencing any difficulties working remotely or attending online sessions.

Bursary Payment dates are:

- 27th November (25%)
- 5th March (25% for all except Level 6 who get 75%)

- 14th May (50%)

Bursary amounts:

- Level 4 (ExBA progressing students only): £300
- Level 5: £500
- Level 6: £600

### **I am a Brand & Communications Student Ambassador and/or a Student Union Ambassador, will I be placed onto furlough?**

If you work for the college in the capacity of a Student Ambassador, your line manager should have reached out to you with information about furlough. You can find more information about what furlough means for you [here](#).

### **I am anxious about money, what support is there for me?**

Student loans continue to be processed as normal, with first payments due at the start of term, based on successful registration onto the appropriate course. Your Registry Bursary will continue to be paid with no attendance criteria needed to qualify.

You can find more finance related info here:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/guidance-for-students-from-england-wales-and-northern-ireland?priority-taxon=b350e61d-1db9-4cc2-bb44-fab02882ac25>

### **Hardship Fund**

Plymouth College of Art offers undergraduate and postgraduate students access to a Higher Education Hardship fund, for students who are experiencing a financial crisis. Due to the restrictions that have been enforced during the pandemic, the Government has added an extra £27,351 to our Hardship Funds, to help you when you need it the most.

**For students facing financial hardship, our Hardship Fund offers a one-off crisis payment that does not need to be repaid, and is designed to help you cover the cost of necessities.** The fund is not intended to offer ongoing support in a way that would replace Student Finance payments, ongoing loss of earnings or benefits, but is instead designed as a form of crisis support that could contribute to essential living costs, bills and accommodation, food, childcare, medication or travel. This is not an exhaustive list, but gives an idea of the sort of reasons that people apply for a crisis payment from the Hardship Fund. Due to the impact of Covid-19, in exceptional circumstances we can now offer students more than one crisis payment.

It's easy to apply: follow the instructions on the [online application form](#) and show evidence of your most recent bank statement (either forwarding a digital copy or screenshot, or submitting a photo of a paper copy - let us know if you need any help with this). Please note that it can take up to six weeks to process a payment, though we always aim to complete this much sooner.

The Hardship Fund is a limited pot of money that can be accessed broadly by most Higher Education students at Plymouth College of Art. We ask that you keep this in mind and apply only for what you need during a crisis, so that we can continue to support as many students as possible.



Please note that the Hardship Fund is designed as a crisis payment for essential living costs, which means that ordinarily we advise students not to apply for funding to purchase materials needed for your course. If you feel that you are unable to complete your work due to a lack of materials or IT equipment, please speak to your Programme Leader in the first instance and if necessary, upload a supporting statement from them via the [hardship application form](#) to let us know why it is vital that you access funding for materials.

### **Students' Union Bursary**

As pledged in Harriet's manifesto, the Students' Union have dedicated £1,000 towards a new bursary scheme to support you in your studies (this is in addition to the Plymouth College of Art bursary). This money will be spread across several students to support your requests. Applications are open from now for a total of four weeks, closing at midnight on 31 January. For more information and the application form, please see the Student Union website [here](#).

### **Students' Union Food Bank**

If you are in financial hardship, vulnerable, self-isolating or unable to make the journey for food and other essentials, please reach out to the Students' Union, who have been running an amazing food bank this academic year to support you. As well as food, they can provide basic toiletries and period products, to ensure period poverty does not get in the way of your education. As long as the campus can legally stay open to access these resources, it can be arranged for you to collect items from them or deliver to you if you are unable to collect. At the moment, Harriet is running this from her flat, so speak to her directly. For more information, please see the Student Union website [here](#).

### **I am struggling with my mental health, can I still access Student Support services?**

From [counselling sessions](#) to [wellbeing](#) resources, if you need any extra support please email our friendly team at [studentsupport@pca.ac.uk](mailto:studentsupport@pca.ac.uk) who will be quick to respond.

Need support outside of our [opening hours](#)? You can find additional resources below:

Register with [Togetherall](#), a digital mental health and wellbeing service, offering safe, anonymous online support available 24/7. It offers a range of therapeutic pathways, including peer and professional support and creative self-expression. Sign up for free with your college email: [www.togetherall.com](http://www.togetherall.com)

Are you in a crisis? Anxious? Worried? Or stressed? [Get 24/7 free help with 'Give us a Shout'. Text 85258](#)

### **Will there be more wellbeing support available?**

As well as counselling sessions, the Student Support team offer lots of mental and physical wellbeing support sessions, such as yoga and mindfulness. Please visit the Student Support [Wellbeing site](#) for all the wellbeing information and services on offer.

The Students' Union also wants to support your wellbeing during this time. They are planning to put together some online events to keep you engaged with the wider PCA community, and Harriet has been working to develop and create online communities for you

to engage with. You can find their current list of Facebook groups [here](#), but please do make any suggestions for groups you'd like to see in the future too.

### **I am a parent juggling home-schooling and online learning, what extra support is there for me?**

We want to reassure you that we know every students' situation is different and potentially difficult at the moment, especially for those of you who are home-schooling alongside your academic studies. Please speak to your Subject Leader so that they can support you. For example, if you are finding your sessions clash with your children's lessons, lecturers may be able to record lectures for you to view at a more convenient time.

Your SU President, Harriet Moore, has created an online community for students who are also parents in the form of a Facebook group. This is a place where you can discuss with other parents the ways that they are managing their studies and home-schooling, and also where you can share your tips and tricks. You can find the link to this and other groups [here](#).

In terms of additional support, the Student Support team have a lot of support mechanisms to help students and provide advice and the Learning Lab team can help with understanding assessment and also run sessions offering advice and guidance on time management.

### **I am struggling with my motivation at the moment, is there any support for this?**

The Library Team has recently created a Study Club to support students who feel this way at the moment. [Study Club](#) is an informal supportive group session to allow us to reconnect with others in a productive way! Sessions are on Wednesdays from 10 - 10.45am, you can [join here](#) and find more information on the [slides here](#).

### **I feel disconnected from the people on my course, what can be done to improve this?**

SU President, Harriet Moore, discussed ideas to combat this at the previous round of Staff Student Liaison Group (SSLG) meetings, as many people felt they did not know the other year groups within their course. Assemblies, crit sessions and online 'studio' spaces have been set up by lecturers, and Student Representatives have created informal places to meet and chat with students in all three cohorts, such as Google Meets and Facebook groups. If your course does not yet have anything like this in place, please reach out to your Subject Leader and/or Student Representatives to discuss.

### **I don't feel I can work during the pandemic, can I defer?**

Taking a short amount of time away from your course (a few weeks) is often called "suspension" of studies. Taking a longer amount of time away (a whole academic year) is often called a "deferral" or "intermitting".

You will need to contact the college to ask for a deferral or if you want to take time away from your studies. In considering requests for a deferral, we will assess where you are in your studies and how appropriate it is for you to defer. Your request might not be granted automatically.

It is important for you to weigh up this decision carefully and seek advice and support from both the college and from your student representative body. You may need to think about how it will affect your funding, accommodation, visa status or access to other services and

facilities. We may be able to give you other options, for example, changing from full-time study to part-time study. Or if your concerns are about being able to access online learning, we may be able to support you, for example, by lending you equipment or helping you to develop relevant IT skills.

### **Can I still access Student Union services?**

Yes, the Student Union Team is here to help. They are remote working, but still very much here to support you during your studies. Your Student Union President, Harriet Moore, has been working hard to collate your concerns and questions to make sure you get the answers and reassurance you need in this difficult time. Please do not hesitate to reach out to her and other members of the Student Union Team if you need support.

If you are struggling financially, vulnerable, isolating or unable to make the journey for food and other essentials, please reach out to the Students' Union, who have been running an amazing food bank this academic year to support you. As well as food, they can provide personal alarms and basic toiletries including period products, to ensure period poverty does not get in the way of your education. Harriet is currently running the Student Union Food Bank from her flat, so please reach out to her if you need any support or would like to contribute in any way. You can find more information [here](#).

The Students' Union has a [Facebook group](#) and [WhatsApp chat](#) for students who are self-isolating or remote-working, and this year Harriet has set up and developed many other Facebook groups to build the online community including [Plymouth College of Art Collaboration Group](#), [Plymouth College of Art Parents Support Group](#) and [Plymouth College of Art What's On](#).

They are also planning to re-start online events, but would love to know what you'd like to see from them, so please include ideas and suggestions on their [Online Feedback Form](#).

As pledged in Harriet's manifesto, the Students' Union have dedicated £1,000 towards a new bursary scheme to support you in your studies (this is in addition to the Plymouth College of Art bursary). This money will be spread across several students to support your requests. Applications are open from now for a total of four weeks, closing at midnight on 31 January. For more information, please visit the SU website [here](#).

### **Will there be more academic support available?**

There is a lot of support available for you both from the academic staff on your course, and the additional support available from the Library, Careers, etc. teams, including:

Online inductions including an interactive programme of interdisciplinary workshops, live stream presentations from the college Principal and Students' Union, module briefings and virtual demos from our Learning Lab technicians. You can also benefit from complementary hardware and software, such as Adobe Creative Cloud, and specialised materials and equipment.

Free and open access to the Virtual Library Counter and online database housing over 30,000 e-books and e-journals and over 1,000 film and television items, plus bookable advice sessions and flexible loans.

If you are struggling to find useful research online, you can email [library@pca.ac.uk](mailto:library@pca.ac.uk) a description of what you are looking for and the Library team will do their absolute best to find some useful research sources for you. Additionally, bookable tutorials with Donna and Emily ([book on Connect2](#)) are available for more in depth help with research and referencing.

You can reach out the Careers Team for any professional development and support with job opportunities and paid commission work. They can help you with CV's, interview preparation, portfolios and more.

### **Can I still access Library services?**

Whilst the library is closed during the national lockdown, the Library Team are still here to support you in many ways. Due to the national lockdown, all library items have been automatically extended until March 31 so you will not be fined during this period.

Below is a list of online support from the Library Team that you can access:

- Research help - if you are struggling to find useful research online, you can email us a description of what you are looking for and we will do our absolute best to find some useful research sources. Email [library@pca.ac.uk](mailto:library@pca.ac.uk) and we will be happy to help!
- The [Virtual Library Helpdesk](#) runs daily 10-10.45am for all of your library queries and questions
- Bookable tutorials with Donna and Emily ([book on Connect2](#)) for more in depth help with research and referencing
- Workshop Wednesday sessions in January:
  - 20th Jan, 11am - [Paperpile: Adding Citations and making a Reference List](#)
  - 27th Jan, 11am - [Paperpile: List of Illustrations](#)
- Referencing Help - email Emily ([ewatkins@pca.ac.uk](mailto:ewatkins@pca.ac.uk)) or Donna ([dgundry@pca.ac.uk](mailto:dgundry@pca.ac.uk)) your work to have your referencing checked this month - we can also have a meeting afterwards to go through any specific questions you have.
- Study Club - [Study Club](#) is an informal supportive group session to allow us to reconnect with others in a productive way! on Wednesdays from 10 - 10.45am [Join here](#) | [slides here](#)

Over the last 12 months the library has continued to develop the online resources that we have on offer, including an increase in the number of eBooks that we have access to. As always you can access these from the [Library website](#). The 5 main digital resource types are below:

- [Databases](#)
- [eBooks](#)
- [Online Journals](#)
- [Digital Videos](#)
- [Dissertations](#)

You can find helpful videos, recorded sessions and guides for accessing these resources from the following pages, and as always if you have any questions you can contact the team at [library@pca.ac.uk](mailto:library@pca.ac.uk) or join them on the [Virtual Library Helpdesk](#) at 10am on weekdays.

- [Library FAQs and help page](#)
- [PCA Harvard Referencing Guide and support](#)
- [Paperpile Support Page](#)
- [Academic Skills Research and Reading Site](#)

**I am worried that employers will not take our graduating class seriously because we have not had the hands-on experience that previous graduates have, what careers support can I access?**

The Careers Team at PCA are here to help you prepare for life after graduation. They can offer 1:1 sessions, workshops and have an online video library full of resources relating to careers, employability and enterprise. They can also help to support your Professional Practice module throughout your degree. You can find everything the team offers on the Student Portal [here](#).

Louise Sharland is the Employability and Careers advisor, and she can help you with CVs, cover letters, job applications (including full length supporting statements), interview prep and mock interviews, postgraduate applications and statements, guidance interviews on where to go next, what to do with your degree. You can speak to Louise about internships, work experience, personal branding and personal branding materials (including CVs, promotional postcards and business cards), getting into teaching, funding and grants. She also designs and delivers in-class sessions that support the curriculum.

Nick Crawley is the Employer Engager and he can help you with creating a good CV, networking both physically and virtually, building an effective LinkedIn profile, entrepreneurship, business plans, leadership, resilience and effective decision-making.

Dr Mark J. P. Kerrigan is the Dean of Learning and Teaching, and he can help you with academic writing, critical thinking, statistics, numeracy, referencing, learning technologies, project planning, research, communication, Turnitin and academic integrity.

We are also looking at different ways we can support you as graduates, in addition to the support that is already in place. It's too soon to share these plans, but we hope to confirm arrangements as soon as we know more.

**I'm a third-year student, what will happen about my graduation?**

We are currently working on plans for both the 2020 and 2021 Graduation Ceremonies. We hope that these events will happen in person, to celebrate the end of your degrees, whilst also making sure to follow the guidelines and keep you safe. It's too soon to share these plans, but we will confirm arrangements as soon as we know more and will speak to the students who are directly affected to make sure that you're informed about any options between physical or virtual events and what restrictions might have to be in place if we meet in person.

**I'm a third-year student, what will happen about my degree show?**

We have already been planning for the eventuality of an online degree showcase since the beginning of the year. We will begin to roll out this planning to courses in Trimester 2. We

are intending to develop upon the excellent work achieved last year in showcasing our graduate work, through both individual programme initiatives hosted on our website and through the IGNITE platform which will be run in collaboration with the University of Plymouth. Further details will follow to include updated information on external graduate exhibitions and showcase events for level 6 such as Graduate Fashion Week, New Designers etc.

### **What will happen about 'Design to Sell' and other similar events?**

Further details will follow to include updated information on external graduate exhibitions and showcase events for level 6 such as Graduate Fashion Week, Design to Sell, New Designers etc.

### **What is the university doing in terms of lobbying?**

We are currently in active discussions with Department for Education (DfE), UKADIA (the United Kingdom Arts and Design Institutions Association, a group of specialist arts and design institutions) and GuildHE (a British membership organisation representing the heads of higher education institutions), alongside other arts universities **lobbying for the importance of practice based art, design and media courses to be reincluded in the government's priority list for the accelerated phased return** of Undergraduate and Postgraduate students to campuses when lockdown restrictions are lifted. In response, Michelle Donelan, Minister for Universities, has recently tweeted "It's too soon to say when we can get students back...but we will look to prioritise practical and creative students and those nearer to graduation in any decision". Harriet Moore, your SU President, has been meeting with other SU Presidents and Officers from art universities across the UK to discuss support and access. Your Student Union is also part of the National Union of Students (NUS), who are running the #StudentsDeserveBetter campaign. Harriet recently met with the Principal to discuss how best to keep you informed of our lobbying activities.

### **I feel I am not getting the education that I signed up for, will the college refund my fees?**

We recognise the impact of the pandemic on our creative arts provision and have worked hard to ensure that your learning remains high quality and achievable, based on the Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA) definition as "broadly equivalent teaching and assessment opportunities" in a way that students can access. The OIA recognises that "Covid-19 has had a huge impact on many aspects of student life and will continue to do so throughout this academic year. Almost every student's experience has been affected in some way, some more seriously than others".

Throughout the pandemic, we have consistently offered students a different way of teaching when we were not able to allow students on campus for in-person delivery. We continue to take this into account when deciding how to carry out our assessments. We plan to increase access and bring students back into our specialist studios and workshops as soon as Government restrictions allow, and are also planning as many ways as possible for you to have increased campus access once national restrictions are lifted, to support preparations for your professional career.

There is not currently a Government package of financial support to universities based on the effects of the pandemic or the impact of Government-enforced national lockdowns nor

has our own overall expenditure decreased. As a result there are currently no planned national refunds for students who feel that their studies have been negatively impacted. We believe that the measures we have taken at Plymouth College of Art have allowed us to continue offering a high-quality creative education, with adjustments for the impact of the pandemic, in line with the conditions for registration with the Office for Students and with the guidance for Higher Education quality and standards by the Quality Assurance Agency. If you feel that we have not maintained the quality of our provision, not provided the teaching and assessment we promised to you, or have not kept you sufficiently informed of the changes we have made to respond to the pandemic then you are able to make a complaint to us. Please contact [jwright@pca.ac.uk](mailto:jwright@pca.ac.uk) for advice about making a complaint, our Complaints Procedures can be accessed [here](#). The student ombudsman, the Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA) provides some useful context in relation to student [FAQs](#) about the impact of Covid-19.

**As I cannot access the campus now, will I get to make up this time as an alumni or can I have an additional year of access between years (aka defer but still have access to resources on campus)?**

For creative arts students, one of the most disappointing aspects of the new National Lockdown mandated by the Government is that we can't currently allow you to come onto campus to access our specialist resources and facilities. While our expert academic staff are working hard to ensure that this won't stop you from completing and achieving your qualifications and moving on to the next stage of your career/studies, we understand that achieving the grades that your hard work deserves is only part of the picture. We know you also want you to build experience using industry-standard equipment and that's why we're planning as many ways as possible for you to have increased campus access once national restrictions are lifted.

We hope this will mean that you have access to additional time in the workshops and studios on Saturdays and evenings or in the days after submitting your assessed work. We're committed to finding ways for you to have valuable access to develop practical skills that will give you an advantage in the creative industries.

**I am confused whether Plymouth College of Art classes as a university or college because of the name? If we are a university, why hasn't the name been changed?**

Plymouth College of Art was awarded Taught Degree Awarding Powers in March 2019, meaning it can award its own taught degrees, whereas previously its degrees were awarded by the Open University. The College later applied for 'University Title' and this application is still being assessed by the Office for Students. However, the College is a Higher Education Institute (HEI) registered with the Office for Students as provider of higher education so no different from another university in that respect, but until the application is approved our title must remain as Plymouth College of Art.

We made the transition from Further Education College to HEI in summer 2015, but clearly still provide our range of Further Education courses encompassing Level 2 Diploma, Level 3 Extended Diplomas (with optional International Baccalaureate Career Programme), and the Foundation Art and Design Diploma.

In terms of the coronavirus pandemic and national guidance for the different education sectors, government announcements for 'universities' or HE Providers apply to undergraduate and postgraduate students, and announcements for Further Education 'Colleges' applies to our students on our FE (Pre-Degree) courses.

### **Why does it take so long for PCA communications to come out after government announcements?**

On 4th January we listened, along with the rest of the country, to the Prime Minister announce a new lockdown. **Like you, we had no warning or prior indication of the lockdown** and like you, we have had to radically alter our expectations of how this new term would begin. Like you, we never have any forewarning about what the government is about to announce, introduce or change.

We are a small, creative and dynamic community who have responded successfully to similar challenges last year and we hope to continue to adapt and adjust to the current situation in a way that allows us to continue to maintain your learning and creative portfolio development.

### **Is the asymptomatic testing still happening as planned?**

Plymouth College of Art and the University of Plymouth have reopened the 2nd phase NHS Test and Trace facility at University of Plymouth's Main Hall, just 5 minutes walk from the college, from 4 January to 2 February inclusive. The testing centre is open Monday-Friday, 9am-5pm.

This testing centre is only for students **without** COVID-19 symptoms (asymptomatic) - to help confirm that you do not have COVID-19, as you may be unaware if you are infectious.

The January phase of testing was originally planned to allow students who returned to Plymouth College of Art after the Christmas break to resume face-to-face on-campus teaching safely. However, due to national lockdown restrictions announced in early January 2021, our campus is now closed and everyone should stay at home until further notice, with all teaching taking place online.

Government guidance on travel dictates that you should not travel back and forth from your term time and holiday address during lockdown, **however if it is necessary for you to travel in order to return to university**, you should arrange to have an asymptomatic Lateral Flow Test before you travel in order to avoid spreading the virus. Check your college email for further details and for the link to book your tests.

The test is very quick and easy, with the results sometimes available within 30 minutes. These Lateral Flow Tests (LFT) are a slightly different type of test to that which anyone with COVID-19 symptoms needs to take at sites such as the city-centre's Guildhall walk-in site (a PCR test).

We feel very fortunate to have been working together so closely with you to keep our college community and the local community safe. We know that your support and commitment has been vital in keeping our staff and students safe, especially those who are more vulnerable.



See our Asymptomatic Testing page for further information and FAQs:  
<https://www.plymouthart.ac.uk/coronavirus/asymptomatic-testing>

### **Do I still need to inform PCA if I have tested positive?**

Yes, please advise the college if you have tested positive through our [COVID-19 absence reporting form](#).

If you get a positive LFT result:

- you will be legally required to self-isolate immediately for 10 days
- your household and/or support bubble must also self-isolate for 10 days
- you should [book a confirmatory PCR test](#) (this is because there is a possibility that some people who test positive with LFT are 'false positive' and the PCR test will identify these.)
- you should [fill in our COVID-19 absence reporting form](#) - this will enable us to support you through your self-isolation period.

You should also send a copy of your positive test results text message [health@pca.ac.uk](mailto:health@pca.ac.uk) so we can enter the evidence of this period of absence into your student records, in case you need support from your course or Registry at a later date.

If the confirmatory PCR test result is negative, then you will no longer be required to self-isolate, and your household/support bubble will no longer need to self-isolate.

If the confirmatory PCR test comes back positive, then you must continue to isolate for 10 days since your initial 'lateral flow' test. Everyone in your household will be a 'close contact' and must also self-isolate for 10 days. Contact tracing will be initiated through the NHS Test and Trace and other close contacts will be advised to self-isolate for 10 days.

You should then tell us your test result is positive by filling out our [COVID-19 absence reporting form](#) and sending a copy of your positive results to [health@pca.ac.uk](mailto:health@pca.ac.uk).

If you are required to self-isolate and feel that this will seriously affect your work, visit the Registry section of the [Student Portal](#) for more information about individual applications for Extenuating Circumstances (ECs).

See our Asymptomatic Testing page for further information and FAQs:  
<https://www.plymouthart.ac.uk/coronavirus/asymptomatic-testing>

### **Should I cancel the two tests I previously had booked?**

This will depend on your situation, please see further clarification below.

If you are experiencing Covid-19 symptoms (any of the following; new continuous cough, high temperature, loss of, or change in, your normal sense of taste or smell) then you should [stay at home](#) (self-isolate) for 10 days, report your symptoms to us through the [absence/sickness reporting procedure](#), and arrange to have a PCR [test](#). You should not go for an asymptomatic (LFT) test. Cancel the asymptomatic tests you had booked and call 119 or [go online](#) to book a symptomatic (PCR) test instead.

If your term time address is the same as your holiday address and you live in Plymouth or the surrounding area, have shown no symptoms, and booked your tests before Christmas, you can still attend on the date/time you booked (until the Asymptomatic Test Centre closes on 2nd February 2021).

If your term time address is different to your holiday address and you are currently located at your holiday address, the advice is for you to remain home and not to return to Plymouth. If you travelled to your holiday address during the festive period, you should remain there if you are able to. You may still be able to book a lateral flow test in the area where you are currently located.