

COVID-19 Q&A for colleges and universities

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General

Q: What should institutions take into account when considering any changes to access to buildings and facilities?

Colleges and universities should follow advice from [Health Protection Scotland](#), and specifically the [Information and Guidance for Non-Healthcare Settings](#).

Q: When will it be appropriate to reconsider events?

Colleges and universities should follow advice from the [Scottish Government](#).

Q: When will it be appropriate to reconsider overseas travel?

Colleges and universities should take account of the advice from the [Foreign and Commonwealth Office](#).

Q: What advice should be given to students planning to travel home for Easter holidays?

Colleges and universities should take account of the advice from the [Foreign and Commonwealth Office](#).

SFC funding, Outcome Agreement measures, student activity targets and conditions of grant

Q: Will SFC expect the same level of reporting given the extreme pressure that institutions are under?

We are working through unprecedented times and recognise the pressures facing colleges and universities. We will therefore keep our returns and reporting requirements to an absolute minimum. We will review what we really need to keep things legal and will review what processes we can simply stop at this point in time.

Q: How will SFC take COVID-19 impacts into account when assessing college and university performance against Outcome Agreement measures (including student activity targets)?

At this stage it is not possible to know with certainty what the impact of COVID-19 will be on college and university performance against Outcome Agreement measures (including student activity targets). However, we fully expect that there will be a shortfall against the student number credit target (colleges) / student places (universities) and we will take account of these exceptional circumstances. And we'll work with Scottish Government departments on controlled subjects in case there are moves to recover funds. We will not recover funds for shortfalls against outcome

agreement targets where these are related to Covid 19 for AY 2019-20. Any decisions will be taken in full consultation with the institution.

If a college or university has a specific question about its ability to meet an Outcome Agreement measure or student activity target, it should contact its Outcome Agreement Manager in the first instance (Regional Strategic Body for assigned colleges).

Q: How will SFC take COVID-19 impacts into account in enforcing specific conditions of grant?

At this stage it is not possible to know with certainty what the impact of COVID-19 will be on the ability of colleges and universities to adhere to all conditions of grant (both general and specific). While colleges and universities should develop their own mitigating strategies to minimise the risk of not being able to adhere to grant conditions, we recognise the particular challenges of this situation. As is already the case, SFC will take into account the specific circumstances of any instance where an institution believes it is no longer able to adhere to a specific condition of grant, before deciding on what action to take, and will do so in full consultation with the institution.

If a college or university has a specific question about its ability to meet a condition of grant, it should contact its Outcome Agreement Manager in the first instance (Regional Strategic Body for assigned colleges).

Q: How will SFC take COVID-19 impacts into account in relation to specific conditions of grant which have been set by partner organisations (e.g. UK-wide research funders)?

At this stage it is not possible to know with certainty what the impact of COVID-19 will be on the ability of colleges and universities to adhere to all conditions of grant (both general and specific). While colleges and universities should develop their own mitigating strategies to minimise the risk of not being able to adhere to grant conditions, we recognise the particular challenges of this situation

There are instances where grant conditions have been set by a funding partner of SFC. If adherence to those conditions might be impacted by COVID-19, we will work with that partner to seek agreement to an appropriate approach to enforcing the relevant grant conditions.

If a college or university has a specific question about its ability to meet a condition of grant, it should contact its Outcome Agreement Manager in the first instance (Regional Strategic Body for assigned colleges).

College and university financial health

Q: What support will SFC provide to institutions where COVID-19 has a material impact on financial health?

While institutions themselves are responsible for securing their financial sustainability, SFC recognises the unprecedented nature of the current situation. Our priority is to ensure stability and continuity. We will keep making payments to colleges and universities and we will support them to keep paying staff and to do their best for students (particularly vulnerable people). Colleges and universities should continue to develop their own mitigating strategies to minimise negative impacts on their short, medium and long-term financial sustainability. Similarly, SFC will be analysing the main risks to institutional financial sustainability and will engage with institutions as appropriate.

If an institution identifies that there is a short-term risk to its financial sustainability, it should contact its Outcome Agreement Manager in the first instance (Regional Strategic Body for assigned colleges).

Q: Will there be funding to support additional staffing costs that may arise if staff need to be available outwith the academic year?

SFC does not currently have any funding set aside to support additional costs in the event that staff need to be available outwith the academic year. It is expected that any additional costs due to COVID-19 would, in the first instance, be met by individual colleges and universities. However, we recognise the unprecedented nature of this current situation. Therefore, where increased costs will have a material impact on an institution's financial sustainability, the institution should contact its Outcome Agreement Manager in the first instance (Regional Strategic Body for assigned colleges).

Student Accommodation

Q: How should students in student accommodation self-isolate?

Colleges and universities should follow advice from [Health Protection Scotland](#) (specifically the [Information and Guidance for Non-Healthcare Settings](#)) and NHS Inform's [COVID-19 page](#). The UK Government has also published [guidance for households with possible coronavirus infection](#).

Q: How can those sharing accommodation with students who are self-isolating protect themselves?

Colleges and universities should follow advice from [Health Protection Scotland](#) (specifically the [Information and Guidance for Non-Healthcare Settings](#)) and NHS

Inform's [COVID-19 page](#). The UK Government has also published [guidance for households with possible coronavirus infection](#).