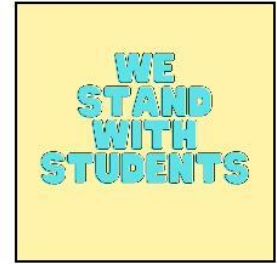


A Letter on Behalf of Strathclyde Students



Dear University of Strathclyde,

We are Strathclyde students and we have been let down by your handling of the COVID-19 pandemic.

We have been lied to and misled for your financial benefit, being unnecessarily told to come to Glasgow just so that we can sit isolated in our own overpriced bedrooms, and work from our laptops. We sit ready to be called on to campus at any given stage for our one or two in person classes this semester, so that you are able to say that you fulfilled your promise of "blended learning".

The way that you have handled this has broken our trust with us as students, as this is not the experience we expected from an institution which boasts itself as one of the best, and so frequently shouts about its own awards and achievements. It is only you that can rectify this, as these awards no longer tell the story of what it is truly like to be a Strathclyde student. The only way for you to do this is by listening to our needs, and responding to them appropriately.

Look at the devastation caused at other institutions who have gone down the same route which you have planned for us; such as those in Manchester. Please learn from these lessons and consider our safety, and that of your staff, paramount to your preferences for our teaching.

Although we recognise that the route that you have gone down has not only been due to your own imperative, but also due to that of the Scottish Government, as it is indeed them who endorsed this route of "blended learning", putting students at unnecessary risk. However, they have also said that it is the responsibility of institutions to listen and respond to the needs of their staff and students appropriately - and by signing this letter, we are stating loud and clear, that **we do not feel that your actions have been appropriate, and that we are tired of waiting for better and of being taken advantage of.**



To this end we are therefore asking that you:

- **Commit to putting university online, and allow us to opt-in to face to face teaching when we are comfortable, and when it is safe to do so.** This would be in replacement of our current complicated opt-out process which involves personal circumstances forms, and treats the pandemic as if it is a personal issue.
- **Ensure that students have access to necessities such as food, laundry, and regular COVID testing - particularly when isolating.** Students are one of the most vulnerable groups in society due to the conditions in which they are housed in student halls, and also due to their reliance on jobs from sectors such as hospitality (which has been one of the hardest hit sectors as a result of COVID) to supplement their income. We need formalised systems to make sure that these basic needs can always be met, so that students aren't just stuck in their cell-like halls bedrooms - which they were recommended to move into, and which institutions profit off - without basic necessities. We also need sufficient, fast and regular testing of students, as once again, we have only done what we were told to do by moving to university however it is now abundantly clear that we are at increased risk by doing so. Many of us do not have cars or other forms of transport if a test centre close to us is booked, so we cannot travel - we need your support in this to keep us safe.
- **Compensate us.** We have seen many institutions compensate their students in halls who have needed to isolate and we ask you to do the same, however we also ask that you compensate those of us who have moved here on the promise of blended learning which was simply unrealistic. Many students have moved up and down the country, if not across the world to attend Strathclyde unnecessarily, at significant costs to ourselves, all while we are paying tuition fees for an experience which we can get at many other institutions for significantly less. We would like our money back.
- **Give us clarity.** Throughout the pandemic we have been given totally contradictory information on what we are expected to do, with little to no notice or justification behind these decisions. We need the ability to plan our lives for more than 2 weeks at a time, and we deserve to have clear expectations for what our time at university will be like. We would like to see published lists of courses that CAN'T be done entirely online, as well as clear outlines for what can be done in person and what benefits we would get from this. This is so that we can make properly informed decisions in regards to our housing, finance, and just generally plan our lives.

**Yours Sincerely,
Strathclyde Students**