

Dear,

Michelle Donelan, MP Education,

The Falmouth & Exeter Students' Union Presidents Response to the Facilities Lockdown

We are writing to you on behalf of the thousands of students at Falmouth University, that we represent, to express our confidence in our University safely returning their students back to their on-campus facilities.

Since the beginning of the pandemic, and the ever-changing guidance, Falmouth University have continually and successfully implemented on-campus COVID-19-safe procedures. The campus operations team, University and Student's Union worked tirelessly over summer to ensure a safe environment for our students, investing large sums of money into signage, sanitizer stations, one-way routes through all our builds, zoning off parts of the campus facilities and extra cleaning crews working through the day. These changes implemented resulted in a zero-community transmission across our student population.

Consequently, we are asking for you to consider our answers to three pivotal questions, when making your decisions:

1. How many students need the facilities?

Our operationally successful blended learning approach to last term, will again minimise the number of students on campus at one time, and it can give priority to those who need it most. Although, our first and second years that have missed using equipment and feel inadequately prepared for their next year. It is our third year and Post-Graduate students who have suffered massively, they unanimously feel underprepared for graduation due to the lack of high-quality portfolio pieces or professional practice of their degree.

2. What will they be doing when in the facilities?

Students that used the facilities last term have said how successfully the distancing and bubbling previously worked. Their degrees are practical based; therefore, they need to make, create, and practice, and our students signed up for and agreed to this when deciding to pay their fees/ take out their loans. Which further means they have consumer rights of disputing poor service and deserve your help from the government.

3. How much time do students need?

With the students that are unable to return to campus until the unforeseeable future, students find themselves in a comparable situation to that of March 2020; where they are at home unable to access certain libraries, stores/ equipment, and study/ studio spaces that are necessary for many students to succeed and thrive academically. Therefore, a national extension covering the academic time lost in lockdowns, will allow our students to use that time to make what they were unable to fulfil. This nationally will allow our student to feel less stressed about delayed employment opportunities, missing graduate showcases and not having sufficient work to show their talent.

The impact of this year on our student's mental wellbeing and financial wellbeing has rocketed. We understand the government gave Universities a grant to support this, but it does not cover affects that cannot be 'bought.' How can we expect first-year course communities who have never met before, to not feel anxious turning on their camera in a room full of strangers? How can we expect international students to feel equal when they must cope with time zones?

We believe as a President team that **no student** should be disadvantaged by the impacts of COVID-19 if paying fulling for a full degree. No student should be disadvantaged by not having the access to facilities they need. All students should be given the integrity of academic standards and outcomes of a practical degree upheld.

We want our University to be able to provide this, they should not have to be put into financial strain; handing back more money to students, when we have the upmost confidence that they can provide a safe environment for students to continue their practical based degrees. However, we are asking that you support Falmouth University and it's creative students by ensuring our students can come back after 15th February 2021 in any means you deem fit and safe. Additionally, looking at the time missed to consider a national extension to the term, so our students fees are justified. Finally, we would like to thank you on behalf of our creative students for taking the time to take into consideration, separately, the Universities of the creative and practical sector.

Sincerely,

The Falmouth & Exeter Students' Union President Team

Elizabeth Marshall – President Falmouth
Amelia Banton – President Student Experience
Charlotte Agnew – President Welfare & Inclusivity