



PROVOST'S MESSAGE



Dear Students,

I thank you for your understanding and cooperation with the various measures the University has implemented so far to protect the health and safety of the SMU community.

In the past weeks, SMU has had to assess the risks to our students and take appropriate precautionary measures beyond the current suspension of overseas student programmes and activities. The reason for this is due to the uncertainty and volatility of the Covid-19 pandemic, which is prevalent globally and is likely to continue till the later part of this year.

While some countries have seen their numbers of Covid-19 cases fall or stabilise, there remains concern over “hidden reservoirs” of cases and under-testing that could result in a change in the situation for the worse. We have seen the virus resurging in countries that were declared “safe” or who seemed to have the spread of the virus under control. Similarly, a large number of countries are operating under their own version of a Circuit Breaker with strict social distancing measures which have resulted in the suspension of campus-based activities at universities. In addition, there are significant international travel restrictions which are unlikely to be lifted for some time. As countries emerge from these different measures, it is not clear what level of continuing social distancing measures will remain and how they will permit their universities to operate. The [World Health Organisation's latest warning on 22nd April](#) was that the virus remains “extremely dangerous” and “will be with us for a long time”.

In view of these continuing impacts of Covid-19 we have decided that all overseas programmes and activities from 1st August to 30th October 2020 will be suspended. The academic directors of affected programmes will convey details of alternative arrangements to students very soon. Should the global outlook improve, SMU would decide on whether to proceed with overseas activities planned for November and December 2020, as early as practicable.

We recognise that this is an extraordinary and challenging time for everyone concerned, and we wish to reassure you that we remain fully committed to assisting students affected by this decision. SMU schools will work with affected students to make adjustments to your study plans, as well as to identify alternative global exposure opportunities as the Covid-19 situation lessens.

Please contact your school or academic directors should you require more information.

Do take good care in these difficult times.

Kindest regards

Timothy Clark
Provost

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