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6 April 2020

Dear Student,

DATA AND CONNECTIVITY READINESS FOR ONLINE LEARNING

We appreciate that there have been some questions around connectivity and data availability. We would like to take this opportunity to discuss a few areas that you need to consider regarding access and usage of data before we commence with online discussion forums on the 15th April:

1) Access to data and hardware

In order for you to work online, you will need to have access to data and IT hardware (desktop/laptop and/or tablet/smartphone). Please make sure that this is in place. Should you have a problem with data, it is essential for you to engage with us on VCAssist by 5pm Wednesday 8 April 2020.

2) Network connectivity

This past month has seen unprecedented personal data usage volumes due to increased home usage of streaming services and many people shifting to working from home, and the load on networks further impacted by damage on the WACS cable (an undersea data cable lying on the West Coast of Africa). Your connection during your online sessions may thus be constrained. We suggest that you download your materials outside of peak-times and work offline as much as possible. You would only need to work online during your Q&A session with your lecturer. We have also lengthened the assessment submission deadline to midnight (23h59), to provide a larger off-peak window for this.

3) Cost of data

Data is the new petrol. As the country went into lockdown, people started converting their monthly transport or petrol spend into data to 'get around' and stay connected. We encourage you to re-allocate the budget that you would have used to travel to campus, on your data costs instead. We would also suggest you investigate some of the data offers your personal financial institution may have launched.



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4) Data Usage

Our projections indicate that you will need around 3GB of data per month to support the following activities: the download of module material, online interaction with your lecturers, access to library resources, submission of assessments on SafeAssign, access to supplementary “click through” material embedded in your module material, and potentially accessing other sites for research purposes and to complete assignments. To limit data usage, we would also suggest, streaming your lecturer’s recordings and not downloading them, unless you need to reference the recording extensively, in which case consider downloading these in off-peak times as per section 2) above. The VCLearn platform is designed to be data-light in support of efficient data usage.

If you have any problems with connectivity and data availability, it is essential that you please contact the Customer Relations Officer of your campus through VCAssist by Wednesday 8th April.

Please be assured of our support as you prepare for your shift online.

Kind Regards,



Louise Wiseman
MANAGING DIRECTOR