I'm writing to you about your application to study the BA Business Management and Economics (NL21) in Sheffield University Management School and the Department of Economics at the University of Sheffield. As you know, the University will be adjusting how it delivers its courses in the autumn to accommodate the social distancing measures required to combat the coronavirus pandemic. The current plans involve a blend of face-to-face teaching in small groups in Sheffield, where social distancing can be maintained, supported by digital delivery. In this email, I'll explain what this will mean for your studies on the Business Management and Economics BA.

**Course content**

There's no change to the overall learning outcomes of the course. You'll still obtain proficiency in Business Management, an advanced understanding of Economics, and a wide range of transferable skills. However, to accommodate the new protocols for the 2020-21 academic year, we have made some adjustments to the content and structure of Levels 1.

We have made the following adjustments to modules at Level 1 to streamline our offer:

MGT140 Business Challenges will not be available. Instead students should take an alternative unit to the value of 10 credits.

**Teaching**

As you know, the majority of our teaching comprises lectures, seminars and practicals, and we'll still be using these formats in 2020-21. Teaching will be spread across the usual two semesters and will start the week commencing Monday 28 September.

It's not possible to social distance in a crowded lecture theatre, so we'll be delivering all our lectures online and using some short online videos. Lectures are primarily presentations by one of our subject experts, and online delivery suits the format well. Lecture material will be pre-recorded.

For our interactive classes, we'll be using a combination of face-to-face and digital teaching, and you’ll have regular, timetabled sessions of each form. Our interactive classes can be either at the level of the programme or an individual module.

The face-to-face sessions will take place in small groups, so that we can use our larger teaching rooms and still maintain social distancing. Our face-to-face teaching has always taken place across the University's campus, and this won't change in 2020-21.

Our academic staff will be available as usual for tutorials and other one-to-one meetings, and will still hold their regular office hours. It may not be possible for these sessions to take place in person, but if not you’ll be able to make an audio or video call.

**Learning resources**

Most of our learning resources are already available online. Our physical libraries will be open as soon as it’s safe to do so, and our librarians are committed to providing as full a service as possible, taking into account social distancing requirements and all the latest government advice.

**Assessment**

Coursework assignments are already completed electronically, and submitted and marked online.
We’re still finalising our plans for exams, but we won’t be holding formal, invigilated exams in the Semester 1 exam period in January/February. It’s likely we’ll use an ‘open book’ format instead, where exam questions are made available online and you have a certain amount of time, for example two days, to answer them. You’d complete your answers electronically at home, and you’d be able to consult your books and notes. Some other universities use open book exams as a matter of course. We’ll confirm the arrangements for Semester 1 exams in the individual module handbooks you’ll receive when you join us.

We will also be using a range of other assessment methods such as online tests, multiple choice questions and online group work. You will be supported by our staff throughout all of these.

Accreditation

There is no impact from current adjustments to our present Triple Crown Accreditation.

Costs

The tuition fee for the course will stay the same, and we don’t expect students will incur additional costs as a result of the changes we’re making. You’ll be able to participate in all the online activities using a regular laptop connected to the internet, although you will need a microphone and camera to contribute fully in virtual discussions. If you are concerned that you might not be able to afford equipment or have a broadband connection to study remotely, please contact the University’s Financial Support Team (financialhelp@sheffield.ac.uk). The University can provide laptops on loan or a grant depending on your circumstances.

I hope this email has given you an idea of what to expect when you join us in the autumn. As you’ll be aware, this pandemic is a fast-moving and unpredictable phenomenon, and we might need to make further changes as the situation develops and the University responds to updates in public health guidance. Please be assured that we’ll be approaching the next year as a single departmental family of staff and students together, and we’re committed to ensuring that you’re supported, and that you still receive a world-class university education here at Sheffield.

If you have any questions or concerns, please get in touch with our Student Experience Team at sums@sheffield.ac.uk. Please also let our Student Experience Team know if you have any medical or personal circumstances that might affect how you’re able to participate next year.

Further information

Please keep looking out for emails from the University and checking our frequently asked questions, which are updated regularly with all the latest developments. We also have some on demand content from our online applicant open days which you might find useful.

I hope you enjoy what’s left of the summer and stay safe, and we’ll look forward to welcoming you to Sheffield in the autumn.

Best wishes

Jonathan Jeffery
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Sheffield University Management School
and
Professor Steve McIntosh
Head of Department
Department of Economics