Letter to all College / University Principals and COVID-19 Co-ordinators

21 May 2020

Dear Principal / COVID-19 Co-ordinator,

Re-opening college and university campuses

As you will be aware, the Scottish Government has today published a framework for decision making, a route-map for managing the COVID-19 through and out of the crisis. The route map gives an indication of the order in which we will carefully and gradually seek to change current restrictions. It provides practical examples of what people, organisations and businesses can expect to see change over time.

The Scottish Government’s route map, or Framework for responding to COVID-19, aims to protect those most at risk and to protect human rights. The Framework sets out a four-phase approach to easing restrictions underpinned by a set of principles and rules, which will guide us in supporting colleges and universities, their staff and students and in the re-opening of college and university campuses.

This Framework ensures that we will proceed on the basis of the public health evidence. Each phase of the Framework makes specific reference to university and college campus operations, namely:

- In Phase 1, starting 28 May: the construction sector will implement the first two phases in its restart plan, with a decision to move to ‘phase 2’ of the construction sector’s plan only after consulting with Government to ensure it is safe to do so in line with public health advice. This will allow the resumption of building works in the college and university sectors.

- In Phase 2: on-campus university laboratory research to restart subject to physical distancing.

- In Phase 3: a phased return for colleges and universities, with a blended model of remote learning and, where a priority, limited on-campus learning. Public health measures, including physical distancing, will be in place.
In Phase 4: college and university campuses will be fully open – including key student services – with any necessary public health precautions.

We recognise the significant work each institution is putting in place to address the public health guidance, in particular looking ahead to the commencement of Academic Year 2020-21, and the early recommencement of estates activities. We are working with the Scottish Government and liaising with Universities Scotland and Colleges Scotland, and with individual institutions, on the development of sector specific guidance, in line with the latest Scottish Government Framework published today, paying due regard to the UK Government’s guidance where appropriate.

If you have any questions about the foregoing, please do not hesitate to contact us by emailing covid19@sfc.ac.uk.

Kind regards,

**Martin Fairbairn**
Chief Operating Officer and Deputy Chief Executive