

## Coronavirus response - Federation University Australia

### Easing of COVID-19 restrictions

Thursday 14 May 2020

Dear Student,

Over the past few days governments around Australia have slowly started to ease some of the restrictions introduced to manage the COVID-19 pandemic.

While the restrictions vary across Australia, physical distancing remains in place across the nation, as well as the direction to stay home.

[Changes to restrictions in Victoria](#) include allowing gatherings of up to five people in your home, small gatherings outdoors of up to 10 people, short road trips allowed but no overnight stays, a staged return to primary and secondary school, and testing for people with even the mildest symptoms.

[Changes to restrictions in Queensland](#) include allowing gatherings of up to five people in your home (if all visitors are from the same household), travel of up to 50km for recreation, a staged return for primary and secondary school students, and some further restrictions eased at the end of this week.

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### How these changes impact Federation University Australia

Federation University leadership is meeting regularly to plan for future operations and a staged return to our campuses. However, for the remainder of semester one, we will largely continue with the adjusted delivery approaches we have already implemented and communicated to you as they apply to your program.

Online learning will continue for the vast majority of our higher education students. The majority of our staff, including our academics and teachers, will also continue to work from home.

I know this has presented a range of challenges and I am impressed with the way our students have embraced technology so quickly to keep you on the path to achieving academic success.

We understand that this has not been easy for many of you and some students are facing financial hardship. I thought this was a good opportunity to remind you that there are resources available to help eligible students. You should apply now if you need assistance through the following scheme.

[Coronavirus Special Assistance Scheme for higher education students](#), which includes:

- cash payments
- computer and technology assistance
- extensions to the due date for tuition fees, and
- assistance with accommodation fees for FedLiving residents.

[Food Relief Assistance](#) is also available. This initiative provides students with fresh food, groceries and essential items, via on-campus community pantries or partner agencies.

We are also seeking to introduce a new administrative grade for this semester, 'SI' representing Studies Impacted. Many students have found their studies disrupted due to the pandemic, so this measure seeks to alleviate some of the stress you may be feeling. We look forward to sharing more detail soon.

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## Transition to work and study on-campus

Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, we have followed the advice of State and Federal governments in making operational decisions and we will continue to do so. The safety and wellbeing of our students and staff is our highest priority.

In light of governments now beginning to relax COVID-19 restrictions, we are working on a plan for transitioning back to on-campus work and study.

This plan will set out a number of stages for the return of face-to-face-teaching. We expect that this will involve a mix of both on-campus and online learning. At each stage on-campus teaching will involve the implementation of physical distancing and appropriate hygiene measures. It is important to note that not all students will be returning to campus straightaway. As part of our staged approach, certain student groups with the highest need to access on-campus resources will be prioritised. The number of students returning to campus will vary according to the stage of the plan we are implementing. It is critical that we plan a careful and safe return. The plan will be shared with you once it is finalised.

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It is important to remember that this easing of restrictions does not mean the COVID-19 pandemic is over. Physical distancing requirements, hand hygiene, staying home when unwell and getting tested if you have any symptoms at all, are even more important during the transition back to 'normal life' to ensure we prevent new cases from emerging.

Thank you again for your patience and your dedication to your studies in these most unusual and challenging of times.

Stay safe,

Professor Helen Bartlett  
Vice-Chancellor and President  
Federation University Australia



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