

CIRCULAR 142/2020: MESSAGE FROM THE PRINCIPAL TO STUDENTS

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Dear Students,

I cannot agree more with messages from Student Support entitled *STAY STRONG. There is always a rainbow after a storm!* Indeed there is! But now we are in the eye of the storm and thanks to the instructions from the national health authorities our country is among the best in the world when fighting this invisible enemy. I wish to thank all our health authorities and the hundreds of doctors, nurses and paramedics who are taking good care of us. It is important in these days of social distancing that you keep respecting the advice of the Health Authorities. Over these last seven weeks, we have witnessed painful stories from neighbouring countries such as Spain, Italy and the UK of thousands of casualties due to the coronavirus. Please be careful and stay safe throughout the day.

In your messages, you rightly mention issues of solitude, the loss of normality but that this phase is survivable. It is indeed survivable only if we respect what health authorities are regularly imploring upon us. In my view, it is also a time for reflection, more study, more reading of textbooks, more research, more online interaction with colleagues, friends and family and more time dedicated to the quality work that your lecturers demand from you especially those finishing their qualification in July 2020 or later if more practical work needs to be done when the College reopens.

The time you spend home is invaluable. You can set your timetable in a better way. You will spend less time travelling and waiting from one lecture to another. You can go online when the lecturer is ready to deliver his or her lecture. You can read the material which lecturers are preparing at your own pace. What is important to remember is that the time you are spending home during the day is as if you are at MCAST. This is important to remember because time flies and with June and July round the corner, you will have to submit your work and get assessed.

So the *loss of normality* can be of benefit during these days at home. Make good use of your time. Timetable your day. When I used to study abroad and had the weekend and most afternoons all for myself, I used to travel and study but in an organised manner. I did not travel every weekend neither did I study every weekend. But I timetabled myself and stuck to it. Discipline is what gives you the edge over all others. So keep up your good work and stick to a time table of your planned activities.

Do respond to your lecturers' strong commitment.

Every week I am briefed on how lecturers are going out of their way to provide you with the lessons that you have lost because of COVID-19. You are lucky to have so many dedicated lecturers, both those who work on a full-time basis but also those who teach part-time!

Call our Helpline 2398 7100 if you need our support or if you need to contact your Institute or the lecturers. Follow instructions on our social media and the web portal www.mcast.edu.mt

Prof Joachim James Calleja
PRINCIPAL/CEO