



## Student and Staff Online Communication Policy

### 1. Introduction

Studying online is very different to campus-based provision where students and staff physically share the same spaces and times in which learning takes place. Online (or 'distance') learning often allows students to have more flexibility around when they study and how they study, but it also means that there need to be clearer expectations regarding levels of communication than there might otherwise be for campus-based provision.

This policy outlines guiding principles to help manage student and staff expectations in relation to online communication, contact, feedback and support.

Please note that for technical issues, students can route their queries through the "Help" menu on the Canvas "virtual learning environment" (VLE); Canvas Guides and Canvas technical support is accessible 24 hours per day, 7 days per week.

### 2. What students can expect from DIME ONLINE

DIME Online is a UK based organisation; courses operate within the national jurisdiction of the UK, and the language of correspondence, delivery, and assessment is English. A working day is defined as being from **9 am – 6 pm (GMT) Monday to Friday**. DIME Online acknowledges the national holidays of England.

DIME Online staff will usually respond to general queries within the hours of a normal working day as specified above. However, this may vary in some cases based on the availability of DIME Online staff outside of normal working hours (for example, if a member of staff is teaching abroad) and during summative assessment periods when work is being marked.

Student support in all areas (academic, pastoral and careers) will normally take place by arrangement between staff and student within the regularly scheduled office hours of 9 am – 6 pm (GMT) Monday to Friday. However, there may be exceptions and these will be arranged on a case-by-case basis.

Students are not limited to the number of support sessions they can request, but the amount of support given will be dependent on student demand and the availability of staff within the hours of a normal working week. **As a minimum, DIME Online staff commit to a 20-minute one-to-one (1-2-1) tutorial for each student every two weeks.**

DIME Online is committed to providing timely and constructive feedback on assessed work. The following are the time-frames in which students can expect communication and feedback to take place. Please note that these response times are indicative and may vary if there are unforeseen circumstances such as staff illness.

- Responses to general enquiries – two (2) working days.
- Feedback on weekly tasks – five (5) working days

- Feedback on formative assessments – five (5) working days
- Feedback on summative assessments – ten (10) working days

### 3. What DIME Online expects from students

Students are expected to maintain an online presence and engagement with the VLE content that enables them to:

- make relevant weekly contributions to discussion forums and collaborations;
- evidence their progress and development through correspondence with tutors and uploading of assignment tasks.

In all correspondence and online contributions, students are expected to comply with the **E-Learning Policy and E-Code of Conduct**.

Students who are unable to communicate for a period of more than one (1) week must advise their Module Leader of this in advance, where practicable.

### 4. Monitoring

DIME Online staff use the Canvas analytics software to monitor an individual student's activity within the VLE. However, DIME Online staff recognise students as individual learners and respect different ways of learning; for this reason, the analytics tool is only used indicatively, to assist DIME Online staff in the identification of potential problems. If DIME Online perceive that a student's online presence and/or interaction with online content is a cause for concern, then the student will be contacted by email and/or telephone requesting that they attend a conference call with their Module Leader or Head of Education.

In most cases, the matter will be resolved through discussion with the student and sometimes, where academic progress is at risk, the implementation of a **Learning Agreement** (see Falmouth University's policy on Learning Agreements in the General Regulations: [www.falmouth.ac.uk/studentregulations](http://www.falmouth.ac.uk/studentregulations))

Failure to engage with the conference call, or failure to adhere to the terms of a Learning Agreement, may ultimately result in academic expulsion.