

20 March 2020

Re: A message to all UCQ staff

Well that was some week!

I want to say a huge thank you to each and every one of you for responding so quickly and positively to the incredible upheaval that has been imposed upon you in the last few days due to the Covid-19 pandemic. I take a real sense of pride in seeing how you have responded and are working as a team. I want to thank everyone for working exhaustively to ensure everything was safely transitioned to remote working.

Some of our team are in a high-risk category, others have caring responsibilities and so they perhaps should have been self-isolating. However, we saw that their commitment to UCQ, their colleagues, clients, learners and family, was preventing them from doing so, which is why we made the decision to stop office-based working and classroom and workplace delivery for everyone. Please continue to practice social distancing or preferably self-isolation.

We know that we will be working remotely for six weeks, however we need to plan for the likelihood that it may be longer. It could be six months for some, or even all of us. With this in mind, we want to make sure that you have everything you need to work from home and to make the transition as painless as possible. Please let IT know if you need any equipment and let the administration team know if you need stationery which we will have sent to your home directly.

Expenses and wages will be paid each month as always, there will not be a reduction in your salary. There is a lot to worry about, but you do not need to worry about your salary, nor whether UCQ will pay our suppliers and partners.

We need to do everything we can to continue to support our learners and employers, albeit from a distance; it is part of our civic duty to do this.

The pandemic and some people's response to it, has caused great disruption resulting in openings for thousands of jobs in retail, warehousing, production and care, all areas which we serve, and we must be able to continue to support our clients as they rapidly scale up. We need to do what we can to help our unemployed learners to have the skills and qualifications for these openings and to help ensure they protect themselves and others when they do start working in a frontline position.

Our Higher Education team has a tremendous responsibility to support our management degree apprentices through what must surely be one the most challenging times in any manager's career, but especially for our managers working in the many NHS Trusts we work with.

Someone asked me how long it will be before we return to normal. My response was that we won't. The new normal will never be the old normal. I believe that this is an epoch and that the world will be forever different. Our vision in 2015 was to create a fully on-line virtual community to support learning and upskilling. Current events are simply driving us towards achieving our vision more quickly than we had expected.

Finally, we want you to remember that we give you permission to make mistakes. As long as we each try to do the right thing, in accordance with our core values, we must not be hard on ourselves or our colleagues if it later turns out that it was the wrong thing.

Stay safe and best wishes,

For and on behalf of
University Centre Quayside



Dr Nick Mapletoft
Principal & CEO