

Minister for Higher/Further Education, Youth
Employment & Training
Ministear airson Foghlam Àrd-ìre agus Foghlam
Adhartach, Cosnadh Òigridh agus Trèanadh
Jamie Hepburn BPA/MSP



Scottish Government
Riaghaltas na h-Alba
gov.scot

T : 0300 244 4000
E : scottish.ministers@gov.scot

Mary Senior
MSenior@UCU.ORG.UK

Our Reference: 202200291021
Your Reference: Covid-19 and testing

5 April 2022

Dear Mary,

Thank you for your letter of 24 March 2022 regarding asymptomatic COVID testing in colleges and universities. I am also grateful for sight of your letter to the Secretary of State for Scotland.

As set out in our Testing Transition Plan, asymptomatic testing for students and staff at college and university will end on 17 April. The Testing Transition Plan will also see regular testing end in other low risk workplaces, and the universal testing programme will cease operation on the same timescales.

Between now and Easter, we will continue to recommend that individuals take a free lateral flow test twice a week. LFD tests will remain available through online orders, the 119 service and to collect from test sites until that time. Those with symptoms continue to be advised to take a PCR test until the end of April.

The regular asymptomatic testing programme has played an important part in the suite of measures to reduce risks in universities and colleges over the course of the pandemic. This decision has been informed by a range of scientific advice and clinical evidence. However, I appreciate that some staff and students may feel anxious about the removal of the asymptomatic testing programme. We will ensure that our communications help people understand the rationale for this decision, and include advice about how to continue to take sensible precautions.

I do, however, recognise that COVID has not gone away and I want to give reassurance that we will continue to work collaboratively with trade unions, institutions and student representative bodies to ensure college and university campuses remain safe for staff and students. This includes working with Scottish Ministers, special advisers and the Permanent Secretary are covered by the terms of the Lobbying (Scotland) Act 2016. See www.lobbying.scot

Tha Ministearanna h-Alba, an luchd-comhairleachaidh sònraichte agus Rùnaire Maireannach fo chumhachan Achd Coiteachaidh (Alba) 2016. Faicibh www.lobbying.scot

St Andrew's House, Regent Road, Edinburgh EH1 3DG
www.gov.scot



INVESTORS
IN PEOPLE

Accredited
Until 2020



institutions – and with trade unions - to support the development of institution-level COVID-19 Response Committees. Using existing structures where possible, these will monitor the public health and wider context, with a view to adjusting local safety protocols accordingly. This enables decisions on COVID-safety measures, beyond any that may be in place across society, to be determined locally and, where possible, collectively.

In addition, it will still be possible for local health protection teams to opt to make use of asymptomatic testing in outbreak management situations in colleges and universities, if their expert judgement deems it appropriate to do so. Testing will also continue to be available if it is advised as part of a person's clinical care.

I hope you find this information helpful that it provides some reassurance. I look forward to continuing to work with you and trade union colleagues.

Yours sincerely



JAMIE HEPBURN

Scottish Ministers, special advisers and the Permanent Secretary are covered by the terms of the Lobbying (Scotland) Act 2016. See www.lobbying.scot

Tha Ministearanna h-Alba, an luchd-comhairleachaidh sònraichte agus Rùnaire Maireannach fo chumhachan Achd Coiteachaidh (Alba) 2016. Faicibh www.lobbying.scot

St Andrew's House, Regent Road, Edinburgh EH1 3DG
www.gov.scot



INVESTORS
IN PEOPLE

Accredited
Until 2020

