



UNIVERSITY OF
LEICESTER



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To Whom It May Concern;

Given the events of the past few months and the rapid escalation of COVID-19 (Coronavirus) cases in the UK, you will be aware that the University of Leicester has decided to move all teaching online and offer alternatives to in-person examinations in term three.

Scores of students have also found themselves out of work as a result of the impact the pandemic has had on the economy. Whilst the Government's financial assistance offers support to some, a significant number of other students in employment are ineligible for the scheme owing to the nature of their employment contract.

This financial peril has left students with no choice other than to review their current living arrangements and their current financial health. Significant numbers of our student population are reporting to us that they are unable to pay their rent for the remaining months of their contract.

Although students will still receive maintenance loans, research undertaken by the University of Leicester Students' Union (ULSU) shows that this loan does not cover their full amount of rent. We also know that many students are from families who cannot afford to make this shortfall up.

With ever-diminishing opportunities for part-time work available to students, we are calling on all accommodation providers to reflect on what support you're able to provide at this unprecedented time.

We are asking all accommodation providers to allow students who require it to be released from their current tenancy agreements from the end of this month, with no financial penalty due to the unprecedented circumstances.

We are also asking that accommodation providers give special dispensation to those students who remain stranded in Leicester. Students we would draw specific attention to in requiring such support include international students who cannot return home at this moment, as well as UK-based students who cannot return home as they have vulnerable family members who must self-isolate as a result of a medical condition. We are also aware of students who are estranged from their families and who require even more support at this difficult time. Furthermore, the University is proud to have a thriving Medical School with students on the frontline of fighting the COVID-19 outbreak, through research or care. Hundreds of students have volunteered to support the NHS and other aspects of the community during this difficult time.

The University itself is showing leadership in this matter and has written to all tenants in its own halls of residence offering an early release from contract or an extended range of support for those needing to remain in Leicester for a variety of circumstances. The University is working hard to support students wherever they now are, through mental health support, food parcel deliveries, extended hardship fund provision, and academic support. COVIDHelp@leicester.ac.uk has been set up to support students.

We hope and believe the private housing sector in the city will do its part in protecting the student community, who play a critical role in contributing to Leicester's economic vibrancy. We would naturally be happy to discuss any of these ideas with you, or to discuss the steps the University and Union are taking ourselves.

Kind regards,

Oge Obioha, ULSU President
Sana Ali, ULSU Wellbeing Officer
Adnan Rahman, ULSU Education Officer
Mia Nembhard, ULSU Sports Officer
Tony Magaia, ULSU Equality & Liberation



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And relevant members of the University

Geoff Green, Registrar and Secretary

Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Education)

Kirsty Woodward, Director of Campus Services.