



## Accessing Help & Support Remotely – Top Tips

All aspects of our lives have been affected by coronavirus, including how you communicate with and get support from others.

With campuses closed and staff and services working remotely, it is important that you get the most from any interactions.

Increased isolation and the many changes to your studies mean that it is key to get the right help and support at the right time.

### This guide helps you

- Communicate effectively
- Make best use of time while you are waiting for a response
- Keep good records of steps taken to resolve your issue

### Managing the impact – a first step before you contact staff

With any problem you face identify what you have direct control over, while thinking about how you can best manage the impact of difficult circumstances.

For example, if your issue is complex and may require longer consideration, you may not have direct control over the response time of the person you have contacted, but you may be able to identify other sources of information and help you can research whilst you wait.

See the scenarios in the document *The Advice Centre – Accessing Help & Support* for more suggestions on the proactive steps that you can take.

### Emailing – what you can control

With staff and services working remotely here are some basics to get the most from the e-mails you send:

- Be **clear on the purpose and point** of your e-mail before drafting
- Have a clear and concise **subject heading**
- Make your points and purpose clear in the main body through **paragraphs or bullet points**



# Support Advice Centre

- Finish with a clear statement of the **outcome you want /the questions** you are asking/your request

## Top tips

- Rather than simply saying that your issue is urgent, **explain why timeliness is an issue** – be explicit around any important fixed deadlines you must meet.
- Recognise that the recipient of your email will be balancing a number of demands on their time, so **ensure that your request for a response within a timeframe is polite, reasonable and realistic.**
- **Keep the e-mails** which you have sent and received **as a clear record of steps taken.**
- Remember that an **e-mail is a matter of record; only send e-mails to students or staff members that you would be happy to hear read out in a meeting.**

## Conclusion

The benefit of this approach is that you will be clear about the positive steps you have taken, start managing a difficult situation and have a clear record of your actions and the help you have sought. All this may help with any subsequent formal process.