



STRANMILLIS UNIVERSITY COLLEGE
A College of Queen's University Belfast

bulletin

staff

Issue 2, July 2020



A very big
thank you to
all staff

A focus on
the student
experience

Moving to the
new normal

Rest and
renewal



Thanks to Staff

Thanks to all staff for bringing the academic year to a successful close, despite all the disruption of COVID-19, and for your contribution to our virtual Graduation Celebration. It was important to give our students a good send off. Hopefully we will be able to work with Queen's University and host the actual graduation ceremony in the not too distant future.

A focus on the student experience.

As we begin the preparation for the 2020-21 academic year the health, safety and wellbeing of staff, students and campus users remain our top priority. The College will continue to operate within the guidelines set by the Government and the Public Health Agency. However, the foreseeable future is likely to be dominated by the need for some form of social distancing.

While there will be restrictions and limitations as we open up the campus, we must continue to focus on meeting the needs of our students and providing a high-quality learning experience.

We aim to facilitate as much face-to-face engagement with students as is possible once risk assessments, safety measures and appropriate support has been put in place.

Moving towards the new normal

We are currently making preparations to move towards the reopening of the College. We hope to be in a position to do so by 3 August 2020.

However, in order to safely reopen the campus, and before any activities commence onsite, we have to assess the level of risk and identify the controls we can put in place to eliminate or mitigate the risk.

The Estates Team has undertaken a COVID-19 Campus Risk Assessment, which will be distributed to staff and trade unions for review. Heads of Departments have been tasked with carrying out risk assessments for their specialist areas in consultation with their staff, following which we will work with trade union colleagues. Risk assessments will be made available to all staff on a dedicated section of the intranet.

Lockdown
Ends on 31 July 2020

1 August 2020
Campus Open

From September 2020
Connected learning
with some face-to-face
learning

Date Unkown
Normal University
College experience and
activities

All of us have a responsibility to help manage the risks associated with the spread of the virus by implementing the agreed controls and following the Government guidance. The Northern Ireland Executive's Guidance is available at : <https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/coronavirus-covid-19-overview-and-advice>.

In a situation full of uncertainty and where government guidelines are evolving and changing as the progress of the pandemic is monitored and reviewed, we will seek to keep staff informed.

Appraisals

The annual appraisal process is normally undertaken at the end of the academic year. However, we are mindful of the work which needs to be undertaken in preparation for the campus reopening and for the new academic year. The appraisal is an important feedback mechanism for individuals and an important part of the planning process. In light of current workloads, and the need for staff to take time off, the process will be delayed. College Management will work with trade union colleagues to agree a shorter version of the documentation to more easily facilitate the process.

Rest and renewal

Over the difficult period of lockdown, staff have been flexible and responsive. Innovative approaches to this 'new normal' have emerged and staff are to be commended for their efforts. The 2020-21 academic year will require more of the same as there is no clear end in sight to the current pandemic.

All of us need some time to relax and reflect on the challenging period we have just lived through. Few of us would have factored into our lives the experience of living through a global pandemic! We need time to prepare for the demands of the 2020-21 year.

I wish you a restful summer break and stay safe and well.

With thanks and best wishes

Professor Anne Heaslett
Principal

