



INDEPENDENT
HIGHER
EDUCATION

Covid-19 Update: 10 June

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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

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



Weekly Covid-19 comms schedule

Wednesday – a general update webinar with Q&A for all independent providers (members and non-members)

Friday – an email rounding up the week's essential information

... and we continue to update the IHE Covid-19 Information Hub on our website with all the latest information.



Upcoming IHE Network Meetings

- **23 June** – [Heads of Finance Network](#)
- **29 June** – [Student Data Forum](#)
- **7 July** – [Admissions Managers Network](#)
- **7 July** – [Tier 4 Compliance Network](#)

If you would like to suggest a topic for an event or a particular guest speaker/organisation to talk at an IHE Network or Forum, please email events@independenthe.com.



Future IHE Events

IHE Covid Essentials – planning for uncertain times

- Creating a socially distanced campus – 18 June 2020
<http://independentthe.com/archives/18-june-2020-ihe-covid-essentials>
- What Company Directors need to know – 25 June 2020
<http://independentthe.com/archives/25-june-2020-ihe-covid-essentials>
- Effective online learning environments and learners – 2 July 2020
<http://independentthe.com/archives/2-july-2020-ihe-covid-essentials>
- Financial stability through transformation – 9 July 2020
<http://independentthe.com/archives/09-july-2020-ihe-covid-essentials>
- Strategies for student recruitment – 16 July 2020
<http://independentthe.com/archives/16-july-2020-ihe-covid-essentials>



Last week's essential news

10 June 2020



Top issues from last week

OfS - Student number controls

- Applied to providers in Approved (Fee Cap) with OfS and to English-domiciled students studying in the devolved administrations.
- Providers in the Approved category are not included in the controls.
- All Approved (Fee Cap) providers should now have their confidential letters outlining their SNCs.
- The guidance notes the methodology for allocating the number controls in England and the devolved administrations and the penalties the government will use if number controls are exceeded.
- It also provides further detail on the additional 10,000 discretionary places.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/student-number-controls>



Top issues from last week

DfE: reopening buildings & campuses (higher education)

- Designed to help providers understand how to minimise risk and provide services to students
- Compendium of existing guidance relevant for higher education providers

<https://bit.ly/2UplEz>

Universities UK – principles and considerations: emerging from lockdown

- Nine principles including detailed points to consider and a full list of resources

<https://bit.ly/2Yk85nw>

UCEA – six principles for emerging from lockdown

<https://bit.ly/3dQMwkY>



Regulation and the OfS

- OfS held an event on providing support for black, Asian and minority ethnic students during the coronavirus pandemic.

<https://bit.ly/3cQ8Qd8>

- Concerns were expressed by the sector regarding Ofqual plans for an autumn A-level exam period which would not produce results for students until December 2020.

<https://bit.ly/2UwYbxB>



Teaching and Learning

QAA – Preserving Quality and Standards Through a Time of Rapid Change: UK Higher Education in 2020-21

- Quality and standards and the student experience, including principles that providers can use to help their planning

<https://www.qaa.ac.uk/news-events/news/the-physically-distanced-campus-how-universities-and-colleges-are-preparing-for-the-next-academic-year>



Student Welfare and Support

- Student Minds - how providers can make mental health an institution-wide priority in the context of Covid-19

https://www.studentminds.org.uk/charter_sustainablefuture.html

- The Sutton Trust will not be running any face-to-face programmes this year. Have launched an online platform to support lower-income students with their university choices and applications.
- UCU - new research that shows almost a quarter of prospective students fear their university could go bust as a result of Covid-19

<https://www.fenews.co.uk/fevoices/48588-almost-a-quarter-of-prospective-students-fear-their-university-could-go-bust-as-a-result-of-covid-19-crisis>



International Students and Visas

- The Home Office published additional guidance on scanned documents

<https://bit.ly/2XOgfFn>

- Visa Application Centres continue to open around the world

<https://www.gov.uk/find-a-visa-application-centre>

- IELTS test centres are now open in 39 countries & territories

<https://bit.ly/30rysub>

- A UUKi survey of Pro VC International found that 80% of universities are likely to pursue a blended learning approach

<https://bit.ly/2MJUuQK>



New this week

10 June 2020



Government updates

The Government has withdrawn its previous guidance for educational settings

- This guidance <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-to-educational-settings-about-covid-19/guidance-to-educational-settings-about-covid-19>

has been replaced by guidance on education and childcare during coronavirus.

- Brings together all current and previous guidance across education settings including higher and further education

<https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus/education-and-childcare>



Regulation and the OfS

Office for Students: Student and consumer protection during the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic

- How OfS will regulate 'C' conditions on student consumer protection
- Does not change consumer protection laws
- Students still have the right to complain, and to take legal action against a provider
- Providers should seek their own legal advice and document their decisions in relation to consumer protection law
- In place until normal OfS regulatory requirements are re-introduced
- IHE presentation to Recruitment & Marketing Network this morning
- IHE Webinar next week

<https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/for-students/student-and-consumer-protection-during-coronavirus/>



OfS – Consumer protection

New/Prospective Students:

- The student experience has changed from when they applied. Providers must outline what has and may change
- In making these changes, consider the impact on vulnerable students.
- Once the new information is provided, the student must be given the opportunity to decline the offer if the change is “material”
- Information must be given before clearing in August so students have a reasonable chance to make a difference decision



OfS – Consumer protection

Current Students:

- Engage students and representatives; understand issues
- Experience has changed, and providers must have and continue to communicate with these students
- No time to communicate with current students what would change ahead of the contract, repeat performances and refunds would not be expected unless provider didn't deliver.
- Existing contracts are important for remedies for students. Follow Terms and Conditions
- OfS will not consider not delivering a course as a regulatory concern during pandemic – although must notify OfS
- Consider vulnerable students, and how these may have changed (international students as specifically listed)
- OfS will only take action where there has been a significant disregard for CMA guidance



OfS – Consumer protection

Current Students: Complaints

- Complaint processes must continue; be flexible
- Make clear statements about complaints in partnership
- Responsibilities to OIA remain; follow their guidance

Current Students: Student Protection

- Make reasonable efforts to meet student protection plans
- OfS will consult shortly to make one change to plans; only for those at high risk of market exit



Admissions and Recruitment

HEPI – A call to action on widening participation in the era of Covid-19

- Emphasises the need to position work to widen participation within the government's 'levelling up' agenda to help secure its future (and funding).
- A range of recommendations across access, student success and progression

<https://www.hepi.ac.uk/2020/06/08/a-call-to-action-for-widening-participation-in-the-era-of-covid-19/>



Teaching and Learning

QAA conclude sector-wide international consultation to map out the future of UK transnational education

- Consultation over three months has produced a plan for quality assurance in TNE, and feel this can continued despite the pandemic
- New model for quality enhancement – will consult in the autumn.

<https://www.qaa.ac.uk/news-events/news/sector-wide-international-consultation-maps-out-the-future-of-uk-tne>

QAA publish list of upcoming guidance areas for the next few months

- Several new guidance documents on online learning
- **Guidance for Smaller, Specialist or Newer Providers of Higher Education**
- Microcredentials

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



Teaching and Learning

Jisc releases new training for online classes and meetings: from Yawn to Yay!

- Multiple dates; first dates free to Jisc members and £150 +VAT for non-members
- Exploring platforms, tools and techniques and following up sessions

<https://www.jisc.ac.uk/training/webinars-online-classes-and-meetings-from-yawn-to-yay>

New Jisc material on digital well-being and a pirate-themed video game for a campus tour

- Great feature of digital wellbeing from a student perspective asks providers to beware of online overload, digital capability and too much “urgent” communication.
- University of Lincoln releases pirate-themed virtual campus tour.
- Jisc blog on reviewing your response to lockdown – a checklist

<https://www.jisc.ac.uk/news>



International Students and Visas

New Home Office updates advice for UK visa applicants and temporary UK residents

- Includes new information on re-opening VAC and SELTs
- VAC will prioritize returning passports when they re-open.
 - Closed VACs cannot return passports.
 - UK nationals can apply for a passport online
- New information if applying to stay in UK under right to a family life

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



International Students and Visas

British Council survey of international students

- Nearly 14,000 fewer students from eight countries – including China, Singapore and Malaysia – are likely to come to the UK in 2020/21.
- A decline of 20% in students from east Asia.
- 12% fall in overall international student numbers
- £460m loss of income from tuition and living expenses such as accommodation.
- 29% likely to delay or cancel their plans to study.

<https://www.theguardian.com/education/2020/jun/08/universities-face-460m-loss-from-expected-drop-in-east-asian-students-coronavirus>



International Students and Visas

EU Settlement – UKCISA Update

- Coronavirus-related absences up to 12 months will be regarded as acceptable for an “important reason”.
- Students/Staff must have been in the UK before 11pm on 31 December 2020, no minimum period of time in UK.
- continue to await Home Office guidance on whether absences exceeding 12 months for Coronavirus-related reasons will be disregarded.

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

Self-isolation – UKCISA update

- Anyone arriving from outside the UK and Ireland from 8 June will need to complete an online form 48 hours before they travel and self isolate when they arrive.
- New government guidance on how to self-isolate:
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-how-to-self-isolate-when-you-travel-to-the-uk/coronavirus-covid-19-how-to-self-isolate-when-you-travel-to-the-uk>



International Students and Visas

Students working rights – UKCISA Update

- Students who spend some time studying online are still eligible for the new Graduate work route if they complete in summer 2021
- Students eligible to work but have been furloughed can undertake additional work and hours from furloughed job should not count.
- provisions for healthcare workers also apply to independent healthcare providers

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



International Students and Visas

New international education champion appointed

- Sir Steve Smith, former VC of Exeter University

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/universities-minister-sets-out-support-for-international-students>



HE Sector

University Alliance and Public First survey on public perceptions of HE

- More than 7 in 10 people think that universities are going to play an important role in supporting the UK's economic and social recovery post Covid
- The public think universities should also prioritise the supply of professionally qualified graduates – for example nurses, social workers and doctors – above all other subjects
- Some 62 per cent said it was “very important” that universities teach applied subjects (for example nursing, medicine or engineering) as the country tries to rebuild after the Covid19 crisis.

<https://www.unialliance.ac.uk/2020/06/10/publicpolling/>



HE Sector

Havas/Education Meet up: Life Interrupted report on A-level students

- Life Interrupted 4th report covers how students are rating university websites, virtual events, and hopes for university.
- The report highlights the importance of websites being up-to-date and recognising that virtual recruitment events are new for everyone
- Students are also worried about support and social events, even online. More information in this area is recommended.
- Overall, students are willing to accept the limitations provided that additional academic
- Support is readily available and that contingency plans are made for practical aspects.

<https://www.educationmeetup.com/download-li4/>



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