

8 April 2022

David Hughes  
Chief Executive  
Association of Colleges  
2 - 5 Stedham Place  
off New Oxford Street  
LONDON  
WC1A 1HU

[David.Hughes@aoc.co.uk](mailto:David.Hughes@aoc.co.uk)

Dear David

As I am sure you will agree given the sharp recent rise in infection and death rates – on top of waning immunity and the emergence of yet more transmissible variants – it is clear that Covid remains a significant health and safety risk and hurdle to effective delivery in our colleges.

In this context, I am writing on behalf of UCU to urge AoC to continue to prioritise Covid-19 in workplace risk assessments and to work with us to develop health surveillance measures in partnership with local health teams to prevent outbreaks and reduce the impact on of the virus on the health and safety of staff and students.

We worked effectively with employers across further education to ensure the implementation of proportionate, protective measures that reduce spread of Covid-19 as infection rates rise and fall during the course of the pandemic.

We urge the AoC to sign up to the Independent SAGE Covid-19 safety pledge to show ongoing commitment to protecting staff and students from the virus, and, critically, to minimising its disruptive impact on the delivery of education in our colleges.

UCU recently called upon the UK government to continue to provide free universal access to Covid-19 testing which we feel is essential in the further education sector. In the absence of government funding, we believe that employers should themselves provide free access to lateral flow tests for their staff and students as part of their workplace health surveillance measures.

There are particular risks for Covid-19 transmission specific to further education with the significant mixing of large groups of staff and students in teaching, social and residential spaces.

UCU would like to work with AoC to develop an approach to workplace Covid-19 health surveillance which incorporates the effective use of free lateral flow tests for staff and

students as well as additional occupational health surveillance approaches.

We believe a commitment to ongoing health surveillance and Covid-19 risk assessment will reduce the spread of Covid-19 infection, prevent outbreaks and reduce the disruption to education as the pandemic continues.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jo Grady". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized initial "J" and a clear, legible name.

Dr Jo Grady  
General Secretary