



Communication to UR students – week 2.

UR is joining the global fight against the spread of coronavirus and while this is a period of uncertainty, we appreciate that many of you want to get on with your studies. This is a positive feeling that you should embrace but we are also aware that not all students share the ability to access all learning materials when they want to.

UR faculty and technical staff are working to ensure that all modules offered in all academic programs are updated and uploaded on our e-learning platform. Over the last few years we have built a team of experts in online teaching who are working with all UR lecturers to verify the integrity of uploaded module information (module description, presentation slides, handouts, notes and key readings). You will then be registered for each module to enable access to the uploaded learning materials in your academic programs. While access to online material has become familiar to many, we are aware that some of you have also recently experienced online assessment.

We need to work together. We are gratified to see many of you developing learning resources and sharing these, and we invite you to share these as widely as possible. We also need your collaboration in gathering all students' contact details where these may have changed, since over time, some people prefer to use different email addresses and occasionally change their phone provider.

During this time of closure at UR and your confinement at home, you are encouraged to do the following:

- This is the beginning of the second trimester, and many of you will have received learning materials for the modules you had registered for. Go beyond learning for passing CATs and summative exams and engage with these learning materials so that you achieve a level of understanding from which you could even teach your peers.
- You should review the learning materials of the modules you have completed in the last trimester, and even in previous years of study at UR. This will embed learning through rehearsal but also increase the mastery of the content by working through those parts you didn't fully understand the first time. This will help you to understand future material, and to approach learning in new ways.
- By now you should be able to identify your strengths and weaknesses in English and you should use this time to challenge yourself and others to create opportunities for improving written and spoken English, as well as your understanding of heard English.



You should keep sharing progress with your peers at UR and with friends studying similar programs in other institutions, and if you live with other students you can begin to teach and test one another while observing the government guidelines for social distancing to prevent COVID-19 contagion. These are good disciplines. However, we recognize that you are keen to get resources and start learning new material.

We are aware that not all of you have access to adequate internet bandwidth or the electronic equipment (computers, tablets or smart phones) required to undertake efficient online learning. These considerations apart, some of you may not be in environments that are conducive to learning.

Putting learning materials online does not mean that you have been taught and can therefore be assessed. All lecturers shall resume their teaching where they left it when the University closed. Recognizing that some of you don't have access to learning materials is not enough - it is making sure that this does not create disadvantage to some and advantage to others. Therefore, only when all relevant material has been taught and learned will it be assessed. However, we recognize that those of you who have managed to engage with online materials shall probably learn more quickly when formal face-to-face teaching resumes and we encourage you to become part of a squad of peer educators when such a time comes.

This period of closure and confinement is about population health, and this must start with you. Look after yourself, stay fit and well, and stay positive. We are in daily contact with students and Guild Presidents, and we know that Principals and heads of campuses are working remotely in different and exciting ways.

We remember all those whose work is essential, including our faculty who work in hospitals and other services, our alumni working in so many areas, and the small numbers of staff working to maintain our facilities. Let us use this time to achieve those things that we otherwise might not have achieved.

Done in Kigali, 24th March 2020.



Prof. Philip COTTON
Vice Chancellor