

Dear Student,

I hope that you are enjoying the summer sunshine and that you had a good break over the last few months. We are looking forward to welcoming you back to campus in the coming weeks. As you can see on the attached calendar, B.Ed. 2, B.Ed. 4, Bait san Oid 2, B.Sc. (Ed Studies) 4, B.Sc. (ECE) 4 and PME 1 students return to campus from Monday next. Some of you have already received information about your orientation schedule. Draft timetables for the coming semester are attached. The timetables are currently in draft form and it is likely that some rooms for classes may be changed prior to the resumption of classes.

Although PME 1 students have no classes on Friday, your induction is scheduled for Friday 3 September and Friday 10 September.

On Monday, 13 September, we look forward to welcoming back B.Sc. (Ed Studies) 2, B.Sc. (ECE) 2 and PME 2 students for your orientation programme.

Finally, on Monday, 20 September we welcome back B.Ed. 3, Bait san Oid 3, B.Sc. (Ed Studies) 3, and B.Sc. (ECE) 3 students for classes and we welcome for the first time B.Ed. 1, Bait san Oid 1, B.Sc. (Ed Studies) 1, B.Sc. (ECE) 1 and International Foundation Programme students to campus for induction/orientation programmes.

#### **GROUPS**

B.Ed. 4 groups A, B, C are as they were for the academic year 2019-20 (and different to the Pandemic-imposed groups that applied in 2020-21).

B.Sc. (ECE) 3 and 4 groups A and B are as they were for the academic year 2019-20 (and different to the Pandemic imposed groups that applied in 2020-21).

Groups for B.Ed. 2 have been reconfigured to balance the size of class groups A, B, C and D. Please check Maestro to see if your group has changed. You will remain in your existing A, B, C, D groups for the orientation programme and the changes will apply when classes resume (i.e. from Monday, 6 September).

The information that was sent to many of you in July still applies, with some minor modifications.

#### **COVID-19 PROTOCOLS**

Although we hope that many of you will be at least partly vaccinated by the time you return, COVID-19 protocols will remain in place and we will operate on the assumption that no-one is vaccinated and everyone is potentially infectious. This means that face coverings will be mandatory for all students and staff, hand sanitisers should be used regularly, physical distancing should be maintained. Under current guidelines, when teaching, lecturers may remove their masks provided they are at least 2 metres away from the nearest student.

Rooms will be ventilated more than before and so you may need warmer clothing than usual, especially as we move into autumn and winter. MIE has new cleaning protocols in place and is keeping abreast of the latest developments. Revised catering arrangements will

also be put in place for the Blasta restaurant and the Cloister Café; both will offer a take-away service for the immediate future. One of the courtyard areas has been covered over and may be somewhere you can consume lunch, snacks or beverages. Signage is in place around the campus in order to minimise congregation and your cooperation with that is requested.

The following videos and resources have been created to help prepare you for returning to campus.

- Hallaí/ Hallways: <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1QVkJGeVjCpNM6VC8E-GNFwPVzRcE6bRyR/view?usp=sharing>
- Maisc/ Masks: <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1U65InfdlGt3h3Mrh-BAC2eOm6IijUS3j/view?usp=sharing>
- Oslóirí Doirse/ Opening Doors: <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1NGdS1XaSh5sSc2w5VvmqM8RDxLnOw0f-/view?usp=sharing>
- Díghalrán Lámh/ Hand Sanitiser: [https://drive.google.com/file/d/11-OW2rn9\\_fqHnf0I79h-QPTz\\_dK0Ac-/view?usp=sharing](https://drive.google.com/file/d/11-OW2rn9_fqHnf0I79h-QPTz_dK0Ac-/view?usp=sharing)

### **COVID-19 SYMPTOMS**

If you experience any symptoms of COVID-19 (fever, new cough, shortness of breath or breathing difficulties or loss of or change to your sense of smell or taste), however mild, you are required to stay at home and self-isolate. Your doctor or the Health Services Executive will advise you about contact tracing. Should such symptoms arise when you are on campus, the following approach applies: If you are well enough and you have means to leave Campus safely in your own car, then do so making sure you get medical advice as soon as possible. Otherwise, please go to one of the designated isolation rooms (Cedar Room in St. Mary's Building or P7 in St. Patrick's Building) and follow the instructions there to call for someone who can help.

### **CLASSES**

Classes of up to 65 students will take place face-to-face on campus, using the largest rooms available to us. Where the number of students in class is greater than 65 students, the class will take place online. Classes of this size will be integrated throughout the timetable and therefore most of you will be on campus when you attend the online classes (unlike when most of you attended them at home last year). Spaces will be available around the campus for engaging in online classes (e.g. your student accommodation, the library, and other spaces that will be made available). More details about spaces you can use for this will be circulated in due course.

### **VACCINATIONS**

If you are following the news, you will know that the Government is currently monitoring a surge of infections related to the Delta variant of COVID-19. The Minister for Health announced that mRNA vaccines (Pfizer and Moderna) are preferred for people aged 18 to 49. MIE supports the Government's vaccination campaign so that college life can resume as fully as possible this semester. Therefore we encourage you to study the benefits and risks associated with the various vaccines and make the decision that is in your best interest. You

can read more about getting a vaccine here: <https://www2.hse.ie/screening-and-vaccinations/covid-19-vaccine/get-the-vaccine/>.

### **ACCOMMODATION**

Student accommodation will be open for the academic year and COVID-19 protocols should be observed here also, including mask wearing in common areas. Only the residents assigned to a particular apartment should be there and consequently guests are not permitted in apartments until further notice.

As we are all learning, these are uncertain times and at all times the Institute will monitor and respond to public health advice and will make decisions in the best interests of the health and safety of students and staff. We'll get through this together!

Kind regards,

Seán