



STRANMILLIS UNIVERSITY COLLEGE
A College of Queen's University Belfast

bulletin

staff

Issue 3 August 2020



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College

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students

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As we begin to open up the College campus and staff return from a well-earned summer break we are very conscious that it will not be a simple case of 'business as usual'. The COVID-19 crisis has changed our lives. We may be emerging from the very severe restrictions imposed in March but a significant number of government guidelines still need to be adhered to.

It is important to note that COVID-19 contingency planning is a **dynamic** process. Our plans will be **constantly 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.

As already stated in earlier Bulletins, 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.

Opening up of the campus

A COVID-19 risk assessment of the campus has been conducted by the Estates Team and you will observe the changes around the College campus in response to that exercise. The College has and will continue to follow government guidelines as it prepares to open up its campus facilities.

Screens have been erected, hand sanitising units have been installed, there is clear signage to indicate the one way system that will operate in Central Building and each toilet area has the cleaning regime clearly documented and on display. These are designed to create a safe working space.

- Staff are now permitted to access their offices. Senior managers will be liaising with staff to discuss the opening up of offices and facilities on a phased basis and to ensure that the appropriate risk assessments have been carried out.
- While the College will be open each day the **Main Gates** will be closed at **6 pm**, except by special arrangement. This arrangement will be in place until further notice. Cleaver Gate will remain closed until further notice.



Individual PPE packs and Face Coverings

Government guidance is changing regarding wearing of face coverings and College guidance on their use will reflect the latest position. Staff and students are not required to wear a face covering at this time unless it is a normal part of their role, although this is subject to change. It is recognised however that some people, due to personal preference, may choose to wear a face covering and the College is supportive of this position.

The wearing of a face covering may, in some instances, be one of a range of mitigations used to facilitate work to take place where social distancing of 2m is not possible. Further useful information can be found at:

<https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/coronavirus-covid-19-face-coverings>

- As a result, the College will provide members of staff with 2 reusable face coverings. In addition to reusable face coverings, staff will be provided with a pack of antibacterial wipes and a bottle of hand sanitiser for the purpose of maintaining a hygienic workspace.

Should they require them for College-related activities, a supply of 2 reusable face coverings will be provided to students

Please note: Reusable face coverings should be washed regularly and if possible re-washed after each use.

It is important to emphasise that the wearing of face covering should not negate the importance of hand washing, good personal hygiene and social distancing all of which are recognised as the most effective way of managing the risk of contracting COVID-19.

Everyone has a personal responsibility to keep up to date with government guidelines. However, the College will take all reasonable steps to ensure that staff and students have access to any PPE that may help to create a safer working environment. Please note that if government guidance changes in regard to face covering, the College will act accordingly.

How do I get access to a College supplied PPE pack?

Due to delivery times, it is anticipated that the reusable face coverings will be available from week commencing 7 September 2020

In the interim, a small supply of face coverings is available for those staff who are returning back to campus prior to this date. Please contact the Estates Department on extension 297 to arrange to collect a mask if you require one.

From 7 September 2020 onwards the following procedures will be put in place:

For Staff: The PPE pack containing 2 reusable face coverings, wipes and hand sanitiser will be available through the Estates Department at the reception desk in Stranmillis House. Staff will be required to sign for receipt of this pack.

For Students: A supply of face coverings will be available through the Students' Union on the ground floor of Stranmillis House or the Student Support Office on second floor of Stranmillis House. The Procurement Office are currently confirming the delivery date for these masks however it is anticipated that these will be available from week commencing 7 September 2020.

Please note that the dates detailed above for availability of PPE packs and face coverings is subject to on time delivery of PPE from our suppliers. Some PPE items continue to be difficult to source and the NHS has priority over all PPE supplies coming into the country.

Timetabling Arrangements

As already indicated the priority will be to have first years on campus and then every other year group as much as possible. Currently the timetable for 2020-21 is being drafted using the following guidelines:

- Classes will be timetabled over 5 days (rather than 3 days previously advised) using the room capacity data prepared by Estates (room capacities being determined by 2 metre social distancing).
- The use of lecture theatres will be kept under review.
- Priority will be given to first year classes, followed by combined 1st and 2nd year classes. However we plan to have all year groups on campus for at least part of the week, depending on capacity.
- The use of specialist rooms, including the Drama Theatre will be kept under review. Heads of Academic areas who wish to make use of specialist spaces will be required to undertake a risk assessment and then discuss the options with Senior Management.
- Placements will be kept under review in line with latest guidance.

Teaching & Learning

- Teaching & Learning will be delivered in a blended, connected manner in 20/21.
- Some classes will be delivered on campus in line with module requirements and always complying with current government guidance.
- The Library will reopen in September with physical services returning on a phased basis. Full electronic access and support remains available.
- No international students will be on campus in semester 1 but contact will be maintained by promoting online contact.
- There will be no Lifelong Learning or Professional Development courses on campus in semester 1 but there will be online and blended learning provision.



IT & Digital Services

- The Digital & Technical Services Manager will issue guidance materials to staff in due course to promote the safe use of IT equipment within individual offices and shared equipment across the campus (including the use of printing facilities).
- IT Services are actively investigating how students might access shared IT facilities in a safe manner and are working to put appropriate protocols in place for this.

Provision of Hospitality

- Staff should note that currently the Refectory Kitchen is undergoing a major refurbishment. Until this project is complete, possibly mid-September, catering on site will be provided by vending machines. Staff may of course bring in their own food and snacks. When the refurbishment project is complete **Chatz**, which will be set up to comply with social distancing requirements, will become the main hospitality venue.
- Staff should follow the COVID-19 restrictions notices associated with the various kitchen areas provided in each building.
- Betty's Coffee Shop will remain closed for the foreseeable future but the matter will be kept under review.



College Meetings

- There will be no face-to-face meetings except where absolutely essential. Even when staff are in College it is recommended that Microsoft Teams is used to conduct meetings.
- Where smaller face-to-face meetings are deemed to be essential this can be facilitated by booking the **Board Room in the Main Building** which has been set up as a meeting room also with social distancing in place.
- Where large face-to-face meetings are deemed to be essential this can be facilitated by booking the **Conference Hall in the Main Building** which has been set up as a meeting room with social distancing in place.
- There will be no conferences, events or similar activities that involve large groups of people hosted on campus in semester 1 .

Student Support Services

Student Support Services are critical to the health and wellbeing of our students and this will be particularly important as we move to a delivery format of blended or connected learning.

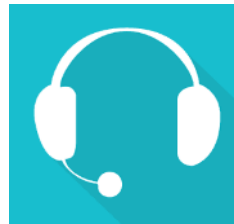


Student Support Services will be provided using a mixture of online facilities and face-to-face engagement – delivery will comply with the relevant government guidance.



Registration and Enrolment

- Registration and Enrolment for all **new students** will be completed remotely online – this is a new development in response to COVID19.
- Registration and Enrolment for all **returning students** will be completed remotely online.
- Academic Registry will be operating a “Call Centre” to deal with queries from **new applicants** following the publication of results process – details of dates and times of operation will follow from the 13th August.
- Academic Registry will also be operating a “Call Centre” to deal with **new and returning student** queries about the Registration and Enrolment process – details of the dates and times of operation will follow.
- Any additional and /or updated information will be provided on the relevant pages of the website.



Welcome and Induction

A number of the key information sessions will be delivered remotely, however the importance of getting students onto campus is also recognised - a suitable programme is currently being developed and further details will be communicated in due course.

We have a responsibility to comply with all government guidance. If any issues of concern arise please do not hesitate to contact the Principal's Office or the Senior Manager on duty.

Professor Anne Heaslett
Principal