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Dear Student,

I am writing to you all today following the recent Government announcement that we should now begin to prepare our Colleges to re-open across the EKC Group. Whilst this will be on a very limited basis, we are planning to reopen our Colleges to some invited students from 1 June 2020 (subject to final Government clearance). We will contact you if you are chosen to attend College in this initial phase. It is planned that this will be done by Friday 22 May.

We will be prioritising students unable to complete their qualifications without a return to College. This is only likely to apply to you if you are required to take practical assessments, or if you need to complete examinations that cannot be taken at home. We know that many of you will want to come back to College, but in the early stages we need to limit the numbers coming in to minimise any risks. So, we would ask you to be patient if you are not in the first phase.

Obviously, ensuring your safety and wellbeing, and that of your peers and our staff is a core priority. That is why we will be taking a range of measures to make certain that if you are amongst those invited to come into the College, it will be a safe environment for you. We will be holding two sessions each day, with one in the morning between 10am and 12.30pm and one in the afternoon between 1.30pm and 4pm. You will only be invited to attend one of these sessions per day if you are chosen to come in. This is to ensure that you aren't required to travel during peak hours, whilst also enabling all areas which are used to be fully cleaned during the one-hour cross over. As we will not be able to provide hot food during these two sessions (we will still provide cold drinks but would recommend you bring reusable bottles where possible), it also lessens the

number of staff on-site, ensuring that risks are minimised. We are following all the Government guidelines to make sure we have a safe environment, so you can feel confident you will be welcomed into a safe space.

However, I know that many of you are likely to still be anxious or may be living with those who are shielding and need to completely remove the risk of transmission of coronavirus. To that end, this is an invitation to attend and will not be mandatory. We believe that you are best placed with your parent(s)/carer(s) to make this decision and we will respect your choice.

Whilst I can appreciate that you are likely to have a number of questions, I hope that as we move toward 1 June 2020 you will feel confident that you are able to access our College environments to continue towards completion of your course. For those who are returning more specific guidance will be issued on the conditions for returning and the expected behaviours.

Please continue to follow Government advice and stay alert, whilst continuing to keep yourselves safe and well. We will continue to issue guidance on our website and social media, so please check ekcgroup.ac.uk for the latest updates.

Yours sincerely,

Graham Razey
Chief Executive Officer

FAQs on reopening our Colleges

Will all students be coming back?

No, we will only be inviting some students in if they need to be on site in order to use equipment to continue learning, or complete assessments. We will contact you by Friday 22 May if you are invited to return in the first phase.

Do students have to attend?

No, you will not be told you have to attend the College. We would like to give you the opportunity to do so, in order for you to complete your qualification in this Academic Year, but we recognise you may be anxious or living with those who are shielding. Therefore, we will simply invite you to attend.

What will happen about mealtimes?

In order to limit the numbers of staff on site, we will have two sessions for students each day. One will be in the morning, and one will take place in the afternoon. As you will not be allowed to attend more than one session each day, you should not require a hot meal in College. However, we will provide cold drinks for you. If you are able to do so, we would ask that you bring your own reusable bottles to refill, as we also have water stations which you will be able to access.

What measures will you be taking to minimise risk?

We will ensure that social distancing regulations are followed throughout the time students come on to the College site, with clearly signposted routes to and from their learning areas. These will not cross over with other curriculum areas, so you will remain in a silo. We will also clean the whole College every evening and give all areas which have been used during the day a thorough clean during the hour-long break between sessions. We will also be robustly risk assessing the plans in line with Government guidelines, to ensure that the College environments remain safe for you. Class sizes will also be lowered significantly across all areas, so that we can ensure all students are able to work safely without breaching any social distancing guidelines.