



UNIVERSITY OF  
LINCOLN

**July 2020**

Dear Offer Holder

We are delighted you are interested in coming to the University of Lincoln. We are writing to let you know about arrangements for the new academic year, as you may not have been able to visit us since the Covid crisis began. We are writing to you as you currently have an offer of a place at the University. We wanted to give you information so you can think carefully about preparing for your future should you be successful in meeting any outstanding conditions of your offer.

We are working very hard to make our students' time over the next year exciting, fun and academically challenging and engaging. Given the Covid impact and the guidance from Government at the University of Lincoln we are making sure our campus and our activities are as safe and as student friendly as they can be for the coming year. You will be joining a strong community where students and staff seek to be friendly and supportive of each other. We have a whole range of activities, facilities and events planned for you, all of which have been checked to make sure we take account of Government guidance and safety requirements. This means that we have adapted the way we teach, with socially distanced face-to-face teaching and online learning, the way we offer services to provide a safe environment for socialising and relaxing and how to safely navigate our campus. In all the changes we have made we have kept in the front of our minds our focus on friendliness and community spirit at Lincoln and we look forward to your participation in that community.

This letter sets out in detail various aspects of the planned experience at Lincoln, and we hope the information is helpful as you plan for your future.

### **Teaching and Learning**

Our starting point is to deliver all of the learning outcomes of your programme of study in an environment that prioritises your health and wellbeing in line with Government guidance. Our plan therefore is to deliver programme content by a combination of face-to-face and online provision, known as blended learning. Being on campus is an important part of the University experience. The blended approach enables face-to-face learning in an appropriately socially-distanced way by reducing capacity in our teaching rooms in line with Government guidelines. To achieve this without reducing your timetabled hours, blended learning supplements face-to-face sessions with timetabled online provision, including live interaction with your peers and academic staff.

All of the learning outcomes of your modules will be met by taking a blended learning approach. You will get regular face-to-face time with your lecturers, alongside your fellow students in a

socially-distanced setting. Any online provision will make use of a variety of approaches and technologies to facilitate personal engagement with lecturers and fellow students in this mode too. Our digital learning tools have been chosen based on what students have told us they enjoy using.

Your programme of study is typically delivered by a combination of lectures and seminars. In non-pandemic restricted times, lectures would be when all of the students on a module would gather together; seminars are smaller groups allowing for more discussion, debate, and engagement with tasks. While current social-distancing restrictions remain in place, all lectures will be timetabled as online sessions, whereas seminars will be a combination of online and face-to-face provision. The principle we are adopting is that most seminars will be timetabled on a rota system, so that students will alternate face-to-face and online seminar sessions on each module of study. On some modules this might vary a little, but the principle of a mix of face-to-face and online provision will be maintained across your programme of study.

We would note also two other aspects of standard provision that remain and are particularly important in these times. First, you will have a Personal Tutor – a member of academic staff who is your designated ‘go to’ person for advice and support, both pastoral and academic. We are planning to increase the number of face-to-face Personal Tutor Group sessions, with an enhanced programme of content. Second, independent learning continues to be an essential aspect of learning in the social and political sciences, and guided reading and other independent engagement remains key, this year as any, to performing well in your studies.

There is a big challenge planning the session times for our face-to-face, socially distanced teaching and in some cases, similar to many other universities, our teaching week will include evening sessions (up to 8pm, Mon-Thurs only). We will let you know your timetable as soon as possible.

Our assessment processes will likewise follow Government guidelines in relation to social distancing and safety. Most of our assessments are submitted online as standard in normal circumstances. Where there are exams, in-class tests, or oral assessments planned next summer, decisions as to whether they go ahead in this form or in an online variant (for example, ‘take home’ exams) will depend on circumstances regarding the pandemic nearer the assessment period in May and June.

Our plan for the above blended learning approach is in place given current circumstances. Should a change in Government advice require a return to lockdown, then we would move to online-only provision for the period required. We did this with short notice in March this year, and the School received an unsolicited letter from our student representatives thanking us for the way in which we met the challenge. If we have to do this again – although of course we hope that such a return to lockdown is not required – then we will be even better prepared, having developed our blended learning approach alongside appropriate training on online platforms. More optimistically, it is possible too that social distancing restrictions will be eased. In that case, we would anticipate increasing the number of face-to-face sessions, whilst retaining an online element, in line with official advice.

The School of Social and Political Sciences is a genuine community, built on strong staff-student engagement both within the formal structures of student representation and the Personal Tutoring system, and also through staff commitment to our students. You are joining us in a year like no other, and this community ideal remains central to our work. As a School, we are

establishing a mentoring scheme, so that as a new student, you have the opportunity to be put in touch with an existing student, giving you someone to answer your questions about student life in Lincoln. Our staff will welcome you via induction events in October, and you will soon be engaging with your studies.

## **The University Campus**

We are of course prioritising the safety of our community through careful preparation for the new term to ensure you are able to learn and study effectively. As you would expect each of our buildings has been through a thorough risk assessment process. We have provided additional hand sanitisers for everyone to use, created one-way systems where possible and the capacity of teaching rooms and other spaces has been reduced to ensure social distancing can be maintained across the campus. In line with Government guidance we expect most facilities to be open, including the Library and Sports Centre although numbers, for safety reasons, will be reduced, which will mean fewer people can use each facility at any one time and we may need to introduce booking systems in some cases to better manage access. Catering facilities will be provided and additional outdoor facilities, including two large tepees, will serve food and drinks and there will be lots of spaces to meet friends and chat. Our campus has lots of outdoor spaces and we will be utilising them more so the campus should also be a fun and vibrant place to be.

The Students' Union (SU) are working hard to make sure that students can access as many of the societies and activities offered as possible, whilst keeping safe. With current social distancing guidelines in mind, we are planning a wide range of outdoor and virtual events that students will be able to engage with and enjoy in a variety of ways including outdoor cinemas, virtual fayres, food-markets and social sport sessions. Students will be able to enjoy The Swan, Tower Bar and The Barge within Government guidelines, as well as being able to take advantage of our brand new food and drink delivery and collection service, using our Student Orders app. The Students' Union are also working closely with their sports teams and societies to make sure that there is a wide variety of activities, training and social events for students to get involved with, to meet new people and make the most of their time at University. You can read more about the SU [here](#).

## **Student Wellbeing and Support**

The Student Wellbeing Centre and the Student Support Centre are open. There is a limited face-to-face service on Campus but you can contact them and make full use of all their support online. Should you, as one of our applicants have any questions or queries about coming to Lincoln in October and any other concerns they are there for you. You can contact Wellbeing and support by going to: <https://studentservices.lincoln.ac.uk/> where all the service details are available.

To enable you to make the most out of your experience in Lincoln and to help you access course materials and other services, we strongly recommend that you have a PC, laptop or tablet device available that will enable you to easily engage with our on line learning platforms from your student accommodation or your home. There will be access to IT equipment on campus in the Library, our learning lounges and specialist academic areas; however, due to the need for social distancing, we are having to reduce the capacity in all of these areas and there may not always be a space free when you have a timetabled (on line) session or an assessment. If you are struggling to access IT equipment, please contact Student Support who can assist you with further advice and information.

We are committed to providing you with the best possible start and to helping you to prepare for your time with us. As part of this commitment, we are offering you the chance to access our new Learning at Lincoln pre-arrival online support package. This set of resources, advice and simple exercises is designed to help you prepare for the all-important first steps into university, enabling you to learn within a supportive community and to make the most of the new opportunities that university provides. Please note, these materials are available to support you in starting your new life at University, but completion is entirely voluntary and any exercises you complete will not be assessed or marked. When you are ready, you can begin by clicking on this link <https://lincn.ac/4d>

### **Student Accommodation**

Many applicants consider taking up student accommodation and you may well have already booked your residence for the upcoming year. All University managed student accommodation will have wardens who will be there to ensure you can settle into your accommodation and will be offering flatmate and residential support activities throughout the year. If you have booked university accommodation we will be writing to you with further details next month to help you prepare but there is lots of advice and information that can be found on our student accommodation website which is [here](#).

The changes detailed above will form part of your agreement with the University. If we do not hear from you to the contrary prior to enrolment, we will assume that you have accepted the changes. Further changes may have to be made in line with Government guidance, and we will communicate these with you as necessary. May we draw your attention to the University's Admissions Terms and Conditions (in particular sections 8 and 9) which can be found [here](#). You may also wish to review the University Student Complaints Procedure which can be found [here](#).

We very much hope this information is useful to help you plan, that you are successful in meeting any outstanding conditions of your offer and can join us in Lincoln. If you have any questions, please do email me at [ebacon@lincoln.ac.uk](mailto:ebacon@lincoln.ac.uk)

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