# Academic Update

**Professor Roger Eccleston, Deputy Vice-Chancellor**

**Course Leader Fest: Q&As**

Jill Pluquailec;

* What is the university policy re f2f teaching for staff who are shielding?

At the present time we are following the government guidance on shielding which can be found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-on-shielding-and-protecting-extremely-vulnerable-persons-from-covid-19/guidance-on-shielding-and-protecting-extremely-vulnerable-persons-from-covid-19>

The guidance states that from 1st August the government anticipate that shielding will be paused – but we have not made any decisions around this until we get more guidance and this will be considered by the Silver Group for Staff Experience.

* In general, how many of us feel we could deliver something of high quality if we're being ask to literally split ourselves and our attention between more than one classroom at the same time - surely staff need to be consulted on this?

I agree that dividing your attention between several rooms is difficult. There should be discussions in course teams and in departments about how teaching is delivered. We are constrained by space and staff time and we want to empower colleagues to develop local solutions to optimise the use of both.

Scott Storey;

* When and how will the offer be communicated to new and returning students?

We are now sending regular communications to current students and updates to new students. Over the next week we are developing online communications for students and contents for the “Insider Guide”

* When and how will the offer be communicated to all staff?

We are now sending weekly updates to staff and a weekly academic update. Information on guidance for Autumn delivery are available online at <https://sheffieldhallam.sharepoint.com/sites/4074/SitePages/Autumn-2020.aspx> and resources for staff at <https://blog.shu.ac.uk/teachingdelivery/>

* For activities that must be delivered on campus. Will staff be provided with additional time to deliver this to an increased number of groups to enable social distancing? E.g. The number I’ve been told for specialist computing space would be reducing group sizes from 25 to 4-8. On my course this would mean 7 groups turns into potentially 40+

Because we are constrained by both space and staff time we need to avoid multiple teaching as much as possible and departments are factoring this into their planning. As guidance on social distancing changes from 2m to 1m+ capacity in rooms increases. We’re currently working on around 45% capacity for teaching spaces.

Rachel Bower;

For a face-to-face session, is a session the normal class length (e.g. 4 x 2 hours per week)?

The guidance I presented was not clear. It should have been clear that it was 4 hours face-to-face per week across all modules. That teaching does not necessarily have to be delivered in 1 hour blocks.

Shahrzad Zargari;

Any updates regarding the new timetable for classes please?

Work is underway to develop the timetables based on the guidance, and advice from departments. Academic Timetabling Leads and HoDs are working closely with the Timetabling Hub managers. There will no doubt be a number of iterations to optimise the timetable throughout July with draft timetables published for checking in August.

Sarah;

How was the 6 hour per week figure arrived at?

Six hours of synchronous delivery is a minimum amount to ensure engagement with and of students. It is broadly representative of typical contact hours outside large lecture delivery (which should be recorded). It is consistent with other institutions.

Denzil Watson;

Hi Roger. I think what is critically here is that we are able to deliver what we promised to deliver while maintaining top quality. Are we going to look at the resources and say this is what we can deliver or are we going to say this is what we want to deliver and upscale resources accordingly?

The former. We have to optimise our delivery within the current resources.

Daryl May;

Hi Roger, when will Departments / teams be provided with the guidance in order to start preparation for Sept? Some of the changes and work will be substantial, time is getting short. Thanks.

Agreed, time is getting short. Heads of Department had received this guidance and asked to cascade it. PVC T&L, Dean of Students and Associate Deans T&L are also providing support.

Sarah Churchill;

Hi Roger, thanks for the update, its very helpful. The 2 hours of the 4 + 2 on campus confuses me. What is the rationale for brining students in but not having a staff member present?

The four hours are a minimum for face-to-face teaching on campus. The additional two hours on-campus delivery has been removed from the guidance because it was causing confusion. However, students should have opportunities to engage with other on-campus activities beyond the 4 hours including tutor directed/independent student learning and bookable face-to-face tutorials, in addition to the extra-curricular offer

Lesley Gornall;

HI Roger, related to Daryl’s point, the no detriment policy runs the risk of quite significant additional marking into October and possibly beyond - we won’t know until 5 days after academic boards - are there plans to mediate the additional workloads?

We don’t know how much this will be and won’t know until after the boards and will then have to manage additional demands, but the assessment load has been reduced by the pass and progression of FY and L4 students along with the simplification of assessments.

Steph Hannam-Swain;

Could you say more about teaching more than one group of students at the same time, via video link essentially? I'm not sure that I can see how this would work effectively for students

I agree that dividing your attention between students in the classroom and students engaging synchronously from a distance is difficult. There should be discussions in course teams and in departments about how teaching is delivered. We are constrained by space and staff time and we want to empower colleagues to develop local solutions to optimise the use of both. We are looking at technical solutions. Course teams should also look at other options including rotating groups so some groups are engaging remotely whilst others have face-to-face sessions.

Jonathan;

Hello Roger. Are different types of cohorts being considered in these plans? For example, there are big differences in FT cohorts who are ordinarily on campus several days a week and PT cohorts who are sometimes only in SHU for one day per week.

We are considering a wide range of cohorts, for example, specific guidance has been released for Apprenticeship programmes, but the diversity of our provision means that local solutions will have to be developed in many cases.