



INDEPENDENT
HIGHER
EDUCATION

Covid-19 Update: 6 April

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Independent Higher Education



IHE Covid-19 Information Hub

6 April

- IHE Covid-19 Information Hub
 - <http://independentthe.com/activities/covid-19-hub>
 - Bringing together information and resources from across government, sector and commercial partners
- FAQs
 - <http://independentthe.com/activities/covid-19-hub/faq>
 - Collated from questions at Weekly Update and Member Drop-in sessions
- Themed information and resources
 - Admissions and recruitment
 - Finance and Human Resources
 - International students and visas
 - Regulation and the OfS
 - Student welfare and support
 - Teaching and learning



STOP PRESS -

International
Students and
Visas

6 April

New Home Office guidance for sponsors

- The Home Office has updated their sponsor guidance to add information for sponsors:
 - who cannot pay the salaries of sponsored employees because they've temporarily reduced or ceased trading
 - who have issued a CoS or CAS and the sponsored employee or student has not yet applied for a visa.
- The rules now allow salaries to be reduced in line with the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme – up to 80% of salaries or £2,500 per month, whichever is lowest.
 - <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-advice-for-tier-2-4-and-5-sponsors>



LAST WEEK - International Students and Visas

6 April

Fact sheets for visa customers and sponsors

- Visa customers outside the UK
 - <http://independentthe.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/Coronavirus-COVID-19-factsheet-visa-customers-outside-of-the-UK-02April.pdf>
- Visa holders and short-term residents in the UK
 - <http://independentthe.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/Coronavirus-COVID-19-factsheet-visa-holders-and-short-term-residents-in-the-UK-02April.pdf>
- Guidance for sponsors
 - <http://independentthe.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/IHE-Covid19-Update-01.04.2020.pdf>



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Finance and
Human
Resources

6 April

New guidance: Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (CJRS)

- Further information has been published by the Treasury on how to furlough employees and apply for the CJRS:
 - <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/claim-for-wage-costs-through-the-coronavirus-job-retention-scheme>
- Claims can be backdated to 1 March
- Employees made redundant or who stopped working for an employer on or after 28 February 2020 can be re-employed in order to be put on furlough and included on the scheme.
- Employers can only claim for furloughed employees who were on PAYE payroll on or before 28 February.
- Any employee whose wages are claimed through the scheme must be furloughed for a minimum 3 consecutive weeks.



LAST WEEK -

Finance and Human Resources

6 April

- New scheme for larger businesses called the Coronavirus Large Business Interruption Loan Scheme will be introduced.
 - <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/chancellor-strengthens-support-on-offer-for-business-as-first-government-backed-loans-reach-firms-in-need>
- Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs) take leading role on advice and support for local businesses. This can be accessed through their individual partnerships and support may differ between LEPs.
 - <https://www.lepnetwork.net/growth-hubs/>
- Main information hub for business support including Job Retention Scheme, Coronavirus Business Interruptions Loan Scheme, Statutory Sick Pay.
 - <https://www.businesssupport.gov.uk/>



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Admissions and
recruitment

6 April

Making offers to applicants

- Nicola Dandridge has written to all registered providers following the minister's decision to extend the unconditional moratorium until 20 April.
 - <https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/media/26b1c2e5-e693-4504-980f-41c2d0afd593/moratorium-extension-03042020.pdf>
- OfS has clarified that unconditional offers can be made in limited circumstances where applicants already have their Level 3 qualification. They have produced an expectations page on offer making.
 - <https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/advice-and-guidance/coronavirus/provider-guide-to-coronavirus/unconditional-offer-making/>
- Providers can still not make unconditional offers on courses which rely primarily on auditions, interviews or portfolios, or confirm unconditional offers made just before the moratorium.
- This moratorium will be reviewed and further guidance issued before 20 April deadline.



LAST WEEK -

Admissions and recruitment

6 April

Awarding of grades for cancelled school exams

- Ofqual has published guidance for schools, colleges, students and parents on how GCSEs and A Levels will be awarded.
 - <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/how-gcses-as-a-levels-will-be-awarded-in-summer-2020>



STOP PRESS -

Regulation and
the OfS

6 April

New Guidance on Quality and Standards

- OfS released guidance on quality and standards late Friday afternoon.
 - <https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/publications/guidance-for-providers-about-quality-and-standards-during-coronavirus-pandemic/>
- Providers are expected to make “all reasonable efforts” to allow students to continue learning, but they must communicate with students and pay particular attention to students who they have identified as vulnerable before or have become vulnerable as a result of COVID-19
- Partnerships:
 - The awarding body remains responsible for quality, regardless of validation, sub-contract or TNE; must take responsibility for the impact of any proposed changes.
 - Each registered body must still maintain the quality of the courses they deliver
 - Awarding bodies initiate provisions for significant disruption but may need to adapt for courses delivered through sub-contract or validation and communicate with partners
 - **Pearson Awards:** Providers should have a policy for dealing with extenuating or mitigating circumstances and assessment regulations, which can be applied flexibly during this period.



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Regulation and
the OfS

6 April

New Guidance on Quality and Standards (continued)

Admissions

- Providers must take reasonable action to ensure students can make an informed choice about study
- Those who take advantage of students will face regulatory action

Assessments

- Where possible, use normal practices for marking and moderation, external examining, etc.
- Be flexible where needed on assessments and ways to make up overall assessment requirements for module, unit, course.
- Communicate everything
- ‘No detriment’ or a ‘safety net’ are “likely to be appropriate”
- Have safeguards against contract cheating
- Relevant case studies: UAL: Creative solutions for creative subjects including low-tech solutions and digitised sketchbooks or mock-ups.



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Regulation and
the OfS

6 April

New Guidance on Quality and Standards (continued)

- Specific guidance for placements, postgraduate programmes, and professional bodies.
- *Case study: The Solicitors Regulation Authority (SRA)*
- **HESA Student Return and HESA Alternative Provider Student Return suspended (will proceed at a future date)**
- OfS will be suspending regulatory activity in relation to Quality and Standards Reviews that were undertaken for some providers after their registration, and not initiating any action in relation to performance on student outcomes until normal regulatory activity is resumed.



STOP PRESS -

Regulation and
the OfS

6 April

Consumer Protection

- Consumer protection law continues to apply
- Making contractual changes must be ‘fair’ – communicate in advance, the reasons and impact of changes, and outline the options for students to avoid changes.
- Providers should consider making “reasonable alternatives available” where students feel they would have had a better outcome if the course had been taught as planned. This can include coming back to be taught when circumstances allow.
- Students must be able to access internal procedures for complaints and appeals and provided with clear accessible information about their right to appeal to awarding body and OIA.
- No changes to Student Protection Plans required
- Further briefing and case studies on consumer protection expected.



LAST WEEK -

Regulation and the OfS

6 April

Updated information from the OfS website

- Monitoring of funded projects has been updated – will be dealt with on a case-by-case basis.
 - <https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/advice-and-guidance/coronavirus/provider-guide-to-coronavirus/funded-projects-monitoring-changes/>
- Regulatory requirements
 - <https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/advice-and-guidance/coronavirus/provider-guide-to-coronavirus/regulatory-requirements/>
- Student guide to coronavirus, including healthcare students.
 - <https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/for-students/student-guide-to-coronavirus/healthcare-students/>



LAST WEEK -

Regulation and the OfS

6 April

- Guidance on reportable events – now more narrowly defined:
 - <https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/media/5b874e9b-5588-4bec-b386-d83d59a20401/covid-19-reportable-events-guidance.pdf>
- Transparency information no longer needs to be submitted in April 2020 and the associated F1 Notice issued on 19 February 2020 has been withdrawn.
 - <https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/data-and-analysis/data-collection/transparency-return-2020/>
- Letters from OfS and Universities Minister
 - <https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/advice-and-guidance/coronavirus/publications-and-letters-about-coronavirus/>
 - <https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/advice-and-guidance/coronavirus/letters-from-the-minister-of-state-for-universities/>
- Deadline suspended for the next submission of the HESA Student Return and HESA Alternative Provider Student Return
 - <https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/media/f351a739-6cd6-4310-8f98-a6aa603f17f4/quality-and-standards-guidance-during-coronavirus.pdf>



LAST WEEK -

Teaching and Learning

6 April

- QAA have new guidance up on their site, some publicly available and others just for QAA members.
- They have identified their priorities going ahead after the [Quality Discussion Forum](#).
 - Academic standards including teaching and assessment and academic integrity
 - Work based learning including placements, partnerships and study abroad
 - Accelerated degrees
 - Practice and Lab-based work
- IHE is supporting the creation of this guidance, please get in touch if you have any feedback.
- Draft guidance shared on 3 April (to members and sector bodies), published on 8 April latest for public
- The publication of the guidance will be accompanied by a series of webinars for QAA members
- New Blog by QAA CEO on maintaining standards in challenging times
 - <https://www.qaa.ac.uk/en/news-events/blog/doing-the-right-thing-securing-standards-in-challenging-times>



IHE Covid-19 Survey

6 April

- Last week you should have received an email from IHE inviting you to complete the IHE Covid-19 Provider Survey
- Created to understand how Covid-19 has affected your institution, covering changes to your provision, the financial impact and business planning.
- Collecting this information quickly will be critical in arming us with the intelligence we require to lobby government departments including the Department for Education and Home Office, as well as the Office for Students, for the actions and support you need.
- Please could provider complete this by Thursday 9 April and the questions can be seen here.
 - http://independenthe.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/COVID-19-IHE-Provider-survey_all-providers.pdf
- If you have any questions or would link resending, please send to info@independenthe.com



IHE sessions coming up

6 April

Dates and themes for the next two weeks

- Our Wednesday and Friday drop-in sessions for members all have special themes we explore in more detail
- Join us and invite your colleagues to our upcoming sessions:
 - Wednesday 8 April – Business and Financial Support
 - Friday 10 April – no drop-in session (Easter)
 - Monday 13 April – no weekly update (Easter)
 - Wednesday 15 April – Student Support
 - Friday 17 April – theme TBC (requests?)
- We hope to be joined by KPMG for Wednesday's session on Business and Financial Support.



Contact IHE

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