

## Open letter to the IPT community

Dear Teaching-staff, Non-teaching staff and students,

The complex circumstances we are facing regarding the SARS-CoV-2/COVID19 pandemic are of enormous adversity and severity. The risk to public health is real and should concern the entire society.

It is very important to follow the announced contingency and prevention measures, both those provided by the Polytechnic Institute of Tomar (IPT) Contingency Plan and related documents, made available in [http://portal2.ipt.pt/pt/ipt/covid\\_19](http://portal2.ipt.pt/pt/ipt/covid_19), or those issued by public entities particularly those issued by the General Health Directorate. These measures allow, to a certain extent, to control the evolution of events and to avoid scaremongering and panic which promotes unwise and inconsequent actions.

The current situation requires all members of our community to endure in sharing a participative cooperation, allowing us to keep active the noble mission of teaching our students, and for that, I appeal to the socially responsible and supportive understanding that all are responsible for one another.

In this scenario of enormous uncertainty, concern and anguish, I cannot but address a word of appreciation and gratitude, on behalf of the IPT, the entire academic community for their civic sense, availability and understanding in addressing this situation. I underline the increased, rigorous and committed attitude that everyone put into keeping the structural services running by providing our students with the continuation of their studies through distance learning methods, thus guaranteeing our mission of producing knowledge for the society.

To the students, in particular, I would like to address words of confidence, tranquility and encouragement so that, despite the contingency that the situation imposes, you should all maintain your study activity, fulfilling the schedules and the works that are being made available to you through multiple means, in order to mitigate the negative impacts all this may have on your training. We are all learning, so I call for your patience, wisdom and responsibility, in the certainty that we will do everything in our power to suppress upcoming difficulties.

To those Students who are in mobility programs through the IPT, either outgoing or incoming, I also want to address words of comfort and tranquility, in this especially complex period when you are at distance to your closest, intensifying the difficulty of the situation. Social networks in this context are very important shortening distances, do not interrupt your study programme and follow classes, bear in mind that this activity can also be a way to dissipate the wishes to travel. Whenever you need to resolve any issue please contact institutional key persons of the institutions either home or in the IPT, keep us informed of your situation, do not neglect the strict compliance with contingency plans and the health indications of the institution you are doing mobility in. Only in this way can we help you keep safe in reducing infection probability, protect yourselves, for your own health and that of others.

I believe that together we will overcome this delicate moment, we will all come out stronger from this battle and continue our mission for the benefit of society, the region and the country.

Tomar, March 18<sup>th</sup>, 2020