



INDEPENDENT
HIGHER
EDUCATION

Covid-19 Update: 13 May

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IHE Covid-19 Information Hub

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



IHE Drop-in schedule

- Monday a general update and drop-in webinar
- Wednesday a short general update and a specialist webinar with Q&A
- Fridays an email the essential information from the week
- We continue to update the IHE COVID-19 Information Hub with all the latest information.



Webinar: OfS Consultation

When: Thursday 14 May 2020

Who: 10:00-11:00

The Office for Students has recently launched a consultation on the integrity and stability of the higher education sector in England. Join us to hear more and discuss the consultation.

<https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/publications/consultation-on-the-integrity-and-stability-of-the-english-higher-education-sector/>

Proposals include a new, time-limited condition that would allow them to take action against higher education providers that engaged in conduct which would not be in the interests of students and the wider higher education sector in these exceptional circumstances. The deadline for responses: 26 May 2020

If you are interested in attending please click on the [following link](#) to register.

Non-members can use the following code to register OFSCONSULT20



Government Guidance

On Monday government [published a more detailed roadmap](#) which highlights the conditions and considerations under which England would emerge from lockdown.

The document offers further detail on the Prime Minister's initial announcement, including on the kinds of services likely to open from June and those likely to be able to open in July.

While universities and higher education institutions are not specifically mentioned, the roadmap lists those working in laboratories for scientific research among those workers now permitted to return to their workplaces. The Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy has since published guidelines for workplaces. Included is guidance for [lab and research facilities](#) and [offices and contact centres](#).

FAQs: students returning home from halls

[FAQs](#) have been published which accompanies the wider guidelines that have been announced for England. It includes a specific question on students returning home from halls. In a change from earlier advice, those students who wish to return to live permanently in their family home can now do so, although the general advice states that leaving your home to stay at another home (for example a second home) is not permitted.



Finance and Human Resources

Extension to the job retention scheme until October

On Monday it was announced that the job retention scheme would be extended until October, with no changes being made to the scheme up to the end of July.

From August, some flexibility will be introduced to the scheme, for example to allow furloughed workers to return to work part-time.

Specific details will be available at the end of May. The scheme continues to apply to all regions and sectors of the UK.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/chancellor-extends-furlough-scheme-until-october>



Finance and Human Resources

Applications for Self-Employment Income Support Scheme

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/applications-for-self-employment-income-support-scheme-open-early>

- Self-Employment Income Support Scheme opens for applications Tuesday
- Those eligible will receive government grant worth up to £7,500
- Money expected to be in bank accounts by 25 May
- 80% of their average monthly trading profits.



Devolved nations – Scotland

Small charities now eligible for £10,000 grants

- Properties occupied by charities can now apply for the £10,000 Small Business Grant Scheme
- Organisations apply for scheme through their local council.

<https://www.gov.scot/news/extra-support-for-charities/>

SME support doubles to £90m

- Additional £45m for Pivotal Enterprise Resilience Fund

<https://www.gov.scot/news/sme-support-doubles-to-gbp-90m/>

<https://findbusinesssupport.gov.scot/coronavirus-advice/sources-of-funding/pivotal-enterprise-resilience-fund>



Regulation and the OfS

OfS announces recurrent funding for 2020-21

<https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/publications/recurrent-funding-for-2020-21/>

- £1.2 billion in recurrent grant funding allocations
- Total recurrent budget for academic year 2020-21 is £1,255 million – of which £1,192 million has been allocated today to the 327 providers registered in the Approved (fee cap) category of the OfS Register.
- Reduction of £48 million compared with the revised budget total for 2019-20.
- £1.2 billion in recurrent grant funding allocations to universities and colleges.
- For the 2020-21 academic year, the overall grant funding to be distributed totals £1.4 billion.



Regulation and the OfS

Consultation on the integrity and stability of the English higher education sector

- A [question and answer](#) on the consultation has been added. This will be expanded in coming days with more frequently asked questions. Q&A cover:
 - When the new condition would come into force
 - Conduct from before the condition is in effect
 - Do providers need to meet the condition now
- Full details of the consultation are available [here](#).



International Students and Visas

MillionPlus have issued a briefing paper on addressing the challenges of international student recruitment:

- Use the expertise and capabilities of UK universities, and build on the trust between government and institutions with Tier 4 student immigration licenses
- Provide clear and timely guidance, with established deadlines and lead-in times
- Enable greater flexibility in the system, building on proven institutional judgement
- Ensure no students or universities are negatively impacted retrospectively through having taken decisions where no clear guidance was available
- Provide clarity and assurances for EU/EEA students as the immigration system changes, and also work to keep the UK competitive and attractive to this market in the years ahead
- Make changes to the Tier 4 system to improve its effectiveness and to release capacity
- Publish a new International Education Strategy designed to combat the impacts of Covid-19



International Students and Visas

- British Council has new reports on COVID-19 and higher education in Europe: <https://education-services.britishcouncil.org/news/market-news/covid-19-update-wider-europe>



Teaching and Learning

New rules for Teacher Training

The Education (School Teachers' Qualifications and Induction Arrangements) (England) (Coronavirus) (Amendment) Regulations 2020

This instrument amends two sets of regulations in order to address the impact of the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak on those undergoing initial teacher training and on newly qualified teachers undergoing statutory induction.

- Those currently enrolled in accredited ITT programmes can be recognised as having achieved qualified teacher status (QTS) if the accredited body feels they were making adequate progress
- Those taking their practical element wholly or mainly outside England are able similarly to be assessed as qualified.
- NQTs will not have their induction periods automatically extended
- The full SI can be found [here](#)



Teaching and Learning

- QAA have updated their “Sources of information to support providers during the covid-19 pandemic”
<https://www.qaa.ac.uk/news-events/support-and-guidance-covid-19>
- QAA have updated their guidance to include “Assessing with Integrity in Digital Delivery” <https://www.qaa.ac.uk/en/news-events/support-and-guidance-covid-19/academic-standards-supporting-student-achievement>
- QAA have brought together resources and perspectives from around the world on what other countries HE sectors are doing for COVID-19: <https://www.qaa.ac.uk/en/news-events/support-and-guidance-covid-19/international-policy-practice>
- Jisc have opened up more of their content for free, and are offering free consultancy in areas such as user authentication: <https://www.jisc.ac.uk/coronavirus> and have a new blog on online safety for staff and students: <https://www.jisc.ac.uk/blog/online-safety-helping-staff-and-students-get-it-right-07-may-2020>



Student Welfare and Support

- Student Minds has new blogs: [Now we're stressed out: Top tips to manage in lockdown](#) and [Self-Care and Self-Love during Covid-19 Quarantine](#)

<https://www.studentmindsblog.co.uk/>



HE Sector

Policy Exchange report: Education and Training after Coronavirus

- Possible watershed moment for education and training in the UK.
- Need an education and training system that is better aligned with the economic and social needs of the UK
- The Government must overcome the resistance of the higher education sector, which has quietly become a powerful cultural and economic vested interest
- New "opportunity grant", to train or retrain, of at least £3,000 should be on offer for every individual
- Spend the apprenticeship levy for new entrants and replace it with a radically simplified model focused on school leavers
- Creation of a sub-set of "applied universities"



HE Sector

Free UUK Webinars on Covid-19: sharing best practice and solutions

Universities UK has launched a series of free webinars to support the HE Sector:

- 21 May: [Mental health and Covid-19: #WeAreTogether](#)
 - 2 June: [Delivering virtual careers services and online support during Covid-19](#)
 - 4 June: [Addressing the impact of Covid-19 on student progression and retention](#)
- Registering for these webinars is free.



Upcoming IHE Events

- 18 May** [Webinar: Immigration Changes](#)
- 28 May** [Quality Managers Staff Network](#)
- 28 May** [Student Services Staff Network](#)
- 1 June** [New to Tier 4 workshop](#)
- 10 June** [Marketing and Recruitment Staff Network](#)
- 10 June** [Webinar: CMA Essentials for HE Staff](#)
- 23 June** [Heads of Finance Staff Network](#)
- 29 June** [Student Data Forum](#)
- 7 July** [Admissions Managers Staff Network](#)
- 7 July** [Tier 4 Compliance Staff Network](#)



Scenario Planning

13 May 2020



Quality and Standards

Factors to consider:

- Providers must maintain Academic Standards as the most important quality concern
- Academic standards and quality are still the responsibility of the awarding body
- Academic quality in many respects is still the responsibility of the teaching provider if registered with OfS
- COVID-19 guidance gives students greater scope to judge the quality of learning provision than ever before
- NSS publication will go ahead, and judgements will be made on the data as a sector, not necessarily by individual institutions
- Annual data returns will happen, although delayed, and judgements of quality will happen, however contextual.
- The most often repeated guidance from any regulatory, quality or government body is:

Communicate with students before you make changes



Quality and Standards

Scenarios to consider:

- Should we be exploring our teaching partnerships now, seeking to solidify contracts, and establish better ways of working together and communicating?
- Will academic governance be digital for 2020-21? Will dates need to be moved/added to accommodate changes and student delays?
- Should we engage external examiners in scenario planning?
- What can we do to ensure minimal impact on our continuation and completion data?
- What does quality online learning look like? Is our view the same as that of our students?



Student Admissions

Factors to consider:

- Student Number Controls are in place for 2020/21
- Our activities now and in the past (to 11 March) are under closer scrutiny than ever before
- UCAS has been given more power to take action against those that break their rules than ever before
- Government and OfS changes are creating a new norm in student recruitment that reaches beyond OfS and UCAS.



Student Admissions

Scenarios to consider:

- Our contacts with partners on who we recruit and how many need to be better.
- Providers under subcontract need to know what data partners have submitted on their recruitment forecasts
- OfS made judgements on financial stability on recruitment predictions – these may change and providers may be at increased risk. We must manage this.
- Contextual admissions creates challenges in these new times, and direct applications will also be problematic. Should we make process changes to ensure these can operate in the new environment? What would those look like?



Tier 4: Pre-autumn

Factors to consider:

- Current concessions end 31 May but there will be no change in circumstances between 31 May and 1 June.
- Providers can change start dates in SMS
- Students still “engaged” in learning can extend etc. This is not as clear for students paused in their learning for what may be an extended period of time.
- Qualifications completed online can be used in visa applications for in-person learning
- **Scenarios to consider:**
 - Could TNE be an option for courses that need an in-person element but this cannot be done in the UK?
 - Short term study visas may be an appropriate option for courses which will spend less than 6 months in the UK



Tier 4: Post-Autumn

Factors to consider:

- No confirmation on online learning
- 14 day quarantine
- Visa Centres will not be working at full capacity by autumn and will open at different times based on country
- SELT concessions are limited by course and provider
- Students may be restricted from travelling based on country

Scenarios to consider:

- Could blended learning be an option for international students?
- Are students going to end up in the UK for less than 6 months? If so would short term study visas be more effective and what are the consequences of that?
- Should we move start dates to accommodate visa issues? Multiple start dates? Accelerated semesters?



14 day quarantine

- **What will this mean for students?**

- Accommodation
- Visas
- Holiday travel
- Short courses

- **What can we do?**

- Marketing in countries that don't have the restriction (France and Ireland)
- Marketing in countries that may become unrestricted earlier than others – low infection rates, opening up their own sectors, travel bans internally?
- Increase TNE – is it easier for short courses if you go there?



Staff

Factors to consider:

- The Furlough scheme will end
- Childcare may continue to be a challenge even if it can open
- Remote working will be necessary to protect social distancing

Scenarios to consider:

- Do we know what factors impact our staff working?
- Can smaller class sizes help social distancing? Will we need more staff to run a greater number of classes in our spaces?
- How do we encourage remote working to minimize risk in office space?



Jisc Ensuring Continuity Guide

- <https://www.jisc.ac.uk/guides/ensuring-continuity-of-learning-during-enforced-absence>
- A great list of all the things we didn't have time to do but should factor into scenario planning:
 - Policies for learning
 - Training for Staff
 - Wellbeing considerations for timing of online content
 - Effective remote working for staff
 - Mitigating circumstances policies



Contact IHE

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