



INDEPENDENT  
HIGHER  
EDUCATION

# STRATEGY 2018-2020





## INTRODUCTION

Higher education is changing. Students today invest more than ever before in their learning and future careers. Employers are more demanding of the skills and the knowledge of the graduates they recruit. The modern world will reward agile and resilient individuals with the creativity to chart their own path and the interpersonal craft to bring others along.

Independent providers are setting the pace in developing innovative models and programmes which respond to this change, ensuring that the future of higher education in the UK is as bright as its past. Independent Higher Education will provide them with the leadership and support they need to build on the current reforms and deliver their distinctive missions. This Strategy for 2018-20 sets out how we will deliver our own.

**Alex Proudfoot**  
Chief Executive

**Philip Wilson**  
Chair

# INDEPENDENT HIGHER EDUCATION (IHE) IS THE UK MEMBERSHIP ORGANISATION AND NATIONAL REPRESENTATIVE BODY FOR INDEPENDENT PROVIDERS OF HIGHER EDUCATION, PROFESSIONAL TRAINING AND PATHWAYS.

## Mission

To represent and promote independent providers of high quality and innovative higher education, professional training and pathways which meet the changing needs of students, employers and society in the 21st century.

## Vision

A diverse, dynamic and world-leading higher education sector in the UK, in which independent providers are recognised and valued for their positive impact on innovation, standards and social mobility.

# PRINCIPLES OF INDEPENDENT HIGHER EDUCATION



STUDENT FOCUS



TEACHING EXCELLENCE



FLEXIBLE PROVISION



QUALITY ASSURANCE



TRANSPARENCY



STUDENT PROTECTION





**BY 2020, IHE WILL  
BE RECOGNISED  
AND VALUED  
BY STUDENTS,  
PROVIDERS AND  
GOVERNMENTS AS:**



**1. THE AUTHORITATIVE AND INFLUENTIAL  
VOICE OF THE INDEPENDENT SECTOR IN  
HIGHER EDUCATION**



**2. DRIVING AND SECURING POSITIVE AND  
PROGRESSIVE REFORMS TO TERTIARY  
EDUCATION POLICY AND PRACTICE IN THE UK**



**3. WORKING ACROSS THE SECTOR AND  
GOVERNMENT TO PROTECT AND STRENGTHEN  
UK INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION**



**4. DELIVERING SERVICES WHICH ARE  
EFFECTIVE IN PROMOTING AND SUPPORTING  
THE SUCCESS OF MEMBERS**

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# THE AUTHORITATIVE AND INFLUENTIAL VOICE OF THE INDEPENDENT SECTOR IN HIGHER EDUCATION

## WE AIM TO:

1

- A.** Further establish IHE as the authority on the independent higher education sector with a rich knowledge base of policy, data and case studies
- B.** Grow our membership and communications network to reach a majority of the regulated independent sector
- C.** Secure a formal role in the governance of all relevant sector agencies which protects the interests of members
- D.** Ensure effective representation on all relevant government and sector committees

## AND OUR CRITERIA FOR SUCCESS WILL BE:

- 1.** IHE's views are regularly sought by the press and other stakeholders, and our data and comments are trusted to be authoritative statements on the independent sector.
- 2.** A majority of independent providers 'approved' by the Office for Students are either in membership or regularly engage with our communications and events.
- 3.** IHE's role is formally recognised in the governing documents of QAA, HESA and all other bodies relevant to the independent sector.
- 4.** IHE is invited to join or nominate a member to all relevant committees established by government or the sector.



## DRIVING AND SECURING POSITIVE AND PROGRESSIVE REFORMS TO TERTIARY EDUCATION POLICY AND PRACTICE IN THE UK

## WE AIM TO:

2

- A.** Ensure that the Office for Students implements a proportionate registration and charging model for providers of different size, mission and delivery model, with improved benchmarking built into its use of student and provider data
- B.** Work with the government, Office for Students, sector agencies and members to develop an appropriate governance code for the independent sector in higher education
- C.** Work with the government, regulators and sector agencies to streamline institutional approval and other regulatory processes across further and higher education
- D.** Secure fair and equal access for independent providers to appropriate funding streams including the apprenticeship levy, and lift the 20% tax on learning currently imposed through VAT

## AND OUR CRITERIA FOR SUCCESS WILL BE:

- 1.** The cost, burden and incentives deriving from OfS registration do not have a significantly negative impact on the fees or learning experience of students at new, small and specialist providers.
- 2.** Independent providers are supported in adopting models of governance which recognise and respect essential commercial realities and different corporate structures while protecting UK academic standards, the sector's reputation for quality and the interests of students.
- 3.** Individual providers see a reduction in the regulatory burden of operating across and extending access into all levels of tertiary education.
- 4.** All tertiary education funding bodies adopt policies and processes which are objective, proportionate and blind to the historical funding status of providers.
- 5.** HMRC extends the exemption of tuition fees from VAT to all students on equivalent courses at appropriately regulated providers.





**WORKING ACROSS  
THE SECTOR AND  
GOVERNMENT  
TO PROTECT AND  
STRENGTHEN UK  
INTERNATIONAL  
EDUCATION**

## WE AIM TO:

3

- A.** Deliver valued support services to a growing network across the international education sector
- B.** Maximise the impact of the APPG for International Students in raising awareness of the value of international education and informing the public debate
- C.** Raise professional standards by extending the range and reach of events and training for international education providers
- D.** Help the government promote the UK as the world leader in education and training with a high quality, diverse and innovative sector

## AND OUR CRITERIA FOR SUCCESS WILL BE:

- 1.** Our subscriber base grows year on year and our services are regularly promoted by sector partners to their own constituencies.
- 2.** The APPG continues to attract new Parliamentarians as members and sector organisations as supporters. The educational and national press report on its meetings and publications.
- 3.** Our sessions attract an increasing number of participants from across the sector, and expand to cover more subjects and an education export conference.
- 4.** Government regularly consults and coordinates with IHE to develop and implement promotional strategies and activities to support international education.



**DELIVERING  
SERVICES WHICH  
ARE EFFECTIVE IN  
PROMOTING AND  
SUPPORTING THE  
SUCCESS OF  
MEMBERS**

## WE AIM TO:

4

- A.** Provide members with the information, advice and support that enables them to adapt to the changing operating environment and develop long-term strategies for their own success
- B.** Work with partners in the sector and beyond to provide all members with access to high quality, fit-for-purpose products and services which assist in the operation of their businesses
- C.** Give members a platform of expanding opportunities to promote themselves to prospective students and their advisers
- D.** Strengthen the benefits of membership which derive from access to a community of practice and shared services
- E.** Develop a range of launchpad services to support new providers to enter the sector

## AND OUR CRITERIA FOR SUCCESS WILL BE:

- 1.** Members successfully navigate new regulatory challenges and report improvements in the recruitment, retention and success of their students.
- 2.** There is a growing awareness of IHE members and the choices they offer amongst prospective students, schools, employers and educational agents.
- 3.** Members have greater access to promotional opportunities in the UK, online and overseas, utilising consortium working where possible to intensify their impact.
- 4.** Members work together on mutually beneficial academic and commercial collaborations, developing good practice and expanding the academic, social and professional opportunities for their students.
- 5.** New providers regularly approach us for support to enter the sector and progress to full membership of IHE.



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