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29 May 2020

Dear Student

RE-OPENING OF CAMPUSES OF THE IIE's VARSITY COLLEGE

In line with the recent announcement of the Minister of Higher Education and Training, Dr. Blade Nzimande, that Higher Education Institutions can commence with a phased re-opening of campuses, we would like to take this opportunity to inform you of the steps that the IIE's Varsity College will take to ensure the smooth re-opening of its campuses.

1. COVID 19 Requirements of Application

The IIE's Varsity College has to adhere to strict measures as outlined in the Post School Education and Training of Higher Health guidelines, released by Government, as well as ADvTECH company protocols and policy. As these play a large role in informing what we are able to make available to our students, we would like to provide insight into some of these up-front.

- Physical distancing and campus population limits will prevent us from bringing the full staffing and student cohort onto campus at any given time, and access to campus needs to be strictly controlled in relation to this, including the need to book visits to campus.
- This is further impacted by rigorous sanitisation protocols which further reduce the availability of campus infrastructure for student usage.
- All persons entering onto campus will be screened, thus students must provide at least 30 minutes allowance, ahead of a session, for campus access protocols.
- Protection of vulnerable members of our community will mean that not all members of our lecturing and student community should return into the campus environment and should preferably continue to engage through online modes of delivery.
- As is the requirement in all public spaces, face-masks must be worn at all times.

2. Opening Date

The IIE's Varsity College will partially open its campuses on the 17th of June for students who have not been able to participate in the online lectures that commenced from the 15th of April. These sessions will cover content that has already been covered by students that continued to engage online, and is not in addition to. In the spirit of "leaving no student behind" we would urge students that have been able to continue with their studies, to preserve Boot Camp(us) capacity for students that have not been able to do so. Other students who wish to use campus resources and wish to engage with staff members will also be welcomed, but with strict rules and regulations as outlined above.



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3. Boot Camp(us)

In our commitment to leave no student behind during the move to online lectures, we will present a boot camp(us) from the 17th of June to the 31st of July 2020. This will be offered for all semester 1 modules that were taught online since the 15th of April. In this regard, please note the following:

- Boot camp(us) will be for students who were not able to participate in the online lectures or had difficulty in participating due to connectivity issues.
- The boot camp(us) will be online VCLearn collaborate sessions led by a national lecturer, thus you will share a virtual classroom with students across the country.
- You will join and self-enrol for the collaborate sessions using designated computer facilities on your campus.
- The boot camp(us) will be timetabled over the entire period mentioned above. As per normal higher education practice, you will be guided to work through material and complete assessments on your own, between the collaborate sessions, as not all the outcomes will be covered online.
- In order for us to prepare for you, and for us to meet the regulatory requirements as outlined above, you will need to book your place for the boot camp(us) sessions. Your campus will provide further guidance to the affected students closer to the time.

4. Assessments

We hope that you are successfully completing the formative assessments and uploading them online. The take-home summative assessments are currently being made available and we encourage you to start working towards completing them once you have submitted all your formative assessments.

5. Opening Up of Other Campus Resources

From the 17th of June 2020, where capacity allows, we will also invite students to make use of our library and other spaces to connect to WIFI in order to engage with the online material on your own or to complete and submit your assessments online. Please note that capacity on campus will be limited in line with point 1. above.

6. Further Opening of Campus

During the month of July, based on what is possible within Covid-19 requirements, we are also hoping for the return of our students who have been able to participate in online classes, and who would like to spend time with their lecturer in a face-to-face environment. However, these sessions will also be run as a VC Learn collaborate, thus not disadvantaging students that are not travelling to campus at that stage either. We will announce further details on this as soon as we have finalised the arrangements, which has to be done in conjunction with Government and Covid-19 prevention regulations.

In addition to the above, we can confirm that semester 2 will commence on the 11th August 2020, except for the BEd programmes which will commence a week earlier on the 3rd August. The format of teaching and learning of semester 2 is currently being considered and will be finalised once we have clarity regarding the progress of Government's Covid-19 prevention regulations.

7. Fees for 2020

We are appreciative of the financial distress that some of our account payers may find themselves in. We have encouraged, and continue to encourage, anyone in such a position to make contact with us in order to discuss a more flexible financial arrangement, and interest has not been charged on arrear accounts, up to this point. We have previously explained that our costs are largely fixed. In reality, the costs incurred in preparing for online delivery and setting up campuses for the return of students – as well as the running of boot camps – are resulting in significant additional costs, as opposed to any sort of saving.

Costs of our revised academic model for contact students during Covid-19 cannot be compared to our Distance-online fees, where students undertake fewer modules, are on a different tuition model and where self-guided study is in a different proportion. We continue to offer tuition, engagement and support time to our contact students as we did prior to lockdown. Furthermore, as you will note from the above, we are now engaged with the process of returning students to campus. We are still assisting students in need of data in this time.

Additionally, a fund has been set up to assist with fee support for a limited number of the most vulnerable of our students financially affected by Covid-19. This will be considered for students or account payers who make contact with us before the end of June 2020, and will be evaluated based on the evidence submitted in terms of the impact of Covid-19 on income and affordability.

8. Student Handbook – The Pandemic Version

We have compiled a Student Handbook to consolidate the essential information to guide you through the remainder of the 2020 academic year. Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, there have been changes to the policies and processes you are used to, therefore it is important that you familiarise yourself with these changes to ensure the successful completion of your studies. The information found in the handbook is to summarise communication you have received already and is applicable to Semester 1 only. The Handbook will be uploaded onto your portal by 1 June.

Please continue to use VC Assist to communicate any queries or issues requiring resolution. It is our primary platform to record and track student issues. We look forward to welcoming you back on our campuses.

Your Sincerely,



Louise Wiseman
MANAGING DIRECTOR