



## COVID-19 national testing programme

### COVID-19 testing for Scotland's Higher Education (HE) and Further Education (FE) sector

As Scotland continues on the path out of lockdown, in-person learning at Scottish universities and colleges is still limited for the moment, with teaching for most students currently taking place online. But how is COVID-19 testing taking place for those students and staff who are back on campus? Here's a look at what's happened in the sector to date:

#### Stopping the spread

Mass testing for university students began last December, in preparation for students making the journey home for Christmas. Asymptomatic testing was offered to students prior to travelling home and plans were put in place for students to be tested on their return to campus. When Scotland entered lockdown in January, the majority of students were unable to return to institutions for in-person learning. Only those whose learning was deemed critical or time-sensitive could make the return to Scottish campuses.

For those making the journey back to campus, since the beginning of March they have been able to book a PCR test via the [UK Government site](#) prior to leaving their home address. PCR testing could be followed up with two lateral flow tests, carried out when students arrived back on campus.

#### Regular testing

With the evolution of Scotland's testing strategy, voluntary twice weekly asymptomatic testing is now offered by Scottish HE and FE institutions. This 'test to find' approach is available to both students and staff, enabling people to isolate quickly and close contacts to be traced.

#### Testing at Scotland's universities

Most Scottish universities have established asymptomatic test sites (ATS), which use lateral flow devices (LFDs) to test for COVID-19, with results available soon after. The sites are conveniently located on campus and are staffed by university staff and contractors, while other institutions have recruited their medical students to help.

The sites have been set up in partnership with HE providers, the Scottish Government, the UK Government Department of Health and Social Care, Deloitte, Universities Scotland and trade unions. For universities where an ATS isn't practical, regular testing of both staff and students is offered via pick up of LFD kits on campus, with testing taking place at home and results recorded on the online portal.

### **Testing at Scotland's colleges**

Scotland's colleges are now also offering twice weekly asymptomatic testing to staff and students, also using LFDs. These are given out on FE campuses for use at home, with results recorded on the online portal.

### **Testing follow up**

Any positive test results recorded either at one of the asymptomatic test sites or at home are followed up with a PCR test.

Having regular asymptomatic testing in place for students and staff is a significant milestone for testing in education settings, providing reassurance for those who are back on campus for essential learning. Scottish Government are now working with HE and FE providers and partners to explore how to further proactively encourage and promote uptake across Scotland's campuses.

Questions or feedback on our Testing capacity bulletin? [\*\*Get in touch\*\*](#)