

Reopening Meetings

- The Minister outlined the purpose of today's meeting was to discuss the latest position on a safe re-opening including testing and face coverings and go through the rationale and impact as these policy decisions are agreed.
- He noted that the First Minister announced that we will publish guidance on Safe Reopening for institutions on Tuesday (1 September).
- Further information around testing will be firmed up in the coming days.
- The Minister advised that working together and issuing communications will be key in keeping student and staff safe as campuses reopen.

University Scotland made the following points:

- Universities are committed to making all campuses safe for students and staff for their return. Preparation work completed to date includes engaging with temperature centres, signage, marking floors etc. we need to ensure we aren't revising existing measures which are already in place.
- Less concerns around face coverings as this is becoming the norm in everyday life e.g. wearing them in supermarkets, public transport etc.
- Universities have created a student and staff pledge to ensure everyone is committed to keeping the virus contained and supporting the measures in place.
- Clarifying information on testing would be helpful. Universities would welcome as clear information as possible where to go next with students from high prevalence areas.
- Students coming from high prevalence area, testing would be of huge benefit and reduce the huge anxiety and concern for other students and staff members. This would be for reassurance why students are quarantining and will help in the behaviours shown by students.
- Student unions should be heavily involved to emphasis what student's responsibilities are in and highlight any necessary disciplinary actions if students aren't complying to guidance.
- Universities concerns are focused on those students staying in private accommodation which makes policing challenging.
- There is also a risk around pubs and parties. There needs more thought on what guidance is available for universities in the event of bad behaviour there is university discipline but there is a lack of clarity of the role of security staff for how much control they are permitted to use to comply with regulations.
- Universities asked for SG to commit to and reinforce the messages they send out to students. The Minister would welcome actions from the sector and will support communications to students.

Universities were advised:

- The Minister confirmed there is growing concern for all students to get tested but clinical advice supersedes this. Symptomatic students will be first priority.
- The First Minister agreed she will do a video for incoming students to address some of the points raised in today's discussion.

Key points on testing included:

- What progress has been made regarding delivery of testing kits - Preliminary workshops with the university sector are underway to discuss challenges and how to overcome these.
- Universities reinforced the need and value of testing kits being available.
- Vast majority of international students will be arriving end of September and start of October. Universities would value having tests readily available to ensure testing is up and running as effectively as possible. Having a testing system in place at the start of the academic year will be reassuring for students traveling from across the world.
- The Minister noted the key points from universities on what their role is in off campus monitoring and reporting and what SG can do to support this. He thanked Universities for their continued support and input on a safe reopening and officials will be in touch as decisions arise.
- Attendees were made aware the FM has agreed to do a video message for students.