



The Scottish Parliament  
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

## EDUCATION AND SKILLS COMMITTEE

Richard Lochhead MSP  
Minister for Further Education, Higher  
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Dear Mr Lochhead,

Thank you for giving evidence to the Committee on 27 January in relation to the impact of Covid-19 on further and higher education. The Official Report of the meeting is now available, and can be read here:

<http://www.parliament.scot/parliamentarybusiness/report.aspx?r=13084&mode=pdf>

During the evidence session, you committed to provide further information on a number of issues. I have set these out below:

### **Deferments**

Daniel Johnson MSP asked about the extension of practical courses such as dentistry and medicine as a result of Covid-19. The Committee would welcome the follow-up information the Minister offered on these questions, including how long these deferments are likely to last for and any similar deferments for any other courses with practical elements.

### **Hardship Funds**

In response to Ross Greer MSP, you offered to provide further information on how students are being made aware of hardship funds. The Committee would welcome this information, as well as data on the sums issued by hardship funds.

### **Remote Learning/Digital Technology**

In evidence, you set out some of the efforts made to distribute laptops to students, particularly in colleges. The Committee requests further information on how many

devices have been issued by which institutions, as well as whether an assessment has been made of how many students still require devices.

### **Participation in FE and HE**

In response to Jamie Greene MSP, you mentioned that Colleges Scotland could provide further detail on drop-out rates and that you would try to keep the Committee up to date on this issue. The Committee requests that any information that can be provided in relation to participation and drop-out rates is provided.

Similarly, Oliver Mundell asked about application numbers for the next academic year. The Committee would welcome any reflections you have on applications for next year, as well as any information you can now provide via UCAS of application statistics.

I appreciate that, in response to some of the above questions, it may be necessary to consult with other organisations such as Colleges Scotland and UCAS. I would therefore welcome a response by Thursday 25 February.

Yours sincerely

**CLARE ADAMSON MSP**  
**CONVENER**