



INDEPENDENT
HIGHER
EDUCATION

Covid-19 Update: 17 June 2020

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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



Weekly Covid-19 comms schedule

Wednesday – a general update 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.



IHE Covid Essentials – Planning for uncertain times

Creating a socially distanced campus

When: 18 June 2020

Overview: This session will consider the current Government guidance for higher education premises as well as recent publications from sector bodies exploring the principles and challenges for creating a Covid-secure learning environment. Led by experts in higher education and health and safety, it will feature case studies from members on how they plan to tackle some of the challenges of keeping students and staff safe in the continuing context of a global pandemic.

Register: <http://independentthe.com/archives/18-june-2020-ihe-covid-essentials>

What company directors need to know

When: 25 June 2020

Overview: This session will provide a Board room briefing from leading corporate lawyers Pinsent Masons, covering the most critical responsibilities of Company Directors during this period of heightened risk, including company meeting and reporting requirements, the new Corporate Insolvency and Governance Bill, and considerations related to the Government's Covid-19 support schemes.

Register: <http://independentthe.com/archives/25-june-2020-ihe-covid-essentials>



IHE Covid Essentials – Planning for uncertain times

Developing effective online learning environments and online learners

When: 2 July 2020

Overview: This session will explore the importance of learning design, distance learning pedagogy and student support when considering how to build online learning materials. The Open University will provide links to free material that they have produced to help this process

Register: <http://independentthe.com/archives/2-july-2020-ihe-covid-essentials>

Financial stability through transformation

When: 9 July 2020

Overview: The impact of Covid-19 creates new challenges and opportunities for all providers in achieving sustainable growth. This session will consider how senior managers can lead their institutions in redefining their strategic intent, reshaping their business model and delivering transformation to create value and improve their operational and financial performance.

Register: <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/ihe-covid-essentials-financial-stability-through-transformation-tickets-108960513830>



IHE Covid Essentials – Planning for uncertain times

Strategies for student recruitment

When: 16 July 2020

Overview: The session will explore the importance of learning design, distance learning pedagogy and student support when considering how to build online learning materials. The Open University will provide links to free material that they have produced to help this process

Register: <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/ihe-covid-essentials-strategies-for-student-recruitment-tickets-108960670298>



Other IHE Meetings

23 June – [Heads of Finance Network](#)

29 June – [Student Data Forum](#)

7 July – [Admissions Managers Network](#)

7 July – [Tier 4 Compliance Network](#)

16 July – Annual General Meeting (nom reps only)



Reminder: OfS Student Panel

Applications for the OfS student panel close 10pm Sunday 21 June

- Applications are welcome from prospective, current and recent students
- Not yet had a student from an IHE member
- Students must apply with a personal statement

<https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/for-students/get-involved-in-our-work/apply-to-be-on-our-student-panel/>



Last week's essential news

17 June 2020



Top issue
from last
week

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

- How the OfS will regulate the C conditions on consumer and student 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

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



Devolved Nations

- The Welsh Government has published initial guidance for universities to follow in order to protect the health, safety and wellbeing of staff, students and the wider community.

<https://gov.wales/guidance-higher-education-keep-wales-safe-covid-19>



Finance and Human Resources

- The Government updated the taxable expenses guidance for those working from home who may need to return equipment.

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/how-to-treat-certain-expenses-and-benefits-provided-to-employees-during-coronavirus-covid-19>

- Companies House launched an online upload service for documents.

<https://beta.companieshouse.gov.uk/efs-submission/start>

- The Government set the eligibility for new Discretionary Grant Fund for small and micro business and charities.

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/apply-for-the-coronavirus-local-authority-discretionary-grants-fund>



Finance and Human Resources

- Last week Universities Minister Michelle Donelan gave evidence to the House of Commons Petitions Committee regarding petitions calling for students to have their tuition fees reimbursed.
- Donelan stressed that it was up to universities, as autonomous organisations, to decide on the fees they charge up to the government-set maximum but emphasised that complaints should be considered on a case-by-case basis.

<https://parliamentlive.tv/Event/Index/5859f062-7772-40c3-83c5-055ae87df55d>



Teaching and Learning

- QAA has concluded a sector-wide international consultation to map out the future of UK transnational education . This three-month consultation has produced a plan for quality assurance in TNE.

<https://bit.ly/37G3i46>

- Jisc have launched Learning and Teaching Re-imagined to examine changing priorities, expand best practice for technology enabled learning and understand the impact on today's student experience.

<https://bit.ly/3e88lg4>

OfS has published a briefing note exploring the particular challenges postgraduate research students are facing during the pandemic.

- <https://bit.ly/2YbP2gl>



Admissions and Recruitment

- OfS released a briefing note looking at how universities, colleges and others are responding to the challenges of delivering high-quality information, advice and guidance.

<https://bit.ly/30NkrY4>

- HEPI and Brightside published a blog with a call to action on widening participation in the era of Covid-19 . It emphasises the need to position work to widen participation within the government's 'levelling up' agenda to help secure its future (and funding).

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



Admissions and Recruitment

- UCAS blog in Wonkhe on the current trends in student recruitment. UCAS data suggests that 40% of students are considering changing their plans. The data also suggests that 20% of respondents, up from 15% a month ago, say their biggest single worry is “missing out on the experience”.

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



Student Welfare and Support

- Student services organisation AMOSSHE has released plans for a virtual conference in July which will run free of charge.

<https://www.amosse.org.uk/news/9032456>



International Students and Visas

- The Home Office updated advice for UK visa applicants and temporary UK residents. This includes new information on the reopening of Visa Application Centres and Secure English Language Testing centres as well as new information if you are applying to stay in the UK under the right to a family life.

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

- The government guidance on self-isolation upon arrival in the UK has also been updated.

<https://bit.ly/3122xkD>



International Students and Visas

- UKCISA update on EU Settlement confirms that Covid-19-related absences of up to 12 months will be considered acceptable as they are an “important reason”.

<https://bit.ly/2NblBo1>

- UKCISA update on student work rights confirms that students who spend some time studying online will still be eligible for the new Graduate work route if they complete in summer 2021.

<https://bit.ly/2NblBo1>

- The British Council released a survey of international students which found that nearly 14,000 fewer students from eight countries – including China, Singapore and Malaysia – are likely to come to the UK in 2020/21.

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



HE Sector news and opinion

- University Alliance and Public First survey on public perceptions of HE

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

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

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



New this week

17 June 2020



Government update

Department for Education Guidance – Primary and Secondary

- Added information on how primary schools can use flexibility to welcome back additional pupils this term, where they have capacity.

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

- Added information to 'Planning guide for primary schools' on how primary schools can use flexibility to welcome back additional pupils this term.
- Supplementary information to 'Guidance for secondary school provision from 15 June 2020' about how secondary schools can welcome year 10 and year 12 pupils in for face-to-face support and, where possible, invite pupils in other year groups in for a meeting this term.

<https://bit.ly/37KBiMI>



Government update

Department for Education Guidance – Further Education

Considerable changes have been made to the FE guidance, which are relevant to any IHE member with a subcontract with an FE provider. Including:

- New information on on-site delivery.
- Specific information for mixed age groups (adult and under 19-years in the same locations).
- New information on traineeships, supporting internships.
- Additional information on awarding of vocational qualifications - highly relevant for BTEC or Level 3 provision.
- New case studies on engaging vulnerable young people.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-maintaining-further-education-provision#history>



Finance and Human Resources

Changes to the CJRS (furlough scheme)

- The CJRS will close on 31 October 2020.
- From 1 July, employers can bring furloughed employees back to work for any amount of time and any shift pattern, while still being able to claim CJRS grant for the hours not worked.
- From 1 August 2020, the level of grant will be reduced each month. To be eligible for the grant employers must pay furloughed employees 80% of their wages, up to a cap of £2,500 per month for the time they are being furloughed.
- Wage caps are proportional to the hours an employee is furloughed. For example, an employee is entitled to 60% of the £2,500 cap if they are placed on furlough for 60% of their usual hours.
- Employers will continue to be able to choose to top up employee wages above the 80% total and £2,500 cap for the hours not worked at their own expense if they wish. Employers will have to pay their employees for the hours worked.



Finance and Human Resources

Changes to the CJRS (furlough scheme) – continued

- For June and July, the government will pay 80% of wages up to a cap of £2,500 for the hours the employee is on furlough, as well as employer National Insurance Contributions (ER NICs) and pension contributions for the hours the employee is on furlough. Employers will have to pay employees for the hours they work.
- For August, Government will pay 80% of wages up to a cap of £2,500 for the hours an employee is on furlough; employers will pay ER NICs and pension contributions for the hours the employee is on furlough.
- For September, Government will pay 70% of wages up to a cap of £2,187.50 for the hours the employee is on furlough. Employers will pay ER NICs and pension contributions and top up employees' wages to ensure they receive 80% of their wages up to a cap of £2,500, for time they are furloughed.
- For October, Government will pay 60% of wages up to a cap of £1,875 for the hours the employee is on furlough. Employers will pay ER NICs and pension contributions and top up employees' wages to ensure they receive 80% of their wages up to a cap of £2,500, for time they are furloughed.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/changes-to-the-coronavirus-job-retention-scheme/changes-to-the-coronavirus-job-retention-scheme>



Devolved Nations

Scottish Government announce further support for students

- The Scottish Government has brought forward early access to £11.4 million of discretionary funds — support for higher education students in financial difficulty — and administered by colleges and universities.
- Scottish students studying in Europe as part of EU Portability or historically arranged schemes will be able to access a £100,000 emergency fund administered by the Student Awards Agency Scotland (SAAS).
- SAAS has also suspended all new debt recovery actions in respect to grants and bursaries until September for students whose circumstances have changed and may have to return overpayments. Students are encouraged to contact SAAS to discuss what help is available.
- No additional funding for students in private providers.

<https://www.saas.gov.uk/news/summer-support-for-students>



International Students

New Guidance from Home Office

- Confirmation that distance/blended learning will be permitted for the 20/21 academic year provided students intend to transition to face-to-face learning as soon as circumstances allow
- Confirmation that those studying by distance/blended learning will be eligible to apply for the Graduate route provided they are in the UK by 6 April 2021 and complete final semester of studies in the UK.
- Concession on applying in the UK for leave to remain under Tier 4 applies both to those extending their leave under Tier 4 and those switching into the route from another category.
- 30-day visa expiry concession will last until end of 2020
- New Pearson Test of English centers are open. Pearson website has list of countries which are not open – including UK.

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/892783/Tier_4_Guidance_-_Covid-19_response_200616.pdf



Teaching and Learning

QAA Small and Specialist Guidance

- IHE is working with QAA to develop guidance for small and specialist providers
- Guidance aims to cover:
 - Challenges with small physical space
 - Course and class sizes: viability issues and student cohort design
 - Practical teaching in a small provider
 - Working in partnership: Small and Specialists with bigger partners
 - Contact joy@independenthe.com with ideas for what should be included.

QAA guidance on Academic Integrity in COVID-19 expected tomorrow

- Cover contract cheating with rise of online assessment
- Explore impact of academic integrity challenges on quality and standards
- Results of QAA survey of providers

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



Teaching and Learning

Jisc Head of HE Blog in University Business – Online Learning

- James Clay outlines ideas to diversify the digital learning offer through multi-mode delivery.
- Suggests combination of online videos, group videos, online chat and one to one sessions could reimagine ways we taught in the classroom, into new ways which feel more comfortable online.

<https://universitybusiness.co.uk/comment/why-online-learning-doesnt-have-to-be-a-poor-experience/>

Two blogs from Education Technology

- 3D technology: Graham Hunter of GeoSLAM on using 3D technology for practical learning.
- Chris Thompson of Jisc explores “hybrid” learning, mixing in person and digital techniques.

<https://edtechnology.co.uk/category/comments/>



Marketing and Recruitment

UCAS Updates

- Any applicants who received decisions from all of their choices on or before **4 June 2020** need to reply to any offers **by next Thursday, 18 June 2020**. If they don't, their offers will automatically be declined.
- UCAS Hub - live sessions to support 2021 applicants – covering including personal statements and leagues tables.

<https://www.ucas.com/undergraduate/what-and-where-study/ucas-hub-live>

- All Covid-19 resources and updates

<https://www.ucas.com/advisers/guides-and-resources/adviser-news/news/coronavirus-update>



Student Welfare and Support

UUK: Most universities will teach in-person this autumn

- 97% of universities surveyed confirmed that they will provide in-person teaching at the start of term this year
- 87% will offer in-person social opportunities to students, including outside events and sporting activities, all in line with government and public health guidance.
- The full range of student support will be on offer at UK universities – including mental health support; careers advice; study skills. 95% universities will deliver this using a mixture of online and in-person services and 5% universities are planning to deliver these services online
- 90% universities have communicated their current plans to prospective and current students; others will be doing so imminently
- 82% universities are working with bars and cafes in the local community as they develop their plans

<https://www.universitiesuk.ac.uk/news/Pages/Most-universities-will-teach-in-person-this-autumn.aspx>



Student Welfare and Support

Student Mental Health: Student Space

- OfS has made up to £3 million available for Student Minds to lead the development of a new targeted programme of support, it will:
 - offer immediate help for students in distress through therapeutic interventions
 - provide educational resources to help students manage stress and maintain good mental health and wellbeing
 - curate a range of quality-assured online resources, such as guidance, apps, peer support platforms, and volunteering opportunities.
- The platform will be available to all 2.3 million students from OfS-registered providers in England and from registered Welsh institutions.
- The programme will run for six months, from July to December 2020. In addition, Student Minds plan for many of the resources to be useful well beyond the initial six-month period.

<https://bit.ly/2Y7f18C>



Student Welfare and Support

Student Minds Webinar: Planning for a Sustainable Future: the importance of university mental health in uncertain times

When: Tuesday 23 June, 14:00-15:00

Will outline what we know so far about the impact of Covid-19 on the mental health of our staff and students and explore with a panel of experts why and how we can prioritise mental health to building a strong, sustainable future for the sector.

<https://bit.ly/3d6J9oO>



HE Sector news and opinion

Jo Johnson report on International Students (King's College London and Harvard Kennedy School).

- Covered widely in the media, the report provides an overview of the international market, including the predicted fall in students due to the pandemic, increased competition and the rise of higher education superpowers such as China.
- The report recommends the introduction of a 2-4 year post-study work visa, an enhanced focus on the Indian market, as well as introducing greater flexibility on English proficiency testing and Tier 4 visa issuance.

<https://www.kcl.ac.uk/policy-institute/assets/universities-open-to-the-world.pdf>



HE Sector news and opinion

HEPI webinar with Michelle Donelan MP, Minister for Universities (17th June).

- The webinar covered a range of issues, including ongoing work to revise the International Education Strategy in the context of the pandemic.
- The minister announced '**Student Space**', a new online platform led by Student Minds to provide support services for issues such as mental health, including £3million in funding from the Office for Students.

<https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/news-blog-and-events/press-and-media/new-funds-to-boost-student-mental-health-through-pandemic/>



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