



2 April 2020

Dear colleagues

You will have seen the correspondence from Professor Osman yesterday about the plans to move online.

The SET met yesterday and agreed to the following schedule:

1-14 April 2020	All faculties will prepare to take the academic programme online. I know that many faculties are already off the starting block.
15-19 April 2020	This period will serve as the online orientation period for staff and students. All course outlines, lecture notes, reading lists and additional audio-visual material should be uploaded and tested during this period.
20 April 2020	The University opens for the second term and delivery of the academic programme begins online.

The updated almanac will be finalised in the second week of April 2020 so please look out for a notice from the Registrar's office.

I am delighted that our Faculty has built capacity to support online learning , and I especially want to thank Greig Krull and Fiona MacAlister and the team for doing an outstanding job in getting us ready for the transition. You are reminded that the online resources (including excellent videos by Fiona and Greig and a range of support materials) at <https://wits-e.wits.ac.za/portal/site/dafd3abf-2ae4-4e05-a498-5dc9aa7cead4> (remember you will need your staff number and password to log in to Wits-e).

The SET is currently finalizing plans to ensure that each student has access to online teaching (currently 15% of our students do not have any device) and we will communicate once this has been finalized.

I recognize that many of you have been working around the clock to keep the academic side of the university running, and to ensure that academic programmes are transformed into usable online delivery methods. This is in addition to enormous anxiety and uncertainty facing all of us at this time. I

want to thank each and every one of you who continues to put in the effort to ensure our teaching goes ahead. The only other option would have been to shut down and our students would have effectively lost the entire academic year. I have watched some of the videos academics have prepared and am extremely happy at the high quality of instruction. It has always been our intention that the standards at Wits are in no way compromised because we are changing the method of content delivery. You have risen to this challenge.

It is important that we all communicate with our students to ensure them that in our preparation to go online we have included an orientation section that will guide all students how to navigate this new way of learning. Some of my most tech-phobic colleagues have been using these new platforms and they are all delightfully surprised at how easy it is to navigate. But between our outstanding online team, led by Greig and Fiona, and our RSP team, we will ensure that no-one – staff or student – is left behind. We are all in a brand new situation and our guiding principle is that we will get through this together.

Once again colleagues, let me thank each and every person in our Faculty who has been working during this lockdown time to keep Wits open. You are playing an important role in servicing not just our students, but our nation, but ensuring we do not lose this academic year.

I wish you and your families strength during these difficult times. Be kind to one another, help where you can and please let us all do what we can to #FlattenTheCurve.

Sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Imraan Valodia', is shown on a light background.

Professor Imraan Valodia
Dean: Commerce, Law and Management