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Covid-19 Update: 29 April

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IHE Covid-19 Information Hub

IHE Covid-19 Information Hub

<http://independenthe.com/activities/covid-19-hub>

Bringing together information and resources from across government, sector and commercial partners

FAQs

<http://independenthe.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



IHE Drop-in schedule

- Monday general update and drop-in
- Wednesday will be a short general update and a specialist webinar with Q&A
- Today's specialist session: widening participation and access
- Fridays we send you a weekly email with all the essential information
- As before we will continue to update the IHE COVID-19 Information Hub with all the latest information.



Webinar: Online Student Support

When: 30 April 2020, 14:00-15:00

Who: Tanya Tanna, Student Support and Wellbeing Manager, and Akosua Bonsu, Director of Studies for Thinking into Character.

The webinar will cover two online tools, used by the college to promote mental health and well-being.

- **Mind Connect:** Students have immediate access to bespoke mental health support information and helplines which they can access whenever they need in times of difficulties.
- **Thinking into Character (TIC):** Thinking into Character is an online Personal and Professional Development Programme, covering a wide range of topics within the general category of self-development.

If you are interested register on the [following link](#)



Finance and Human Resources

Bounceback Loans Scheme

Launched on 4 May

SMEs can borrow between £2,000 and £50,000.

Government will guarantee 100%, no fees or interest for the first 12 months

6 year terms, no repayments in the first 12 months

Delivered through accredited lenders

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/apply-for-a-coronavirus-bounce-back-loan>

Local Authority Funding

Local Authorities have paid out to 614,181 businesses. This is over 61% of the grant funding allocated to local authorities.

https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-grant-funding-local-authority-payments-to-small-and-medium-businesses?utm_source=fc3c13f3-2f86-472d-a9a4-904f2c11276f&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=govuk-notifications&utm_content=immediate



Strengthening and enhancing UK public services

Universities UK and MillionPlus

http://www.millionplus.ac.uk/documents/Strengthening_and_enhancing_UK_public_services_in_response_to_Covid-19_-_April_2020.pdf

The report argues that, working with universities, the government could take a major stride towards mitigating against future capacity shortfalls with a simple three-pronged approach:

- Supporting students and graduates to become key workers in public services, by offering a maintenance grant of up to £10,000 for all students in training, removing any recruitment caps, and providing fee-loan forgiveness for those remaining in the relevant professions for at least five years.
- Strengthening and enhancing key public service HE capacity in universities by increasing the funding to the Office for Students to reflect the added costs while creating a new Public Services in Higher Education Capital Fund to enable universities to invest in simulation equipment, additional staff costs and other infrastructure.
- Retaining and developing key workers in public services, by increasing general staffing budgets and creating a new professional development programme focused on enhancing skills of current key workers in public services and the new NHS volunteer reserve.



Regulation and the OfS

- Office for Students Deadlines and Forward look page:
<https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/advice-and-guidance/deadlines/>
 - New dates for announcement of funding, prevent update, student engagement funding
- Office for Students Registration suspension – update
- Moratorium on unconditional offers – update
- Institute for Apprenticeships new list of standards with temporary discretions or flexibilities:
<https://www.instituteforapprenticeships.org/covid-19/recent-announcements/list-of-standards-with-temporary-discretions-or-flexibilities/>



International Students (EU)

Home Office new definition of a Migrant Worker



International Students

New Home Office guidance on what to do if your 30 day visa to work, study or join family has expired

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-advice-for-uk-visa-applicants-and-temporary-uk-residents#history>

- Request a replacement visa with revised validity dates free of charge until the end of this year
- Will be contacted when VAC open to arrange for a replacement visa



International Students

British Council

British Council USA virtual market briefing -

7 May from 15:00-16:30

<https://education-services.britishcouncil.org/news/opportunities/british-council-usa-virtual-market-briefing-7-may-1500-%E2%80%93-1630-bst>



International Students

UKCISA Updates

- Recourse to public funds and financial hardship
- Immigration permission granted but you can't travel

<https://www.ukcisa.org.uk/Information--Advice/Studying--living-in-the-UK/Coronavirus-Covid-19-info-for-international-students>



International Students

QS International Student Survey

- Low awareness of the extension to the UK's post-study work visa among international students
- Only 6% of international students interested in studying the UK are aware of the timeframe of the post-study work visa. Almost half (48%) think they have between 0 and 4 months
- There is a strong appetite amongst international students for an increase in the length of the post-study work visa from 2 to 3 years
- The proportion of students who have had to change their plans to study in the UK due to COVID-19 has increased from 27% in mid-February, to 58% in late-March
- 42% of international prospective students stating that they have no interest at all in studying their degree online.

<https://www.internationalstudentsurvey.com/international-student-survey-2020/>



Admissions and Recruitment

Blog from UCAS CEO – What is the Covid cohort saying about applying to university

Most applicants (69%) say the biggest effect of Covid-19 is financial

23% of respondents said that the outbreak has impacted on their mental health

86% sticking with their university choices

32% thinking about changes

87% believe they will still get a place

<https://wonkhe.com/blogs/what-is-the-covid-cohort-saying-about-applying-to-university/>



Teaching and Learning

Jisc letter calling on government to make education websites free for UK students

- Jisc has written a letter seeking parity of online access for learners during coronavirus.
- The letter asks the Secretary of State and Ofcom to work with telecoms providers to make all relevant online education sites free to access for UK FE and HE students.

<https://www.jisc.ac.uk/news/sector-leaders-call-on-government-to-make-education-websites-free-for-uk-students-24-apr-2020>



Teaching and Learning

QAA release new blog on Academic Integrity

<https://www.qaa.ac.uk/news-events/blog/academic-integrity-in-canada-during-covid-19-reflections-from-the-university-of-calgary>

Very useful website from University of Calgary:

<https://taylorinstitute.ucalgary.ca/academic-integrity-online-learning>



Teaching and Learning

IHE, AoC and UUK Working in Partnership Guidance

IHE are co-developing a short guidance note for providers working in collaborative teaching partnerships

Searching for great practice from providers who are working with their partners – sharing resources or staff training, making exceptional exam boards, communicating with students?

Email joy@independenthe.com



Teaching and Learning

The HE sector considers online learning:

Covid-19 is the pivot point for online learning (OES)

<https://wonkhe.com/blogs/covid-19-is-the-pivot-point-for-online-learning/>

- What is possible versus what is desirable
- Asynchronous learning, shift from academic focused to total student hours
- Good diagram on stages

The digitalisation of the university

<https://wonkhe.com/blogs/the-digitalisation-of-the-university-2/>

- Opportunities and Risks of online world
- Great overview look across institution
- The Digital twin



Student Welfare and Student Support

Higher Education Policy Institute – Views of students entering the labour market

- 79% of graduates feel confident of getting a graduate level job once they graduate
- Only around a third say the Coronavirus pandemic has altered these feelings

<https://www.hepi.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/HEPI-Policy-Note-22.pdf>



Resources

QAA new Resource Hub re-organization:

<https://www.qaa.ac.uk/news-events/support-and-guidance-covid-19>

Newable Covid-19 SME Webinar Series:

<https://events.newable.co.uk/events/372/get-finance-accessing-small-business-loans-sme-covid-19-series>

BEIS Webinar – 4 May: *Financial Support for Businesses*

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/webinar-financial-support-for-small-businesses-during-coronavirus-tickets-103680541290?aff=BIRD>

New online learning - The Skills Toolkit

<https://theskillstoolkit.campaign.gov.uk/>



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Access and Participation

Guest: Jessica Woodsford, Applied Inspiration (formerly
Head of Programmes, Office for Students)



Digital Outreach

Office for Students:

- Outreach should go digital but must be monitored and evaluated
- OfS are producing info on good IAG that students can access from home. Are you doing something that is accessible and appropriate for students, even if they are not coming to you? Email joy@independentthe.com asap



Digital Outreach

What Works?

- Short online courses which can raise attainment and open learners to your brand
- Schools and home-learners can book a [virtual classroom](#) from the National Archives
- PEARL– Outreach for adult learners with confidence building short courses

Resources

- Bishopsgate University share their process - <https://www.bishopg.ac.uk/adapting-outreach-delivery-methods-during-covid-19/>
- [Case Studies for working with adult learners](#)



NEON Summit

30 April - Taking outreach online: delivering widening access to HE work in the Covid-19 context

1 July - Where to now for outreach? Innovation and impact of Covid 19 on widening access to HE work in 2020-21

- Book here:
<https://www.educationopportunities.co.uk/events/taking-outreach-online/>



Access and Participation Statements

- Requirement to publish a statement is suspended
- <https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/media/3147f6f5-e399-4bb0-b623-bb84f31534eb/covid-19-accountable-officer-letter-25-march.pdf>
- Paragraph 30



Access and Participation Plans

OfS have published amendments to regulations for Access Plans <https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/media/3147f6f5-e399-4bb0-b623-bb84f31534eb/covid-19-accountable-officer-letter-25-march.pdf>

- 2020-21 plans submitted by providers with a 2019-20 plan will get a decision
- 2020-2021 plans submitted by providers without a 2019-20 plan may be granted for no more than a year
- Plans submitted after 28 February, or where there is no 2019-20 plans will not be prioritised. Providers should not assume they will be able to get higher loan limit.
- Providers should seek to meet commitments, particularly financial. Judgement will be on “reasonable decisions”
- Not undertaking monitoring of plans from 2018-2020 – enhanced monitoring and specific conditions are suspended



Meeting expectations

Will the OfS take regulatory action if, as a result of the coronavirus pandemic, a provider cannot deliver all of the commitments in either its 2019-20 or 2020-21 access and participation plans?

- Providers are expected to seek to deliver their approved access and participation plans, in particular any financial commitments they have made to current students under a 2019-20 plan and future students under a 2020-21 onwards plan. We will look at how providers have sought to meet their other commitments and, when we do this, we will take into account the current circumstances.
- In doing so, there may still be significant uncommitted funding for planned activities such as the delivery of face-to-face outreach activity in schools which have been closed as a result of the coronavirus outbreak.
- Given that, it may be both reasonable and necessary to divert such resources towards other activities for vulnerable students, including the enhancement of mental health support for students and student hardship. In such cases, the provider should refer to the [advice on OfS student and disabled student premium funding](#) (see questions under 'support for vulnerable students').
- When making regulatory decisions in the future, we will look at whether a provider made reasonable decisions about its delivery of the commitments in its plans. It is critically important, therefore, that a provider has a clear and robust rationale if it is not able to meet a commitment in its plan and is clear that it has explored reasonable alternatives. As with all significant decisions in these uncertain times, this could mean recording the reasons clearly.



Uni Connect

- OfS has agreed to continue funding for UniConnect partnerships for 2020-2021:
 - <https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/media/2160f8e2-2c05-4156-90e2-9ee8d868007b/uni-connect-programme-an-update-from-the-office-for-students.pdf>
- They will not be holding partnerships to targets or administering student surveys.
- They do expect partnerships to explore alternative models of delivery and identify:
 - How your approach could support broader groups of underrepresented students, not just those in your target schools and wards.
 - The information, advice and guidance needs of students applying to higher education in the current admissions cycle.



Upcoming Network Meetings

- **28 May** – [Quality Managers Staff Network](#)
- **28 May** – [Student Services Staff Network](#)
- **23 June** – [Heads of Finance Staff Network](#)
- **7 July** – [Admissions Managers Staff Network](#)
- **7 July** – [Tier 4 Compliance Staff Network](#)



Contact IHE

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