

29 September 2020

Dear Students,

As Principal and CEO of University Centre South Devon (part of South Devon College), I wanted to take the opportunity to write to you directly at the beginning of term, to not only welcome you but also to address any concerns you might have at this time and to reassure you of actions we have taken and are taking to keep you safe and healthy whilst continuing to provide the very best learning experience and environment.

Our Head of Higher Education – Alastair Wilson, has already welcomed you by video that was used as part of your induction programme. This video is still available on our [website](#) (embedded in the first section). I would also like to extend my own warmest welcome to all of you, and to thank you for trusting us with your Higher Education journey.

During your application and offer stages we communicated our [intended commitment](#) to you, specifically relating to this academic year, 2020-21. We are very aware of recent national press focussed on Higher Education at this time and I wanted to take the opportunity to reiterate our intentions.

We will of course follow government advice on social distancing and personal safety to ensure a ‘Covid secure’ working and learning environment. It remains our intention that in the majority of cases you will be able to continue to participate in lectures, seminars and tutorials in person on campus, albeit with face coverings and other appropriate measures to keep you and our staff safe.

If you do have [symptoms of coronavirus \(COVID-19\)](#) you should get a test as soon as possible. It is important to only get a test if you have coronavirus symptoms or have been asked to get tested. This will help make sure people who need a test can get one. If you do have symptoms of coronavirus, please report your absence to us in the normal manner and you will be contacted by your tutor to discuss testing options. We do have local arrangements to access a test. Tests can also be booked online at [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\): getting tested](#), or ordered by telephone via NHS 119 for those without access to the internet.

For those who test positive, we will work with the Local Authority and Health Protection Teams to identify close contacts of the symptomatic individual and will provide advice and guidance directly to you about the next steps. If you are identified as a contact by NHS Test and Trace team, further information is available in the guidance [NHS Test and Trace: how it works](#).

If they are needed, either to enable social distancing or to support your individual circumstances, options for remote access or online and blended learning will be available alongside the face-to-face experience. We know that we all may need to adapt if Covid conditions change.

We do have students living in private residences, private landlord accommodation and in houses of multiple occupation (HMOs). If you develop symptoms of coronavirus you should self-isolate in your current accommodation. If a resident of an HMO has coronavirus symptoms, all residents must isolate for 14 days, follow the [COVID-19: guidance for households with possible coronavirus infection](#). Please notify us of your absence and we will support you to receive the food and medicines you need for the duration of your isolation. Please be assured that we will work with the Director of Public Health in our local authority in order to control or manage any outbreak in an integrated fashion

Our [FAQs](#) provide more information for you about your experience, and today we have updated these with specific information about Track and Trace, and guidance for those students in House of Multiple Occupation.

The College will also be making face shields available to Higher Education students, and these can be collected from 2nd October from the Faculty Office on the 1st floor of the University Centre.

Our commitment remains to provide you with the very best learning experience in the safest possible environment and we will absolutely do this following Government guidance and directives and best practice. However, if you have any concerns or questions please do speak to your tutor or a member of the Higher Education team in UCSD.

Kindest regards,

Laurence Frewin
Principal and CEO of South Devon College

