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Address C Block, Level 1, QUT Kelvin Grove
QUT GUILD STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE COUNCIL

To the Office of the Registrar

I am writing to you in my capacity as the President of QUT Guild in response to the ongoing issues surrounding the cyber-attack on Canvas and the following outage.

I would like to begin by acknowledging that the cyber-attack on Canvas was an event no one could have foreseen, and that I in no way consider QUT to be responsible for the attack, the outage, or ongoing concerns surrounding the website and its operation.

This letter is focused on developing an expanded response to the cyber-attack that is equitable and fair for students at QUT. Recently, I have been inundated with correspondence from QUT students expressing their own experiences arising from the Canvas outage.

Universally, students are experiencing emotional distress over the fact that their information may have been compromised as part of the attack, but even more so at the consequences of the outage on their academics. I recognise QUT has provided an extension to students with assessments due during and immediately after the outage, and while this is a welcome step in the right direction, the resounding student view is that more must be done.

This emerges from the fact that while a student's assignment may not have been due during or immediately after the outage, all students at QUT were unable to access course material, worksheets, quizzes, and instructions, hindering their ability to take any action on assessments or their course progression at all.

This issue is particularly true for students who work full-time, who have written to me, informing me that they are only able to study or work on assessments during the weekend. In essence, these students have lost an entire week of work on assessment and course progression. These students have told me that the only way they could make up for that lost time would be to take time off work, which, for many, is simply not an option due to the impact this would have on their financial position during the ongoing cost of living crisis.

I can speak from experience in saying that students who work full time are already under a significant amount of pressure without having to make the choice between a week's income

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and a deserved academic outcome. I know that this issue is having a significant impact on their wellbeing.

QUT is the university of the real world, and I implore you to consider the real world impacts the Canvas outage has had on every student at QUT. While not every student had an assignment due, every student's learning was impacted.

In considering the widespread and significant emotional distress impacting QUT students arising from this issue, I believe it is a matter of urgency that the University provide additional accommodation to students in the wake of the Canvas cyber-attack.

It is my view that the university wide extension should be broadened to assignments due at later dates and extended for assignments currently covered. Furthermore, in response to this incident, I believe the process for a student acquiring a personal extension or special consideration should be relaxed for those impacted by these events.

I know that QUT is a university that prides itself on the wellbeing of its students, and so I hope you give this letter the consideration so appropriate for such a serious matter.

I look forward to your response.

Kind Regards,

Caleb McGiffin
QUT Guild President