Introduction

We welcome new and returning students to the College for the Academic year 2020/21. With the intention of resuming teaching from 5th October 2020, we have been working hard to prepare for your arrival and make our building Covid-19 safe.

Teaching across courses will be carried out mostly online, with the addition of some scheduled face-to-face learning where possible. The decision to do so and the preparations to follow are informed by Scottish Governments guidance and is a move shared by other institutions within the Higher Education sector.

We recognise that you may have worries and anxieties about returning, however be assured that the College is doing everything it can to make the building a safe environment for work and study. You will find more information and guidance below on the measures we are introducing to keep everyone safe. Be mindful however, that the plan does not address individual circumstances (e.g. health issues, caring responsibilities etc). These should be discussed with the Student Administration Office before returning to College.

Staying Safe:

The College advises on the following six key actions for staying safe:

If you or any one in your house show symptom of COVID-19 stay at home, self-isolate and book a test if you have symptoms or if you have travelled through a country not listed as a UK government exemption.

Wear a cloth face covering when moving in communal areas within College, unless you cannot safely wear a face covering

Wash your hands with soap and water often and do this for at least 20 seconds. Use hand sanitiser gel if soap and water are not available

Follow the Scottish Government guidance around social distancing - keep a 2m distance where possible when in the College.

Use provided cleaning materials to wipe down a printers, workstation and study areas before and after use

Minimise all non-essential face-to-face meetings, do not attend large social gatherings and always consider remote options first

Returning to the College and moving around:

Coming to and leaving the College

The normal entrances and exits are operational, and you should use the hand sanitiser provided upon entering and exiting the building. Additional sanitiser dispensers are also available at key locations within the building.

Perspex screens are in position at Reception and the Library to avoid face to face contact.

Where possible we will restrict or stop all external visitors to the College.

Moving around the College

Upon entering the College building, you will notice that there is additional signage including floor markings and additional directional signage, indicating how to move around the building.

Movement around the building should be kept to the minimum required for you to undertake your study. Whilst moving around the building, you must abide by all signs and social distancing measures.

Staircases

With 2-metre distancing in place, the main staircase is fully operational, but we ask you to make proper use of the landing spaces, to allow others using the stairs to pass by you. Wherever possible, we recommend that you follow a 'keep left' system.

Learning and Teaching facilities:

Face to face teaching

We are committed to ensuring the College building is a well-controlled, and risk-managed environment. College teaching staff have prepared teaching plans for online learning- with the addition of limited face-to-face teaching.

Time spent in the College building will be limited in Semester 1 due to the impact of social distancing guidelines on capacity.

Teaching Rooms

College facilities including study spaces, social spaces, IT suite, dining area etc. will unfortunately not be available to students during Semester 1. Students will however have access to designated classrooms. The maximum room occupancy is displayed on the door before you enter and should not be exceeded under any circumstance.

All available rooms will have clear markings indicating which areas, seats, desks or workstations can be used, while maintaining physical distancing. At no point should you attempt to move any of the furniture or signage within the rooms.

The Scottish Government Guidance requires the College to monitor groupings of people in all areas to help support the Scottish Public Health Test and Protect initiative. Room users must ensure there is an accurate record of anyone in attendance and adequately record these details in an appropriate and secure manner.

When you use a room, you must use the cleaning materials provided in rooms to wipe down your personal work area at the start and at the end of each session. This will help to keep rooms safe for all.

Under no circumstances should the provision of PPE be used to increase the occupancy rate of a room.

Meetings
All general meetings between staff and/or students should be held via Microsoft Teams wherever possible.

If it is critical to meet with someone face-to-face, you should carry out the meeting in the designated meeting room that allows 2m physical distancing.

Health and Safety measures:

Face Coverings
Face coverings must also be worn in the following circumstances (except where someone is exempt from wearing a covering):
- where people are moving about in corridors and indoor communal areas (including toilets)
- wherever 2m distance cannot be guaranteed. This includes where people are interacting face-to-face at less than 2m for a sustained period (about 15 minutes or more) or for any amount of time where there is close contact within 1m.

Face coverings are not generally required in teaching settings when students are seated in a classroom or other learning and teaching environment unless this is stipulated in the Risk Assessment for the activity and/or 2m physical distancing cannot be maintained.

There are some exemptions permissible. Our staff may ask you to use a facemask but will not know about your exemption. Whilst you are not required to prove your exemption, we ask that you help us to understand any issues so that we can ensure that you are adequately supported. Likewise, all students should make themselves aware of the Scottish Government Guidance regarding facemask exemptions and approach any concerns about non-mask wearers with empathy.

Hand Sanitisation
Hand sanitiser dispensers are located at high-touch points around the college building including entrance to the building, reception, library, dining room and in teaching corridors.

We strongly recommend that you wash your hands or use hand sanitiser every time you enter or leave a building.

Toilet Facilities
Most toilet facilities in the College function as a single occupancy with a "knock and enter" system in operation.

Some larger facilities (those with more than one toilet unit) may be designated multiple occupancy (with the occupancy clearly displayed on the door) where physical distancing allows.

Disabled access toilets should be kept available for those with disabilities.

Cleaning
The College has implemented a cleaning regime that concentrates on the cleaning of communal areas, with priority given to high-use touch points and toilets.

Additional cleaning activity during the day will take place across the building with a focus on high traffic areas. However, cleaning between individual uses of areas cannot be undertaken by janitorial staff alone. Cleaning materials will be provided to allow self-service cleaning of shared and personal

workstations, equipment, and tabletops. This will typically include disinfectant spray or wipes provided at these locations.

Signage
Signs will be visible in all areas of the College highlighting social distancing rules, stop signs, don't touch unless necessary etc.

Controlling the numbers in the College
Students are advised to only attend the College if they have been made aware of scheduled face-to-face teaching. Students are reminded that gatherings of two or more families and above six people in social situations is not allowed in accordance with Scottish Government Guidance.

Welfare and canteen facilities
There are various factors to consider and we will control the use of welfare facilities by:

- Limiting the number of students allowed in these areas at any one time. Signage is in place to advise on numbers
- Taking alternate chairs out of use in seating areas to eliminate face-to-face contact and ensure social distancing while eating
- Providing hand gels and sprays for wiping down communal items such as vending machines and water machines etc.
- Using small toilet facilities as a 'one in, one out' basis and ensuring signage is clear and visible
- Larger toilet blocks will have every other cubicle/urinal taken out of use, to ensure social distancing while using the facility
- Ensuring posters, highlighting the importance of hand washing, are displayed.

Cleaning procedures
A more frequent and robust cleaning regime has been implemented to ensure all areas of the College are regularly cleaned and completed to a high standard. This includes areas which may not usually be part of the daily cleaning regime:

- Handrails on stairs
- Door handles
- PCs (in communal areas)
- Printers

Cleaning products will be sourced for 'anti-viral' cleaning as COVID is a virus not a bacterium.

Hand washing and gels
Hand washing will be encouraged where possible. If this is not possible, then hand gels are be provided. 70% alcohol-based gels will be used where available. If unavailable, 60% will offer some protection.

Travelling to and from the College:

Using public transport
When travelling, whether by public transport or taxi you must wear a face covering by law. If you do not comply with this requirement you could be issued a fixed penalty notice. Information is available on **GOV.UK**.

Driving
If you are unable to cycle or walk, the government advocates the use of personal cars although car sharing is not allowed. Please note the College does not have any student parking facilities and that students should allow adequate time to find a parking space.

Stay informed:
Stay informed, with regular updates on the College website, monitor your @almcollege.ac.uk email address and check the Scottish Government guidance at the link below:

https://www.gov.scot/coronavirus-covid-19/

Further information
The College web pages will be updated weekly unless there is significant change in government guidance. Please check the link below and other social media channels for such updates:
https://www.almcollege.ac.uk/covid-19-coronavirus-information-and-guidance/