



E: scottish.ministers@gov.scot

College and University Principals

03 March 2021,

Dear Principal,

I am writing to update you following the First Minister's statement to Parliament today on the current COVID-19 restrictions and what this means for the return of students to colleges and universities in Scotland.

As I set out in my letter of 23 February, under our [refreshed Strategic Framework](#), universities and colleges can continue to bring back a small number of students where in-person learning and teaching is critical. For both universities and colleges, the vast majority of learning will continue to be online, with the number of students on campus to be kept as low as possible. No more than 5% of students should be on campus at any one time for in-person learning and teaching.

As the First Minister set out in Parliament, from 15 March – unless new evidence or new circumstances require us to reconsider – it is our intention that all secondary school pupils will return to spend some time in school until the Easter break. Students in the senior phase will have priority for in-person teaching in school.

I can therefore confirm that from 15 March, more senior phase school pupils will be able to return to college beyond the current 425 pupils studying Level 6 Foundation Apprenticeships in Engineering and Scientific Technologies. Whilst any additional pupils returning to college must remain within the 5% limit, this gives colleges flexibility to prioritise those students who require in-person provision now in order to complete or progress.

Whilst attending college, school pupils should follow the [sectoral guidance](#) for universities, colleges and student accommodation providers and we will shortly update this to reflect the policy change outlined above.

Any further return to in-person learning and teaching will be kept under regular review, with decisions informed by the data on virus prevalence.

Scottish Ministers, special advisers and the Permanent Secretary are covered by the terms of the Lobbying (Scotland) Act 2016. See www.lobbying.scot



While I fully recognise that the continuing restrictions on in-person provision remain extremely challenging for students and staff alike, we can take heart that the latest evidence shows real, significant and sustained progress in getting the virus back under control. As the First Minister has stated, if we can go further and faster in any relaxation of the rules then we will not hesitate to do so. I would like to reiterate the need for you to do all that you can to support as many students as possible to complete and progress as soon as it is safe to do so.

In the meantime, we must remain cautious in the face of a dangerous and highly infectious virus and I am grateful for your continued support as we continue to abide by the lockdown rules.



RICHARD LOCHHEAD

Scottish Ministers, special advisers and the Permanent Secretary are covered by the terms of the Lobbying (Scotland) Act 2016. See www.lobbying.scot

St Andrew's House, Regent Road, Edinburgh EH1 3DG
www.gov.scot



INVESTORS
IN PEOPLE

Accredited
Until 2020

