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Final Year Biomedical Science Students

27 March 2020

**Open letter to all final year biomedical science students in Scotland  
from Karen Stewart, Healthcare Science Officer**

We have all heard from the First Minister that we are in a time of crisis, and we all need to work together to ensure the best possible outcome for the people of Scotland. The First Minister described it as “the biggest peacetime mission that our nation has undertaken in our lifetimes”.

The Cabinet Secretary for Health and Sport has instructed NHS Scotland and individual health boards “to do all that is necessary to be ready to face a substantial and sustained increase in the number of cases of Covid-19”, and the Scottish Government is “working with regulators to enable returners to the healthcare profession and by looking to deploy students into settings that are appropriate to their skills”.

I know that as a final year student you are highly skilled and you will be able to make a significant contribution. So for those of you who are able (and we recognise that some of you may not be, for a variety of reasons), I am asking you to agree to become part of your local health and social care workforce.

Your university and local Employer, together with you, will work to place you where you can continue to develop your skills, complete your academic programme and at the same time provide service to the people of Scotland.

You will be paid for the work and will have the same terms and conditions as any employee. At the same time, you will continue to be a student of your university, and they will provide you with academic support to enable you to graduate on time, as much as is possible.

This change to your programme has been agreed by the Health and Care Professions Council, and is following legislation being brought forward in the UK Parliament.


I recognise that you may be anxious or unsure, and there are many of you who are in the category of people who need to be shielded, rather than exposed. So this isn't for everyone,



and we will be working to minimise any disruption for those who cannot participate. However, if you aren't able to practice in a NHS laboratory, there are other areas where there will be a need for staff to support the delivery of laboratory services. Whatever your skills, if you feel able to be deployed, there will be an opportunity for you if you want to take it up.

Your university will be in touch with you regarding their plans, so please keep an eye out for communication from them.

Yours,



Karen Stewart  
Healthcare Science Officer