



STRANMILLIS UNIVERSITY COLLEGE
A College of Queen's University Belfast

bulletin

staff

issue 1, June 2020



Tremendous
challenges in how
we work and
operate

Blended learning
approach with
priority for first year
students

Academic calendar
will be shaped by
3 key priorities

What does it mean
for staff across the
campus



I hope you and your families are keeping well.

The Coronavirus pandemic has brought tremendous challenges in terms of how we work and operate in our everyday lives so I want to thank staff across the College most sincerely for all of their hard work and effort during this period. As a result of your dedicated professionalism, the College has been able largely to continue with 'business as usual', albeit depending on digital technology to enable us to work remotely.

As a result an enormous national effort the virus has been brought under control although the need for

continued vigilance is of the upmost importance. Now we need to consider how we will operate as a consequence of the expected incremental easing of the lockdown but where measures like social distancing, personal hygiene etc. remain in place and are likely to be in place for most, if not all, of the next academic year.

Planning for the 2020-21 academic year will be shaped by 3 key priorities:

- The health, welfare, and safety of our College community.
- The continued provision of a high-quality learning and teaching experience for all

students, and the maintenance of quality standards.

- The continued provision of a high-quality broad all round educational experience for all students.

Contingency planning will constantly be reviewed and evaluated in light of the advice from government and other relevant agencies and feedback from staff, trade unions and the Students' Union to ensure the health, wellbeing and safety of all campus users. The College is also liaising closely with colleagues at Queen's University and St Mary's University College in the preparation of plans for the 2020-21 academic year.



The Governing Body have endorsed the following decision:

In September the College will open using a blended learning approach with priority being given to first year students on campus who will have to follow a strict social distancing and sanitisation regime in place.

This means that:

- All lecture materials will be delivered online.
- There will be limited small group activity on campus for first year students. More details will follow in due course.
- There will be no international students on campus in semester 1 but contact will be maintained by promoting online contact.
- There will be no LLL or CPD on campus in semester 1 but there will be online and blended learning provision.
- There will be no conferencing or other activities on campus in semester 1 that involve large groups of people.

- There will be no face-to-face meetings except where absolutely essential. A single meeting room, e.g. **Conference Hall in the Main Building**, will be set up as a meeting room with social distancing in place.
- Betty's Coffee Shop will remain closed. There will be a single point for hospitality services, apart from coffee/tea making facilities accessed by individuals, in **Chatz**, which complies with social distancing.

A COVID-19 risk assessment of the campus has been conducted by the Estates Team and a COVID-19 Health & Safety Strategy is being developed for consultation with staff. Over the next 6 weeks, the Estates team will be taking steps to make the campus compliant with government guidance on COVID-19 and ensuring that public health guidelines are displayed in a variety of formats, including campus signage and visual aids. We anticipate that it will be safe for individual members of staff, or small groups, to come on campus by the beginning of August. It is

important that our campus is ready to facilitate small groups on campus during the critical period of enrolment and induction. However, we will continue to encourage staff to work from home wherever possible in line with government guidance

There is much detailed planning to do over the next few weeks. Staff will receive a Weekly Bulletin with updates as these details take shape. Meantime I want to close this edition by encouraging staff to plan to take their annual leave before the end of the current leave year (31 July). Everyone has been working exceptionally hard under difficult circumstances and the 2020-21 academic year will be equally demanding. In the interests of our health and mental wellbeing we all need time to relax and take time away from the virtual reality we have all had to deal with over the past few months.

Stay safe & well

Professor Anne Heaslett
Principal