Finance Office working during current period.

Overview: for staff outside the Finance Office most processes remain fundamentally unchanged.

Most of the Finance Office's duties can be carried out remotely, but we have had to adapt some processes so that we can keep records that are appropriate for internal control purposes and also so that we can be sure that all internal controls are adequately maintained. I apologise in advance if any of these processes seem unnecessarily onerous. If any are causing operational difficulties please email or skype me so that we can amend the processes.

I attach an updated version of our roles and contacts document. I have colour coded it to show which processes are unchanged, and which have been slightly amended. The underlying rationale for most changes is that we should have paperless back up for all of our transactions, which can be kept for audit purposes. We are therefore asking for requests and their backup to **emailed to the appropriate email address: please do not send paper forms to the Finance Office.**

Please use the generic emails, as set out on the contacts list. This will allow us to maintain support in case of sickness and will ensure that requests don't get "lost" in email inboxes of staff who may be off sick. It also allows us to monitor levels of outstanding requests so that we can redirect resources if needed.

This is a period of heightened risk of fraud, where fraudsters will be aware of the potential to exploit shortcuts in untested processes. We all need to be especially vigilant. Compliance with the Financial Regulations continues to be obligatory. Some of our revised processes are devised to give us extra assurance that controls are not being bypassed, and this may lead to additional processes for budgetholders. Unfortunately this is inevitable.

Supporting documentation must be provided where applicable. If staff do not have a scanner there are available free apps for mobile phones that scan to pdf.

Changes to the processes, other than removing paper copies, are highlighted in italics in the text below.

Updated Finance forms and process documents are available here:
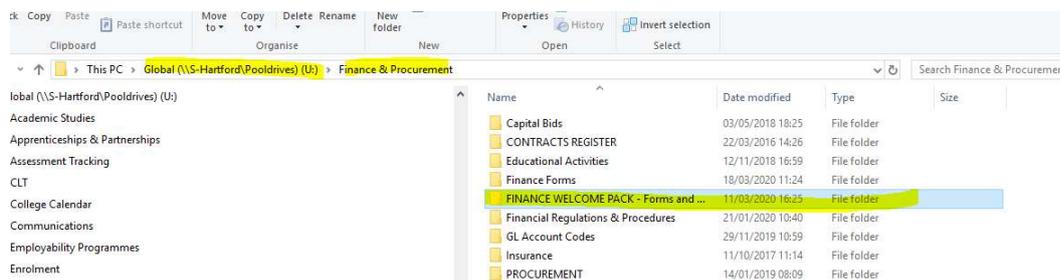
Nearly all the processes outside the Finance Office are unchanged. I have set out a brief outline of the main procedures. In summary changes have been designed to ensure that processes can be made paperless and can continue in the absence of a named member of staff, whether within the Finance Office or without.

Overview of specific functions:

1. Sales ledger:

1.1. All processes can continue as normally, except that we cannot process paper copies. Please ensure that any forms requiring authorisation are appropriately authorised, ideally on the face of the document, but if email approval is forwarded please note that the email used **must be the college email.**

1.2. Refunds for students as a result of the College's response to COVID-19 will be processed in line with the College Policy on refunds in the current situation, which will be published when it has been agreed. If you are in receipt of any requests for refunds please forward the request to sl@escg.ac.uk.

2. Purchase ledger

2.1. <u>Payments requiring a PO</u>

2.1.1. **Requisitions** should be raised on Agresso in the usual way.

2.1.2. The use of Purchase Orders is a very important control against fraud, and hence we will not be relaxing the No PO NO PAY rule during this time.

2.2. **Invoices** must be sent to the PL@escg.ac.uk inbox direct from the supplier. Because of a heightened risk of fraudulent payments we can only accept invoices through this route. Once the invoice is registered, please approve it promptly to avoid delays in processing the payment. *Where an approver is off sick or on annual leave, it is the Line Manager's responsibility to alert Finance, so that we can push the approval to someone else in the approval chain. Finance will notify the substitute directly by email.* We cannot pay invoices until they are appropriately approved within Agresso. This is the responsibility of the Budget Holder.

2.3. **Goods receipting (GRNs)**

2.4. When deliveries are received at the College, Facilities will email the person named on the delivery note, copied to PL@escg.ac.uk and procurement@escg.ac.uk. This person must either receipt the goods on Agresso, in the normal way, or alert the appropriate Administrator to do this. Again, please note that invoices cannot be paid until this has been done in the normal way in Agresso in the Budget Holder's area and so processes to ensure that this can happen are the Budget Holder's responsibility.

3. Payments of invoices not requiring a PO:

3.1. We will be contacting areas individually to ensure that processes offer sufficient control and are workable.

4. Payments for bursaries, nurseries, homestay:

4.1. Please email cashiers@escg.ac.uk in the normal way, attaching all backup and authorisations. *Please note that emails of approval should include the amount and a (brief) description of the item/ service and **must** be on an escg email.*

5. Single payment requests

5.1. These should be sent by email, in the usual way to cashiers@escg.ac.uk. They must be (as usual), fully documented, approved and accompanied by the PO number. .*Please note that emails of approval should include the amount and a (brief) description of the item/ service and **must** be on an escg email.*

6. Set up of Supplier Accounts

6.1. As usual, requests, must be sent directly to procurement@escg.ac.uk. Supplier bank details must be sent *direct* from the supplier to procurement@escg.ac.uk.

7. Staff expenses:

7.1. Please email completed, authorised forms, with scanned copies of the receipts/ backup to cashiers@escg.ac.uk. Please again note that the expenses claimed must be in line with the Staff Expenses Policy. If you need advice please email cashiers@escg.ac.uk.

8. GPC cards

8.1. Please note that all the Policies and Procedures as set out in the cardholder's agreement, as signed by each cardholder continue in force. It is particularly important that these procedures are adhered to strictly, including the requirement for POs, as it is these methods of payment that are most susceptible to "push / CEO / impersonation fraud as they fall outside the more rigorous controls in the Finance Office. This will also reduce the likelihood of invoices being paid by card and then sent to the Finance Office for payment again by BACS. If you are contacted by a supplier, or someone purporting to be a supplier or by someone impersonating a member of the Exec team, asking for an urgent payment, please refer him/her to the Finance Office who will be able to help.