



Dear

As we reach the Easter break, I imagine we are all reflecting on how rapidly our plans for this year have unraveled. At the start of the year, we expected to be able to offer you the traditional Griffith educational experience. We worked as hard as we could for as long as it was safe to continue to offer you essential classes on our campuses and then to assist you with the transition to studying remotely.

This has not been the trimester you expected, and nor has it been the one that we wanted for you. Some of you will have only had a bit over a month in your first year to make friends and get to know your way around before moving online. Others will be graduating this year and will not have a chance to celebrate with friends and family. Still others will have had long anticipated international experiences, work placements or clinics cancelled. I know many of you will be concerned for relatives, particularly those who are overseas or elderly. We all wish the world was otherwise and you have my sincere sympathy with the struggles that you may be facing.

I know that many of you have been very appreciative of the incredible efforts made by your teachers and the support staff to transform the university in a short period of time to be able to support your learning online. Many of those staff have been working long hours, learning new technologies, and being highly creative in their efforts to provide you with an ongoing educational experience.

I also want to applaud you on your ability to adapt to these changing and challenging circumstances. This adaptability is a skill that will serve you well in both your studies and your future careers.

The University is dedicated to minimising the impact of the changing circumstances on your studies with a number of new support measures and updates to services.

Trimester 2 academic calendar

The break between Trimester 1 and Trimester 2 has been extended by one week, so most students will commence Trimester 2 a week later on July 13. The additional week's break will assist you to adapt to the current situation and allow more time to recuperate after Trimester 1. Non-standard academic calendars and further information on official dates will be updated and [available online before Easter](#).

Recording of Fails

I know how important succeeding in your assessments is to you and that you have had to adapt to the new methods of teaching and assessment we have had to put in place in Trimester 1. We have therefore decided if you fail a course this trimester, the Fail grade will not be recorded on your academic record and will not be included in calculations of your Grade Point Average (GPA).

Scholarships and Bursaries

Many of our students have suffered financial stress with the reduction of opportunities for casual employment or the need to support family members. The University has so far committed \$2m to the Griffith COVID-19 Student Support Bursary for students suffering financial hardship affecting their ability to study online. This more than quadruples what we have provided in previous years and means we will have helped more than 2000 additional students who are financially struggling. The University has also invested two and half million dollars in student scholarships this trimester. We also know more financial support will be needed during the year.

For students requiring access to technology to support their studies from home, we are making available for students to 1,000 loan computers from on-campus labs

Studying and engaging online

We are continuing to redirect on-campus resources to support additional and expanded online services in preparation for online delivery of learning for the remainder of this Trimester and into Trimester 2. Forty percent of students were already studying at least one course online through our well-established Digital campus prior to the current changes to Trimester 1, with all students fully online after the Easter break.

Our Digital campus has a wide range of resources including [Thrive Online](#) to assist you in making the most of studying online. The Digital campus has been set up to ensure students studying online have a comparable experience to those on campus, with a wide range of services and supports available remotely.

A top priority in the current transition to fully online delivery has been our focus on ensuring all students have a comparable and engaging experience. We have significantly expanded a range of digital services and resources to ensure your needs continue to be met.

Below are just a few examples of how we are adapting and implementing online innovations to support our Griffith community:

- Fireside chats hosted by Dean of Law and Head of Griffith Law School, Associate Professor Therese Wilson

- Virtual coffee catch-ups post class with Dr Kuldeep Sandhu of Griffith Business School
- [Career development webinars](#) connecting students to employers facilitated by Griffith Careers and Employment Service through Careerboard
- Student collaboration and social engagement via [Microsoft Teams](#)

As we continue to grapple with significant changes to our daily lives, it is important we remain connected now more than ever. The new [Staying connected](#) resource offers ideas to help you stay in touch with your peers, and [Coronavirus and self-care](#) provides strategies and tools to support you with social isolation and staying well while studying online.

Fake Emails

Please be aware there is at least one fake screenshot of a Griffith email doing the rounds online.

I remind you that all formal information from the University will come to your email address, myGriffith or through our official social media channels.

For the latest information, please visit www.griffith.edu.au/coronavirus

Thank you for your understanding and resilience over the past couple of months. I urge you to continue to reach out to your peers and support one another as we continue to navigate these uncertain times.

Professor Carolyn Evans
Vice Chancellor and President
Griffith University

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